

Baronial and Royal Court Handbook or “How to Serve on Court and Guard”

Notes and thoughts by Bridget Lucia Mackenzie, with input from many,

Developed from the Royal Chamberlain’s Handbook written by Baroness Cara Michelle DuValier, OP.

The Baronial Presence at Tournaments - Court and Guard:

These are the folks who will attend and guard the Baron & Baroness. They are called by various names and have different duties. The Chief Lady-in-Waiting is in charge of the Lords- or Ladies-in-Waiting of the Court, The Guard Captain is in charge of the Guard, who can be from Armored Combat, Archery, Rapier, Horse Sergeants. There can also be Companions, Advisors, Ambassadors, Pages, Scribe, Court Magician and Bard.

The Baronial Pavilion - the living room at events

The Baronial Pavilion should be set up by the Guards, and then the insides set up by the Lords/Ladies of the Court. The Baron & Baroness decide what will be brought and coordinate with who needs to bring what, with help from CLiW (Chief Lady/Lord-in-Waiting) and the Guard Captain. The Court should keep it tidy all day, keeping trash and personal items neat. Guests of the Baron & Baroness should be welcomed in and shown a chair. The Pavilion should NEVER be left unoccupied by a member of the Court/Guard. Not only are people’s personal items all laid about in this public park, but the symbol of the seat of royal power, Thrones, must be guarded. There is a lot of symbolism here and we need to take it seriously.

The Thrones

Only the Baron and Baroness should ever sit in the Baronial Thrones. Sorry, but not the former Barons or Baronesses, visiting B&Bs, Counts, Dukes, Knights, cute kids. The Thrones do not just become chairs when the B&B are not around. The only exception would be Their Majesties, in whose name the B&B are holding their royal seats anyway. Their Majesties should be offered the Baronial Thrones FIRST if they enter the pavilion to sit.

Fixing them up and keeping them fed

Their Excellencies are a focal point for many SCA events, how they look and function is the Court’s responsibility. The Baron & Baroness could not do this job alone, and without the Court/Guards help, they would look like children playing dress-up. Court ladies should periodically and discretely view the Baron, the Baroness and even other Court and Guard members, and make sure the tunics and coronets are sitting correctly. Ensure that they have water regularly and remind them when it is time to eat. Tell the Baroness when to put on lipstick! And with everyone with a camera in their pocket, it is easy for less-than-perfect photos to get out there. Please avoid wearing sunglasses, car keys on your belt or carrying a cup of Starbucks while in the Royal Presence, because you and your anachronism can ruin and otherwise nice picture!

Food

Each Baronial Pavilion at tourneys or wars will have its own style. Some have a sideboard of food where folks buy in to a food plan, some have a table where folks bring potluck items to share. In some baronies, each person brings their own food. But no one should be required to bring anything or feed anyone they don’t want to! If there is baronial feast gear it can be used, but it will need to be packed up and washed at someone’s home. Arrangements should be made for one or more persons to bring water and trash bags. Everyone should work to hide the modern plastic items, put food in period bowls, pick up trash. Everyone should be cleaning up after themselves, but the Chief Lord/Lady should assign someone to maintain the Food table throughout the day, if only to remind others to keep their messes tidy! No one should have to play Mother or be a servant, but someone should keep an eye out that it looks nice and stays sanitary. Keep the table moving so perishable food is not in the sun, and is covered. Watch out for little kids wandering in seeing a table full of cookies!

The Baroness Basket

When Her Excellency needs to leave the pavilion and walk about the eric or event, she should be attended by a Court Lord or Lady, and a Guard. The Court member should grab The Baroness Basket, which is stocked by Her Excellency, OR bring a basket maintained by the Court themselves with the following contents:

- Bottle of water, Period cup
- Notepad and pen
- Kleenex tissues, Folding fan
- Safety pins, sewing kit
- Day Favor or ribbons, small tokens
- Sunscreen, hand sanitizer

Thank you Tokens to helpful folks:

The Baron and Baroness will have a container of small tokens from which he/she can select a gift to give out during the day. Perhaps a child has been very helpful. A bard sang a beautiful song. A fighter showed exceptional chivalry. An officer performed their job with exceptional aplomb. Something that deserves a notice from His or Her Excellency. These can include rings, necklaces, handkerchiefs, brooch, flower, braided cord in the baronial colors, etc. If you can help make or buy these items, the Baron & Baroness will appreciate it! And if you see someone who deserves this note, discretely let Their Excellencies know.

Attending Their Excellencies

Each Baron & Baroness will have their own level of attendance required at each event. At the home Baronial Anniversary, and major Kingdom events, they should be closely attended (i.e. followed around and helped). Her Excellency should be a little more attended than His Excellency, the theatre is that he can defend himself, but she, the frail female, should be both Guarded and bridget@blazingsword.com

attended by Ladies at all times. Though we know in reality this is not true, the theatrical image should be maintained. Both Baron & Baroness should not need to be as closely attended as Their Majesties.

During Baronial Court

At events where the Baron & Baroness are sitting in Court, a Court Lord or Lady should be writing down what is awarded, given or received. A Baroness Book is good for this. This will help the Baron & Baroness fill out thank-you cards after the event. These include Kingdom Awards, Baronial Awards, Contest Winners, Champions, Gifts - including who gave them.

During Baronial Court, Guards should stand at attendance during Court, helping create the middle ages environment (and also assist ladies who approach in Court or help folks who may need help rising from the cushions). Be attentive, people are watching you!

Baronial Champions - Honorary Members of the Court:

These fine gentles have proven their skill on one of several different fields of competition, winning the right to defend the Baron and Baroness in any question of honor. They also become automatic ceremonial members of the Baronial Court, encouraged to attend and accompany the Baron & Baroness in Court, on Procession or other situations. They may not be members of the Barony, but they certainly should be made part of the baronial family. Please be aware of who they are, make them welcome! They can include Champions of Armored Combat, Rapier, Arts & Sciences, Archery, Equestrian, Chess, and Youth Combat.

Other events

Since they are in fealty to the King and Queen, The Baron and Baroness are required to swear fealty to Their new Majesties at Coronation. It is also tradition to make a gift to both sets of Majesties at Coronation, personal items for the outgoing, and regalia, largesse and items they will need for their new reign for incoming. Court, Guard, Companions and Members of the Populace are asked to help contribute to gifts of fealty to Their Majesties at Coronation and at your own Baronial Anniversary. You are also encouraged to join the Baron & Baroness in the presentation of these gifts during Court.

Cone of Silence

There are times when the Royals will need to have private conversations. You may be asked to not only take a few steps out of earshot, but to discretely stand a perimeter watch to ensure others do not intrude upon the conversation. Please handle this with utmost courtesy. Treat any conversations that you happen to overhear as confidential; do not share with others that you heard the Baroness is ill, or that the Baron had car troubles or that someone misplaced the Coronet(!). These are private/internal matters that should not be discussed outside. A casual comment can turn into a game of "telephone" and spin out of control. Keep it zipped! Conversely, bring appropriate news (not gossip!) to your superiors' (Excellencies, Chief Lady, Captain of Guard) attention. You work for them, so please keep them informed if a situation comes up that concerns their rule of the Barony.

Notification

It is courteous to let the Baron & Baroness, or at least the Chief Lady or Captain of the Guard, know if you are not able to attend events they will be going to. The Baronial Progress (listing of events they are planning to attend) should be posted, and they need to know how many will be there to assist. Arrive at the requested time and stay until tear-down, or let them know if you cannot. For Baronial Anniversaries and other Barony-sponsored events, Court and Guard are expected to attend and assist with the many duties of the day.

Countess Bridget Lucia MacKenzie, OP, 73rd Queen of Caid, Former Baroness of Altavia, Royal Co-Chamberlain to Conrad III/Aisha II, Current Kingdom Regalia Officer, Royal Guard for Francisc/Seanachie, Royal Lady-in-Waiting for Alaric/Kissa, Edric II/Battista, Co-Chief Lady-in-Waiting to Robert/Therese of Barony of the Angels, Advisor to Baronial Court of Thorin/Courtney, Secca/Meliora of Altavia. Royal Companion to Edric/Faizeh, Edward/Mora, Wilhelm/Taleah.