

How to Herald Court: a Primer
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Court heraldry is a subtle art. A successful herald will know how to comport themselves with dignity, orchestrate the court with a gentle hand, and provide guidance to the Crown as befits their station. The herald is the voice of the Crown, and should behave accordingly.

Certainly, most people expect that court heraldry is straightforward: be loud, read what the scrolls say, and look real pretty/handsome while doing it. The truth is that, while court heraldry encompasses all of those things, it also requires careful orchestration of events. This usually begins in the court meeting.

COURT MEETING

The court meeting is designed to give the herald time to review the scrolls, the Crown time to sign them, and a chance to confirm the order of business for the day. It is up to the herald to schedule the meeting after conferring on a time with the Crown/Regents. It is recommended that the court meeting be scheduled at least 30 minutes before court begins, with additional time for longer and more complicated courts - Boar's Head, Twelfth Night, and WW, for example, but this will always be at the pleasure of Their Majesties and/or Their Highnesses.

The signet should handle anything to do with the scrolls. Make sure they know where and when the court meeting will take place - it is their job to make sure the scrolls get stamped, signed, and sorted into presentation order. If there is no signet, then this responsibility is usually handled by the chamberlain, the herald, or by someone who is appointed to handle scrolls.

Take a few minutes to read every scroll over a few times. If you are working with other heralds, this is the time to decide who is reading what. While most scripts are legible, do not hesitate to write out a legible text copy if you feel you will need one. Take time to confirm that your pronunciation of recipient names is accurate. If you are unsure, consult the Crown or a senior herald.

In general, the order of business will be as follows (though not all parts will be in all courts):

1. Open court
2. Oaths
3. Presentations/announcements
4. Awards (AoA, GoA, Non-arms bearing, Peerage) (order determined by the Crown)
5. Closing remarks
6. Close court

The majority of Northshield courts are conducted in this manner, though it is flexible. Confirm with the Crown/Regent before proceeding.

If the gentle receiving an award is not present at the event, the Crown/Regent may choose to have their award read in a private court. This requires that a seneschal and warranted herald be present. Open court (see below), read the award, and close court. These should be reported, but indicate that the recipient has not received the award yet.

COURT

General court things

5-10 minutes before court begins, the herald(s) and signet(s) should be in place in the front of court. In some very specific circumstances, the herald will process into court with the Crown/Regents, but this is rare in Northshield.

Before each item of business, bend down and quietly confirm the next item of business with the Crown/Regent. This is usually as simple as, "Your Majesties, we have Rose Tyler up next for her AoA." They will usually indicate their approval, at which time you can call Rose into court.

After each item of business, you will say, "for _____, vivat/vivant." Vivat is the singular, while vivant is the plural. An easy way to remember which one is this: vivant is for more than one person, and it has more letters. Be sure to enunciate clearly.

A herald's book will make your heraldic activities simpler and easier to accomplish without incident. Often, a nice journal-style hardcover notebook will suffice. Some heralds prefer books with pockets in the front for storing court lists and other miscellaneous items. Others prefer electronic books. In any case, doing court without a book is inadvisable.

Write everything down. Seriously.

Opening court:

The herald will announce the arrival of the Crown/Regents and call on the populace to rise. If the Heirs to the throne are present, they process in next. Other dignitaries (such as royals from other kingdoms, and territorial baronages) are usually invited to join the royal family in court if they are present. (This is up to the Crown/Regents.)

1. Oyez! All rise for their Dread Stellar Majesties, _____ and _____, King and Queen of Northshield, and _____ and _____, Heirs to the Griffin Throne. Their Majesties invite into Their court _____ and _____, King and Queen of _____, and _____ and _____, Baron and Baroness of _____.

(Note: The Herald should run the intended language to be used above past Royalty before use. They may have other ideas or preferences...)

Once the Crown/Regents are in place and have been seated, consult with the Crown/Regents, and then open court. State that the court of the Crown/Regents is open, on this ___ day of ___, AS ___, in the Shire/Barony/Canton of _____, at _____ (event name). For example:

1. Here opens the Court of Northshield on this 22nd day of November, AS 47, in the Shire of Border Downs, at Yuletide.

Having already said the date, the herald does NOT need to repeat the date on every scroll. This helps to save time, especially in lengthy courts.

Oaths:

Call the members of the Order into court:

1. Their Majesties invite into their court any members of the Order of the _____ wishing to swear fealty at this time.

Once the Order has assembled, the herald will either go in front of the Crown to be heard by the Order, or will speak loudly enough for all the Order members to hear the prompts.

The Order of Chivalry does not need prompting. All other orders are to be prompted (unless they ask not to be.) Remember that in Northshield, oaths of fealty can be replaced by pledges of service—you may announce this but you will only read the words of the oath rather than the pledge.

Oaths, unless otherwise indicated, should be read from the Boke of Ceremony. Break each sentence up into manageable phrases. It is essentially call-and-response.

If you are unsure of how to do an oath, ask a member of a peerage order or a senior herald for guidance.

Once the oath is done, and the Crown/Regents has said what they wish to the members, dismiss the order:

1. For the _____ of Northshield, Vivant!

The territorial baronages, Great Officers, and the populace are not orders but are also invited into court for their oaths or pledges. Adjust your phrasing accordingly.

Presentations:

Call each presenter into court. An example follows:

1. Their Majesties invite the Worshipful Company of Moneyers into their court.

At this time, the person/group will enter into court. They will either have an announcement or a presentation.

In the case of a gift: after they have presented their gift, describe it for the populace. Often, it's hard for them to see what is being given, while you have the best view.

After the gift has been given, or once the announcement is complete, you may cry the following:

1. For _____ and her gifts (announcing the gift), vivat!
2. or
3. For _____ and their taxes, vivant!
4. Or
5. For _____, vivat!

There is no such thing as a surprise presentation for the Crown. All presenters should disclose their gifts ahead of court to the herald, and the herald should always disclose the contents of the gift to the Crown. Never surprise the Crown.

Note: Gifts consisting of or containing alcohol should never be presented in court. The presenter may gift the Crown some lovely glass bottles, though the contents may have gone bad at some point.

Awards:

Confer with the Crown/Regent and confirm the next item of business.

You will summon each recipient:

1. Their Majesties summon _____ into their court.

Their Majesties will usually say a few words to the recipient(s), and lead into the scroll by saying something like, “and because of your actions, we will do this...” and indicate that it is time for you to read the scroll. If you feel it is necessary, you may request that the Crown/Regent overtly indicate that they wish you to read the scroll by either a hand-wave or by them looking at you.

You will read the scroll. Omit the date and event.

After you have read the scroll, you will hand it and the case to the Crown/Regent. They will then give it to the recipient, and will usually say a few more words. Once this is done, you will dismiss the recipient using the appropriate title. For example:

1. For Lady/Lord _____, vivat! (AoA level)
2. For The Honorable Lady/Lord _____, vivat! (GoA level)
3. For Baron/ess _____, vivat! (barony)
4. For Mistress/Master _____, vivat! (bestowed peerage)
5. And so on.

Use the highest award that the person has for the honorific. For example, a Laurel who receives a GoA level service award would be heralded as Master or Mistress, not The Honorable Lord/Lady.

If the award is an Order (Bridgit's Flame, Black Griffin, Tyr, Pyxis, White Scarf, etc), you should check with the Regent on whether they prefer the order be called in before the recipient or after. When dismissing, you should say:

1. For (title) _____, newest member of the Order of _____, Vivat!

It is strongly recommended to keep a list of orders and awards of the realm in one's herald book. If you are unsure of the status of an award, ask a senior herald, or the chamberlain.

Peerages:

Often, a vigilant will want to customize the “standard” ceremony held within the Boke. Consult with a senior herald or a member of the Order if a peerage is to occur on your docket.

Closing court:

Once the Crown/Regent has said their closing remarks, it is time to close court. The Crown/Regent will rise. At this time, you will say:

1. There being no further business, this court of _____ is now closed. ALL RISE!

Next come the boasts. The boasts should be for the King and Queen, Prince and Princess (if they have been crowned yet), the Baronage of the hosting group (if a Barony or Canton), the group itself (sometimes the canton in addition to the Barony, if applicable), and Northshield. The text is as follows:

1. Long live the king!
2. Long live the queen!
3. Long live the Prince and Princess!
4. Long live the Barony of _____!
5. Long live NORTHSHIELD! (sometimes accompanied by fist pumping.)

Court Report:

Within 72 hours of the close of the event, you should email your report to courtreports@northshield.org, which will forward to the appropriate parties.

Your court report should contain the following information:

1. The presiding royals and/or regents
2. The date and event
3. Optional: morning or evening court, if applicable
4. The name of the reporting herald (usually, this will be you)
5. The names of any heralds that assisted you, as well as any signets that assisted
6. The notable events of the court. Awards being reported should include the name of the scroll scribe whenever possible. It may be necessary to get those during the court meeting.

An example of a court report would be as follows:

Herein is the Court Report from That Moot Thingy held February 25th, AS 51 in the Canton of Coille Stoirmeil:

The Court of Northshield was opened by the will of Yehudah Khagan, Sovereign of Northshield. He was joined by Robert and Leona, Their Excellencies Jaravellir.

A presentation by Judith and Asana of Rokeclif consisting of bookmarks was given to His Majesty.

Winners of the activities of the day were recognized.

His Majesty allowed Their Excellencies Jaravellir to open court and conduct Baronial business.

His Majesty opened a regency court of the Barony of Nordskogen to conduct Baronial business.

After resuming the Court of Northshield, the following Awards were given by His Majesty:

- Annora de la Wylowes – Award of Arms (Scribe: Judith Northwoode of Trewint)
- Dugu Jinan – Pyxis
- Fujiwara no Nagamochi – Black Flame (Scribe: Ivetta)
- Auden the Black – Cygnus
- Sarangerel “the Sadist” of the Steppes – Aquila et Fulmen (Scribe: Cecilly of York)
- Matthias of Rolling Oaks – Court Barony

There being no further business the Court of Northshield was closed.

Submitted:

Heralds of Record: Iohannes Glenfidanus

Signets of Record: AEsa inn bjardoelska