

## ACCOMMODATION

Negotiate rates for those staying over either at the venue or an adjacent mid-price hotel e.g. Premier Inn, Travelodge. Your Regional Councillor can be your salesman in attracting members of the National Council and others from beyond your Region.

## BAR (SEE ALSO WINE)

Try to make sure there are adequate numbers of bar staff – caterers are often surprised by the enthusiasm with which 41ers approach the pre-meal bar! Unless he specifies it, there is no real need for a separate reception for the National President – they usually aim to meet as many members as possible. If possible, allow a little time for fellowship at the bar at the end of the formal proceedings. Negotiate a later closing time with the venue.

## CLUB ROLES

Successfully adopted by Ossett & Horbury 41 Club for the 2010 White Rose Dinner.

Three main players, with help as appropriate:

- 1/ The main man – Chair of the Organising Committee. Organising the evening – menu, wine list, seating plan, table decorations etc.
- 2/ Bookings Co-ordinator, liaising with a team to chase up bookings. This person is the logical one to deal with financial matters.
- 3/ The MC, who runs the event on the night.

Other roles can be shared out with members fully briefed, e.g. band liaison, raffle, photography etc.

## COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS?

This document has been based on a career in the hospitality industry and involvement in many regional dinners. There are bound to be omissions and possibly errors. Please send any feedback or questions to Andy Waite [andywaite41club@gmail.com](mailto:andywaite41club@gmail.com) ; telephone 01924 260007 or 07941 380821 or by post to: 8 Peel Close, Horbury, Wakefield WF4 5AE

## DATE

Set the date as far in advance as possible and publicise it on the 41 Club website [www.41club.org](http://www.41club.org) and the 41 International website [www.41international.net](http://www.41international.net), as well as the online Forum, the monthly e-bulletin and of course our magazine Links. The Webmasters' addresses are [webmaster@41club.org](mailto:webmaster@41club.org) and [webmaster@41international.net](mailto:webmaster@41international.net)

You can also log on to our on-line forum <http://41forum.notlong.com> to reach all the 41 Club Forum members. However it is important to avoid clashes where possible with other events such as International AGM or Half Yearly Meetings, or Round Table Area Dinners and Charter events. On the other hand, if your event were to coincide with a National Council weekend it could bring another 35-40 attendees in the form of the National Council. If this happens, spread them around the room to mix with the members, rather than seating them all together. Careful liaison would be needed with the Conference Officer in the first instance, as part of his role is to arrange Council weekends.

If the event is an annual one, make sure your Club attends in good number the year before, with a flyer and booking form (remember to ask if there are any special dietary requirements). You can use a 'ring round system' to good effect. List your target Clubs and the nights they meet. Divide them up among your team so that each Club Contact and/or Secretary is telephoned around 6 pm on their meeting night, or the night before if more convenient, and asked to mention the Dinner at the meeting later that evening. Letters and emails are useful too but best of all is to go visit their meeting. Emphasise that you will accept post dated cheques; you might even offer a

small discount for booking early. You might also mention that the best seats are allocated to the Clubs that book early; also that it is not impossible for a Dinner to sell out.

#### DEPOSIT – SEE VENUE

#### FUNDRAISING

Do not feel this is essential; however any sponsorship can be used to keep the ticket price down. On the other hand, it is tempting to fundraise and a dinner presents a great opportunity. Many members groan when asked for £5 or £10 for a raffle, or games of stand-up bingo, heads & tails, kings & queens and the like at £5 a time. Raffles should be short and sweet, with a few decent prizes rather than many minor ones. If you are **not** holding a raffle this can be a selling point! Which causes or charities might benefit from any surplus is up to you; but if you are setting out to fundraise then liaison with the charity could pay off in terms of a speaker, a video presentation or a sales table with literature about the charity. Of course the President's charity or ones with Round Table connections such as Children's Wish or Anthony Nolan are favourites. At the Dorset Knobs they have an original fundraising idea – the 'Wheelbarrow of Wine'. Each guest brings a bottle to a minimum value and buys a ticket for £5. This can make three or more very acceptable prizes.

#### GUEST SPEAKERS

If you have a renowned (and probably expensive) speaker as well as the National President you need to allocate time correctly. To ask the President to be fairly brief in bringing his greetings and his message may not be well received. He will be putting in a massive effort throughout his year in office and should be afforded the courtesy of as much time as is feasible. He has a unique viewpoint and may well have travelled a long way at great expense.

#### THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S EVENT

If the dinner is an annual one, liaise with the organising Club as they can give you masses of useful information. A joint meeting is a great idea. Your Regional Councillor will also be able to advise, to avoid 're-inventing the wheel' and to share good practice (and avoid adopting ideas that may not work).

#### LIAISON WITH THE VENUE

Make an appointment and go with a list of questions/issues to be discussed. These may include staffing levels for food and wine, pricing, public address system – many of the points that appear elsewhere in this document.

#### MARCHESI HOUSE

The staff in Marchesi House can email all Clubs or a selected group on request, and write to those few Clubs still preferring postal contact.

#### MASTER OF CEREMONIES

A professional toastmaster is money well spent as long as you brief him fully. Your club may well have a 'character' who can take this role on – again, make him aware of the timings of the evening as precisely as possible. There are several 41 Club members who regularly undertake this role.

#### MENU

Keep it simple but high quality. Remember to ask for special dietary needs on the booking form.

#### MENU and SONG SHEET PRINTING

These may be sponsored or paid for through advertisements, otherwise must be costed in. Be aware of lead times. Design the menu early and add details as they are finalised. Print a few more than you need – costs are marginal.

## MUSIC

Brass bands are often well received especially if they play the Round Table favourites such as 'Land of Hope and Glory', Jerusalem, Ilkley Moor etc. If you come from a brass band area this type of repertoire can be well within the remit of a junior section, who will often be happy with a donation rather than the fee the top band may expect. A junior band might play during the reception and at the end of the meal, before the speeches. This will allow them to get home safely in good time. They will appreciate some sandwiches and a drink!

## NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Book him early! His identity will be known at the National AGM the previous year. If for some reason he is not free then the National Vice-President or members of the National Executive can deputise. The President and V-P's diaries are on the National website.

## NEXT YEAR (SEE ALSO 'THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S EVENT')

It would be very helpful to the organisers of the next Dinner to keep a file and pass it on, to avoid 'reinventing the wheel'. A joint meeting is ideal for this.

## PAYMENT FROM 41ers

Make it clear you will accept post dated cheques dated up to, say, 2 weeks before the event. It is much better to get the money in early rather than collecting on the night. Non-refundable deposits are worth thinking about, as are discounts for early bookings. Your own members could be encouraged to pay well in advance to provide some 'pump-priming' money. Electronic payment might be possible – if so make sure the reference includes the Club as well as the member's name. A possible downside of this is that members may book individually rather than as a group.

## PRICE

The headline ticket price is what members look at, even if you have negotiated special prices for wine/beer/port. £30 is perceived by many members as a maximum. Aim for a break-even point of two-thirds of the real capacity of the room (after allowing space for bands, lecterns and any other 'dead' space).

## PROJECTOR AND SCREEN

If necessary these can be borrowed from National if the President or other Officer is in attendance.

## PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM

This is critical. Get this wrong and your event is in great danger of failure. Do not leave this to amateurs. If the guests can't hear clearly they will start their own conversations and chaos will ensue. Take the venue's advice. They may have a hearing loop which might be welcomed by some members.

## PUBLICITY – SEE DATE

## RAFFLES – SEE FUNDRAISING

## ROUND TABLE

Don't forget to invite local Tables, Area/National Officers (probably at their own cost). It may be possible to combine your dinner with an RT Area Dinner, especially where attendances have been dwindling for some years. What better way to support RT?

#### SEATING PLAN (SEE ALSO MUSIC)

Round tables of 10 are often considered best but can be wasteful of space. It is tempting to 'shoehorn' as many diners as possible into a small area. This is almost always a mistake, especially if there is a brass band. Whatever musical arrangements you choose, make sure there is plenty of space for the performers and a decent distance between them and the diners. Make it known that you will allocate the better areas of the room to the Clubs who book early; and don't be afraid to refuse late bookings or operate a waiting list.

#### SPONSORSHIP

This is becoming more and more important as few dinners are less than £30 these days and some can be much more. 41ers have a price point they are happy with and as I write I would suggest this is a maximum of around £35. Of course there are exceptions for very grand settings. Members and business acquaintances can be invited to sponsor several elements at a range of costs, for example the menu card, a table gift such as a commemorative glass or badge, the wine for the top table, the guest speaker's expenses, a bottle of port on each table – the list goes on.

#### STAFFING LEVELS

You need to find out how many staff will be working to ascertain how long the meal service will take. For example, a few staff can 'sweep' the room table by table quite efficiently BUT the top table will almost certainly have finished their main course before the last tables are served. This may well lose 30-40 minutes from your evening. Ideally every table will have its own server(s). You should clarify this point with the venue.

#### TABLE GIFTS

Again, these could be sponsored. Do any of your members have access to corporate freebies, e.g. from banks or building societies? Also, consider whether your guests really need another commemorative glass? Alternative souvenirs include pin badges, pens, bookmarks, key rings and the like.

#### THANK YOU

Contributions to this document have been made by President Malcolm Lockey, IPP Richard Matthews, Mark Hunter of Ossett and Horbury, and verbally from Mike Garner, Region 7 National Councillor, and Past NC and Membership Officer David Weaver.

#### TIMINGS

The evening should be meticulously planned and all parties made aware of the time given to their element of the evening. See Appendix 1 for an example. This is just to give an idea of the level of detail needed; not all dinners have as much 'business' as this.

#### TOASTMASTER – SEE MASTER OF CEREMONIES

#### TOP TABLE WINE AND OTHER HIDDEN COSTS

Top Table wine might be sponsored by a generous member or be factored in to the cost. The only 'freebies' should be the meals for the National President and the guest speaker(s). If the President prefers a hotel rather than being home hosted then he will deal with the bill himself. The President will usually present a gift and a banner; you should be able to reciprocate.

Other items may include bunting, flags and the like. Your Regional Councillor may be able to provide 41 Club display boards for the evening.

#### TRAVEL AWARD

A small gift can be awarded to the Club which scores highest when the number of members is multiplied by the distance travelled. Prizes for the oldest and newest member could also be presented.

#### TROPHIES/VALUABLES

These need securing against being 'borrowed' by visitors, especially raffle prizes – even large ones like mountain bikes, TVs and even a gallon bottle of whisky have mysteriously disappeared over the years.

#### VENUE

There are so many issues here – a balance has to be struck between location, facilities and cost. Whatever you agree with the venue, be sure to get it in writing. Changes of management and/or ownership can cause huge problems. Equally, if you are asked to pay a deposit insist on a proper receipt.

#### WINE

Try to arrange a short wine list at reasonable prices negotiated with the venue. Two or three reds, two or three whites and a rosé should be adequate. A wine order table during the reception can be a big help. The venue should be aware that fast service equals greater sales.

APPENDIX – EXAMPLE 'MINUTE-BY-MINUTE' FROM A WHITE ROSE DINNER  
**EVENT                    xxth ANNUAL xx DINNER – 20XX**  
**PROPOSED RUNNING ORDER**

- 18.30                    Bar Open – Reception Area ONLY  
19.00                    Wine Orders now being taken (*in Reception Area*)  
19.35                    MC                    First Call to "Take your Seats"  
19.40                    MC                    Final Call to "Take your Seats"  
*Top Table gathered together by xxxxx "in order" of seating"*
- 19.44                    Top Table Enters
- 19.47                    MC invites the Chairman of zzzz 41 Club to present the White Rose Dinner Trophy to  
qqqqqqq 41 Club Chairman
- 19.49                    MC                    GRACE by ??????????  
19.50                    First Course Served

National Councillor    ROLL CALL of REGION xx CLUBS (*between Courses*)

Someone from National ROLL CALL of VISITING CLUBS (*between Courses*)-  
(*Annual White Knights "OLD GIT" Award*)

- 21.25                    MC                    LOYAL TOAST – Someone from Host Club

xxxxxx SILVER BRASS BAND PLAYING FOR 30 MINUTES

- 22.00                    WELCOME to the GUESTS – Host Chairman  
*(INCLUDING an EXPLANATION of the CHARITIES)*  
*TRAVEL AWARD PRESENTATION to xxxxxx 41 CLUB*
- 22.10                    MC to INVITE a REPRESENTATIVE of rrrrrrr 41 CLUB to MAKE a SHORT  
PRESENTATION CONCERNING NEXT YEAR's WHITE ROSE DINNER
- 22.15                    RESPONSE & TOAST to the YORKSHIRE REGION of 41 CLUBS  
– *NATIONAL PRESIDENT*
- 22.30                    GUEST SPEAKER – ??????????
- 23.00                    National Councillor to remind 41'ers of the 2011 White Rose Dinner Hosts, and  
REQUEST VOLUNTEERS to HOST the 2012 DINNER
- 23.10                    Host Club member to distribute RAFFLE PRIZES
- 23.15                    FINAL TOAST by host Club Member  
*"MAY THE HINGES OF FRIENDSHIP NEVER RUST"*