

ALBERT LUCKING LODGE

Festive Board

GUIDELINES



Compiled and Produced by W Bro. Stuart James - June 2019

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FORWARD...

There are many websites explaining the many ways of conducting a Festive Board which includes various generic explanations and that of customs and traditions of individual Lodges. Therefore, the purpose of these guidelines are to describe the customs and traditions *in our Lodge*.

How long our current procedures have been carried out is hard to say as Festive Boards are not recorded. So we can only assume that since our consecration during 1898 the procedures adopted must have been similar but no doubt have seen some evolvement to the present day.

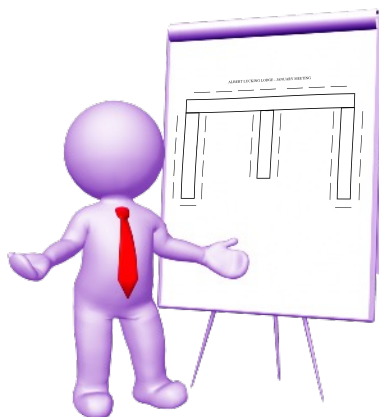
The Festive Board is a dinner usually with wine (although may also be a lunch) for Brethren to enjoy the social side of Freemasonry. It is less formal than the work performed in the temple but, importantly it is still a 'formal affair' and should be carried out with due propriety and deportment to a laid down agenda.

Hopefully therefore, these guidelines should give you some insight into the process of organising and running a successful Festive Board.

Preparing for the FESTIVE BOARD...

The first duty *usually in the hands of the Assistant Secretary* is to list those attending and draw up an appropriate Dining Table Plan. This duty can be onerous as the Ass. Secretary must be available to receive confirmations from members (and acknowledging their receipt) also invariably, having to chase up some himself.

He must then give considerable thought to drawing up a table plan that will fulfil the protocols of correctly placing members, visitors, distinguished brethren and members with their guests/ member preferences etc.,



Finally, to follow up with our Masonic Centre in booking the meal and confirming any alternative courses together with enclosing a copy of the Dining Plan.

Getting all this right will add to a successful and harmonious event but, failure to do so, can lead to member and visitor disappointment and despondency.

There are some priority placements on tables so please see over to see some sample Dining Table Plans and further explanations of table protocols.

TABLE DINING PROCEDURES...

As you can see from the *Standard Layout* adjacent, the first diagram shows the fixed seating requirements.

Followed by examples of 3 Top tables *showing the inclusion* of an Initiate or visiting Assistant Provincial Grand Master (APGM) or both.

The remaining seats on the Top table should be filled with *Lodge or visiting, Senior Officers/ Distinguished Brethren.*

The following should be accommodated to the best of abilities *wherever possible:*

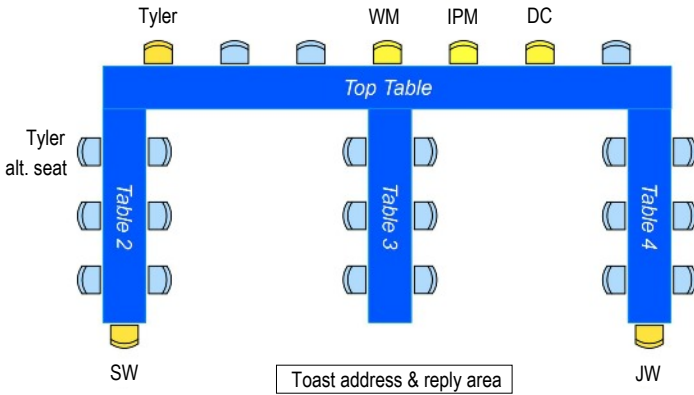
Grand Officers should be placed on a centre sprig. **Guests** should be seated with their hosts and facing *inwards* to the Festive Board.

Guest Reigning Masters should be grouped together on the centre sprig.

Lodge members should be mixed throughout tables unless a member expresses preference to be seated next to an individual(s).

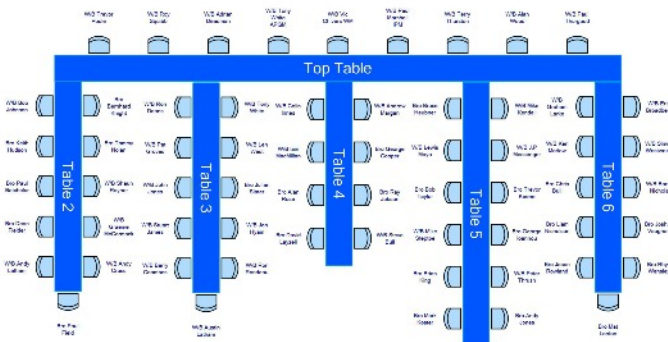
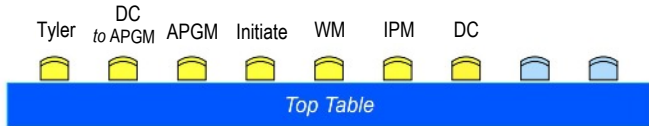
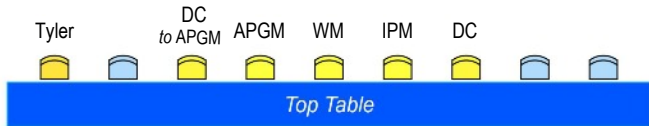
Be aware of any Members not wishing to be seated near an individual(s).

On occasions it may not be possible to balance numbers on tables or avoid making a table sprig longer than another - this should not be a problem as long as the differences are not too pronounced.



This is a basic layout to show the fixed seating requirements - *Note: the Tyler can be semi-fixed as, if necessary he could be moved round 1 to the top of Table 2.*

Here we have 3 variations for the Top table
Note: the Top table can only be odd numbers i.e: 5, 7, 9 etc., to enable the WM's position to remain centre.



This is a very busy layout - *Note: not all sprigs are the same length and we have a diner at the end of Table 3.*

COMMENCING...

Following the closing of the meeting, the Brethren usually retire to the bar for a convivial drink and chat before dining.

The Festive Board commences with all the brethren being called to enter the dining room and stand by their seats with the exception of the WM *and if applicable an Initiate or visiting APGM or both.*

The Director of Ceremonies (DC) or Tyler will then call the brethren to order to receive the Worshipful Master (WM) (including Initiate or visiting APGM, or both (*if applicable*)). The brethren respond

with a slow repetition clapping
applause until the WM sounds his
gavel *followed by the Senior*

Warden (SW) and Junior Warden

(JW) – (for the sake of these guidelines the SW & JW will always follow the WM's gavel).



The WM will then call on the Chaplain for Grace.

The Chaplain will give the Provincial Grace at our installation meeting although at any of the remaining meetings he can select a suitable Grace of his choice.

Provincial Grace:

For food in a world where many suffer hunger,
For faith in a world where many walk in fear,
For friends in a world where many walk alone,
For our concern in a world where many are in need,
We give thee humble thanks,

Great Architect of the Universe. AMEN

Following this,
dinner can
commence...

The STEWARDS role...

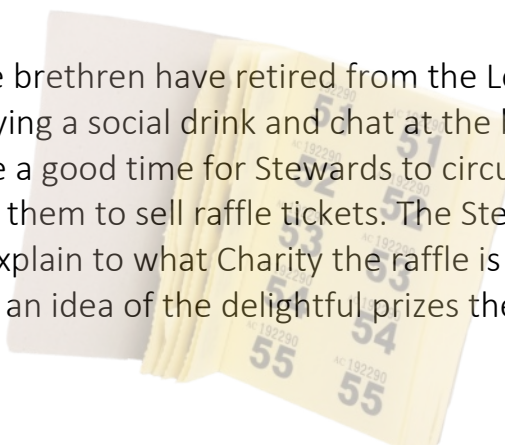
The Stewards carryout an important role before and during a festive board.

Just prior to closing the Lodge meeting our Head Steward will request 'Can the Stewards retire in order to prepare the Festive Board?' The



preparation work consists of checking the dining tables are prepared and fully furnished with cutlery, glasses, napkins etc., together with laying out place cards in accordance with the Table Plan; these cards will be supplied by the Ass. Secretary and will need to be collected during the course of the dinner. If there is to be a raffle, to display the prizes for all to see.

Once the brethren have retired from the Lodge and are enjoying a social drink and chat at the bar, this would be a good time for Stewards to circulate amongst them to sell raffle tickets. The Stewards should explain to what Charity the raffle is for and also give an idea of the delightful prizes they could win.



The STEWARDS role cont/...

The Steward will also be called on to serve wine (if included) within the dining menu; they need to be hasty in eating their first course to make sure all brethren have some wine by the time that course is finished. The wine is served for the numerous toasts that may take place during the dinner and as such is called a 'toasting wine.' So... it should be served sparingly; as a rough guide for a 3-course dinner, wine should be served twice.

Finally, all Stewards should be available at any time during the dinner, for assistance, if required or requested by the Head Steward.

Although, the duties appear to imply the Steward will be having a busy time, in reality there is ample time for the Steward to enjoy his evening with members and especially if he has an invited guest. The *importance of the duties* are for Stewards to overcome any possible nerves or shyness by mixing and getting to know Members better (and Visitors) in a relaxed atmosphere.



TOASTS...

Toasts are part and parcel of a Masonic Festive Board but as you may surmise there is a particular order and time for these to take place. We perform two sets of toasts namely *Casual* and *Official*.

Casual toasts take place between dinner courses and are at the WM request and the Immediate Past Master (IPM) is in charge of calling.

Official toasts are carried out at the end of the meal and are to follow our Provincial Toast List proposed by the WM.



CASUAL TOASTS...

During the first course the IPM will draw up a list of casual toast's our WM would like to propose, for example: his guests, individual (or grouped) brethren who performed tasks in the temple, etc., It must be understood that the toasts are to be Masonic connected and not *for example* toasting his Grandma or his next door neighbour's cat!

TOASTS Casual cont/...

These would be interspersed between courses but to start this process, at the end of the first course the IPM will ask the WM to gavel and will then rise and say 'Brother Wardens, how do you report your respective columns?' – basically he is enquiring as to whether the brethren on their table have been served wine.

On checking the SW will reply 'Fully charged in the West WM' and the JW 'Fully charged in the South WM.'

Following another requested gavel from the WM the IPM will rise and propose that 'The WM would like to take wine with his Wardens.'

Once completed the IPM (following another gavel) will propose that 'The WM would like to take wine with you all' and usually gestures 'That you remain seated.'

From here on the remaining casual toasts will be carried out in the same manner, between the meal courses. It is important that the IPM who is controlling these Casual Toasts makes sure as best as possible, to call the toasts when the majority of diners have finished their course and before the waiters begin clearing away.

TOASTS Official...

Once coffee has been served the official toasts can begin...

From here, the Festive Board should take on a more serious note which should be observed by all those in attendance. The simple stance by the WM of just rising and waiting for silence before he speaks is a clear sign that respect to speakers should be observed.

First, the IPM indicates to the Tyler for him to make sure the room is Tyled.

The WM will then gavel and he will stand and state 'We will now sing Grace.' – All brethren should rise and whether with music accompaniment or not, Grace* is sung – All will then be seated.

From here on the WM will gavel and stand proposing toasts from our Provincial Toast List

* See Appendix page 23

sample overleaf and after each toast a 'Good Fire' will be given. Please note: 'Good Fire's' can only be given following the first official toast 'The Queen and the Craft.' Also known as the Loyal toast.

A 'Fire' should be given at a medium speed and all in attendance should observe that speed.

A 'Fire' should be declared by the WM or Toast Proposer; 'Good Fire Brethren, taking your time with me.'

1) THE QUEEN AND THE CRAFT

2) The Most Worshipful The Grand Master
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF KENT

3) The Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master Peter Geoffrey LOWNDES
The Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master Jonathan SPENCE
The Right Worshipful Assistant Grand Master Sir David Hugh WOOTTON
and the rest of the Grand Officers, Present and Past

4) The Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master
Rodney Lister BASS

5) The Deputy Provincial Grand Master
Very Worshipful Brother Paul George REEVES
The Worshipful Assistant Provincial Grand Masters
Peter HOLLINGSWORTH

Neil BEVERLEY

Nick FRANKLIN

Tony WHITE

The Reverend Martin HOWSE

Charles ELLIOTT

Lee TAYLOR

Graham DICKERSON

and the rest of the Provincial Grand Officers and holders of Metropolitan Ranks
Present and Past

6) THE MASTER OF THE LODGE

7) (THE INITIATE)

8) THE VISITORS

9) (THE PAST MASTERS, FOUNDERS AND OFFICERS OF THE LODGE)

10) THE TYLER'S TOAST

It is important that WM's read through the names in advance of the Festive Board to familiarise themselves with the names. In consideration, that these are official toasts, every effort should be made to overcome any mis-pronunciations. The above Essex Toast List was correct at the time these guidelines were printed.

TOASTS Official cont/...

As you can see from the adjacent *sample list* there are 10 toasts to single or grouped individuals; the bracketed Toasts 7 & 9 are *as required*. All brethren should be seated when a toast is proposed.

There will be toasts where all will need to stand and some, where various brethren will remain seated as being the recipient(s) for the toast ie: Grand Officers, Provincial Grand Officers etc.,

Arriving at *toast 6*, is where the toast's require an address to the individual(s) with of course Wine taking and Fire; *please see over for some more information regarding these toasts.*

PLEASE NOTE: Should the meeting have the presence of an 'official' visit by an APGM then there will be variations to the toasting process. Usually, the APGM's DC will take over calling the Brethren to Order for all toasts; also casual toasts will be limited and 'exclude' any personal toasts of the WM. Also, during the official toasts, the visiting APGM is expected to respond to the Provincial Officers toast (*no. 5 on the list*). Once the toast to the WM has concluded (or in the event of an Initiate toast) it is usual that the APGM will take his leave from the Festive Board; this is accompanied by all rising and giving applause.

TOASTS Official cont/...

Toast's can be, Proposed and Replied, by Top Table Diners standing at their seats; which also applies to both the Wardens.

Other than these, they should be from the base of the central table sprigs facing the WM.

THE WORSHIPFUL MASTER.

This toast is in the hands of the IPM and should be directed to a general overview of the WM. This can cover his work, achievements and the progress he is making during the year. It is important not to drift into other areas of the meeting or individuals to avoid possibly encroaching on a following Toast content.

THE INITIATE.

The toast should be given usually by the Initiates Proposer but, if unavailable his Secunder or closest friend to the Initiate. However, it is extremely important that the toast is clearly directed to the Initiate in welcoming him to Freemasonry; standing up being vague and stumbling over words is unacceptable. In these circumstances, the toast giver should be given help in preparing and delivering the toast or alternatively, another individual be chosen.

The initiate will be called on for a reply but, should be instructed in the brief thank-you, that is only required.

TOASTS Official cont/...

THE VISITORS.

This toast should be an address welcoming all visitors to the meeting and hoping they enjoyed the Ceremony and Festive Board. Visitors are an essential part of Freemasonry and this should be conveyed as part of the address. There is more information regarding this toast in a paper entitled 'Need Help on Delivering a Toast.' This is currently displayed on our Website Notice Board - www.albertlucking2717.org.uk



FOUNDERS, PAST MASTERS & OFFICERS *of the Lodge.*

The toast should be proposed by a *Lay Brother* who may need some extra guidance from the DC and/or Senior Officer on the content, which should be a brief show of appreciation towards Past Masters and Officers and *in particular* the current officers.

The response should be made by an officer or PM of the lodge.

On occasions, there may be a situation whereby a *Lay Brother* may not be available for proposing this toast and so it may then be proposed by an officer or PM *of the lodge* with no reply. It may also be prudent to limit the amount of meetings the toast is given.

CLOSING...

The Festive Board is official closed by the Tyler delivering the Tyler's Toast; he is called by the WM who gives a 'quick' double knock (*on this occasion not followed by the JW & SW.*)

The Tyler's Toast can vary from Tyler to Tyler but will maintain the traditions of remembering all Poor and Distressed Freemasons wherever they may be dispersed throughout the world.

The Tyler will then call for the *Final* Wine taking and Fire and the Festive Board is then closed.

Again, decorum is required in delivering this address and so on occasions where a Tyler may not be present either due to illness or perhaps he doesn't dine then a Senior Officer can substitute for the role.



APPENDIX...

MORE TOAST PROTOCOLS...

Endeavours should be made for a Toast address to refer (respectfully) to the subject in question. The priority of a Toast *is not* a joke and *swearing* is totally un-acceptable.

If you have been given the honour of proposing or replying to a toast and need help in 'how best to prepare,' do not hesitate in speaking with the Mentor, DC, Secretary or any other senior officer for guidance.

Nine o'clock Toast.

This toast is a Salute to all Poor and Distressed Freemason's throughout the world and is given at Nine o'clock. The idea being that the toast is given by *all* Freemason's Lodges, *throughout the world*, at this very time.

However, the toast is not always proposed as the timing can fall within an ongoing formal part of the evening or by virtue of the Festive Board finishing before Nine o'clock. This should not be considered as discourteous as the Tyler's Toast, encompasses Poor and Distressed Freemasons.

Members of the Royal Arch.

A toast to the RA is encouraged and should be included within the Casual Toasts. *Please note: No other Masonic Units should be Toasted.*

APPENDIX...

FIRES...

Good Fire

This is the term we use in our Lodge however, it can also be called, as you will see by other names.

Craft Fire.

There are other forms of 'Fire' outside of Craft Lodges. Craft Fire therefore, is just informing all present, that this is a Craft Lodge and as such, Craft Fire.

Quick Fire.

Here the clue is in the title! - Quick Fire is performed quickly. However, this should not be at an extremely fast speed rendering it indistinct and resulting in the fire turning into a cacophony of an 'out of time' hubbub.

Slow Fire

Alternate to a Quick Fire which needs no explanation.

Silent Fire

This fire is a salute to absent brethren and is given by tapping the fingers on the cuff of your jacket instead of clapping. Some Lodges may apply this approach with the 9 o'clock Toast.

Province Fire

Some Lodges may even call the Fire by their Province name, for example: Essex Fire, Surrey Fire etc.,

Finally, it should be noted that, there are Provinces that refrain from providing a Fire unless the recipient(s) are present and providing a reply!

So... as you can see there are many variations for giving a Fire therefore, when visiting you must adapt to the local customs and conventions that are applied.

APPENDIX...

THE MASTER'S SONG...

At the installation of a New Master the Festive Board can include a 'hearty song' to him called the Master's Song. Our song was written by Richard Rome Bealey,

In 1866 and we use the first three verses interceded with a chorus.

The lyrics of the song are shown here and overleaf is the procedure for how it is performed:

This world is so hard and so stony, that if a man is to get through,
he need have the courage of Nelson and plenty of Job's patience too.
But a man who is kind to another and cheerfully helps him along.
God Bless such a man and his brother and here's to his health in a song.

Chorus: And here's to his health, here's to his health;
And here's to his health in a song. (repeat)

This life is as cheerless as Winter, to those who are cold in the heart.
But the man who is warm in his nature, it's Winter forever depart.
The ground that he treads on will blossom 'till beauties around him shall throng,
God Bless such a man and his brother and here's to his health in a song.

Chorus: And here's to his health, here's to his health;
And here's to his health in a song. (repeat)

As clouds that in sunshine are open and silvered by light passing through,
So men who are generous in spirit are blessed by the good deeds they do.
There's nothing like helping another, forgetting ones own self along,
who does this is truly a brother and here's to his health in a song.

Chorus: And here's to his health, here's to his health;
And here's to his health in a song. (Repeat)

APPENDIX...

THE MASTER'S SONG...

The procedure for singing the Master's song:

Once the IPM has presented his toast to the WM and carried out a Fire the singer should take his position at the toast address area and commence the song.

Towards the end of the first verse the singer would have slowly approached the SW who should rise and raise his glass. The singer will sing one chorus toasting glasses with the SW; the second chorus should be sung by all, seated but raising their glasses. The SW will then remain standing.

The next verse and chorus is repeated in the same way to the JW. The JW will remain standing.

As the third verse is sung the singer will slowly approach the WM, at the same time in unison the SW & JW will also approach the WM from either side and then assist him to stand on his chair - the singer will then again sing the first chorus and toast the WM following which for the second chorus all will stand with glasses raised singing a final hearty chorus.

The song, if delivered correctly (with or without music) can be strongly felt by the new Master as a very moving show of respect and good cheer from the members and visitors in attendance.

APPENDIX...

INITIATE'S SONG (if applicable)... Please note: Just one example

Come let us prepare, We Brothers that are
Assembled on merry occasion:
Let's drink, laugh, and sing; Be he Beggar or King,
Here's a health to an Accepted Mason.

CHORUS:

Let's drink, laugh, and sing; Be he Beggar or King,
Here's a health to an Accepted Mason.

The world is in pain, Our secrets to gain,
And still let them wonder and gaze on;
ALSO CHORUS : They ne'er can divine The Word or the Sign
Of a Free and an Accepted Mason.

'Tis this, and 'tis that, They cannot tell what,
Why so many Great Men of the Nation
ALSO CHORUS : Should Aprons put on, To make themselves one
With a Free and an Accepted Mason.

Great Kings, Dukes, and Lords, Have laid by their swords,
Our myst'ry to put a good grace on;
ALSO CHORUS : And ne'er been ashamed, To hear themselves named
With a Free and an Accepted Mason.

Antiquity's pride, We have on our side,
And it maketh men just in their station;
ALSO CHORUS : There's nought but what's good, To be understood
By a Free and an Accepted Mason.

We're true and sincere, And just to the fair,
Who will trust us on any occasion;
ALSO CHORUS : No mortal can more, The Ladies adore
Than a Free and an Accepted Mason.

ALL STANDING AND JOINING HANDS, RIGHT OVER LEFT.

Then join Hand in Hand, To each other firm stand;
Let's be merry, and put a bright face on;
ALSO CHORUS : What mortal can boast, So noble a toast
As a Free and an Accepted Mason.

APPENDIX...

RAFFLE'S...

Care should be taken when drawing Raffles that it doesn't clash or interrupt 'Formal Parts' of the Festive Board. It is also important that the total raised by the raffle is declared *together with* the Charity collection from the Lodge meeting.

Opportunities for drawing a raffle could take place when: *The coffee is being poured or Prior the Toast to the WM or Prior to the Tyler's Toast.*

THEMED EVENINGS...

Many Lodges denote one of their Festive Boards to a themed evening; this could take the form of 'An Olde English Night,' 'Burns Night,' or in our case a 'Fish Night.'

These evenings can include group sing-along's, members presenting comedy sketches and so forth. The evening's events however, must be concluded before the commencement of Official Toasts.

WHITE & BLUE TABLES...

White Tables are where members' wives, partners or friends are invited to attend the Festive Board following a meeting. It is suggested that protocols should include the welcoming of the WM and following the meal the Loyal toast (The Queen and the Craft) is proposed and followed by a welcoming address by the WM to the guests with no response. A Blue table is identical other than only males being invited with the aim of encouraging new members.

APPENDIX...

GRACE (That is Sung)... *From the Laudi Spiritualis, AD 1545*

For these and all Thy mercies given,
We bless and praise Thy name, O Lord:
May we receive them with thanksgiving
Ever trusting in Thy word.
To Thee alone be honour, glory,
Now and henceforth, for evermore. Amen.

GENERAL DEMEANOUR...

As already indicated, a Festive Board is for members and visitors to enjoy the social side of Freemasonry in a relaxed atmosphere. It is to be expected that there may be some heightened joviality but, this must be kept in control and should not deteriorate into a cacophony of shouting or rowdiness; swearing is strictly forbidden.

It is respectful that when the Master and Wardens's gavels are sounded silence should be observed, immediately. It goes without saying that silence also must be observed when someone is speaking or during a toast address.

The removal of Jackets is frowned upon unless under extreme circumstances whereby perhaps the room temperature is too hot; even in this event the WM should give his consent.

Should either the Master or Warden's wish to retire from the Festive Board for a short period, their chairs must be occupied in their absence; the IPM should occupy the Master's chair and a lodge member for either of the Warden's.

CONCLUSION...

So this concludes a brief overview of the procedures our *Lodge* follows in running a Festive Board.

It explains the tried and tested, fundamental protocols used in able to achieve a professional and enjoyable Festive Board.

Needless to say, when visiting other Lodges you will find variations in the way they carryout their procedures, in particular with Lodges in other Provinces or other Grand Lodges ie: Scotland, Ireland etc.,

Obviously, there may be occasions for whatever reasons whereby *changes* will have to be made. In these circumstances, as long as a common sense approach is applied and alterations are enacted as close to the guidelines, as reasonably possible, the actions can only be respected.

Whatever the outcome, you should now feel confident in understanding and appreciating a good deal of the necessary procedures and important duties, for preparing, running, attending and enjoying a Festive Board.

...ooo00000ooo...