

Understanding Brasenose College Culture



Students of systems will wish to know that Brasenose College is not a hotel and does not function as a hotel; the College is, essentially, a large private house with its own extensive systems and hierarchies; Symposium members and guests familiar with the popular tv series *Downton Abbey* will understand that our role is that of guests constituting a large country-house-party; in relation to the College staff serving us and waiting on us, and in relation to our host, fully styled as *the Principal and Scholars of the King's Hall and College of Brasenose in Oxford*, who kindly and generously lend us their magnificent and historic High Table for our sole use, our role is to conform to the highest standards of traditional guest behavior; in such actions as complaining or negotiating an issue in regard to service provision—and above all in our objective of simply enjoying ourselves as guests—a key principle is the “light paintbrush” approach; Symposium members and guests coming from a faster-paced, 21st century service culture may choose to catch up on *Downton Abbey* so as to become entrained to a more 19th century way of being a guest in a house party in a historic, quirky English country house.

Tipping at Brasenose College

A custom is still very much in existence today is that a guest departing an English country house is expected to leave a tip for the servants to acknowledge the additional work caused them by the guest's presence and to thank them for their "many kindnesses" during the guest's stay. The Symposium adheres to this tradition by collecting an amount from each member, pooling this amount and handing the money to the Brasenose College Conference Manager for distribution among staff members. The kindness and courtesy of the staff to our group is all due to custom and training—and we reinforce these by showing our appreciation with a tip. The recommended amount for Symposium members staying the full five days is £20 per person, to be divided between the housekeeping and buttery staff.

Brasenose College website
www.bnc.ox.ac.uk

