

King's College London - Duel Day – Questions and Answers

Q: What is Duel Day?

A: A commemoration of the Duel fought between the Duke of Wellington and the Earl of Winchilsea over the founding of King's College London and Wellington's support of democratic rights for Irish Catholics.

Q: When is Duel Day?

A: The Duel itself was fought on 21 March 1829 and that is the anniversary to this day. But this may clash with religious or national festivals, so any celebration around 21 March and up until 28th March is suitable. Most people aim for the Thursday on or after 21 March; but more important than the date is the annual celebration of the event.

Q: Who celebrates Duel Day?

A: It is King's alumni who lead the way in celebrating Duel Day - but any friend of the College may celebrate the Duel and guests are most welcome. Duel Day is a way to show the world how much we value our connection with the College and the dramatic events which led to its foundation.

Events to mark Duel Day do not have to be organised exclusively by branches, although Duel Day itself is a very good way of marking a regular date in a KCLA calendar. Individuals can, and are encouraged to, hold their own celebrations inviting friends from their time at College on top of any events which a branch may plan.

Q: How should I celebrate Duel Day?

A: This is limited only by your imagination. Alumni and friends are challenged to find the most interesting and apt ways to mark the event.. Formal dinners are popular and notes and a script for the Duel Dinner are enclosed in this package. Challenges to Alumni branches of other universities are also encouraged (KCLA Singapore's bowling match against LSE in 2007 set a notable precedent). But if numbers are not large, a meal at home with friends, a meet for drinks or cocktails, even breakfast may be suitable. If you are by yourself and cannot meet with other friends and alumni then a lit candle and a glass raised to The College and The Duel is fitting. If you are with others then a re-enactment of the Duel is worth considering.

Q: How do I re-enact The Duel?

A: Re-enactments of the Duel at the College go back many years at least to 1920s. A script is attached along with a note on how to re-enact the Duel after dinner. But Re-enactments need not be only after dinner events and a public re-enactment is an excellent way to spread the name of the College and the Duel. Ask KCLA London or the Alumni Office if you want further ideas.

Q: How should I record my Duel Day event?

A: Photos and video footage of Duel Day events are encouraged. The Alumni office will collect media records of Duel Day and they can be displayed on the alumni website. In this way, they can inspire others to hold Duel Day events and give ideas to others who want to celebrate DD next year. A more traditional way is to circulate a copy of the menu card for signature by all those present at the event.

Q: How should I decorate my Duel Day event? Is there a dress code?

A: There is no dress code – but formal evening dress (Black tie/tuxedo or even white tie) is suitable for a formal dinner. Some branches have even held balls in Napoleonic era dress. However, you can also show your link to the College by dressing in the College's colours of scarlet and blue, in whatever combination, or decorating the event in these colours. If there is enough interest, college bow ties can be made up. Reggie badges can also be provided by the Alumni office. The prints of cartoons of the time can be downloaded from the College website and make excellent colour copies.

Q: How do I obtain more materials for a duel day event?

A: The KCLA and the Alumni Office have produced invitation cards, menu cards and place cards for Duel Day. Samples are enclosed and these materials are suitable for a Duel day event of any type and on any date. These are completely free of charge and more can be ordered by contacting the alumni office.

Good luck, and enjoy Duel Day!

Steven Rhodes

Chairman King's college London Association 2005 - 2008