

Buckingham Palace official residence of Britain's reigning sovereign since 1857 is probably one of the world's most famous addresses. The exterior is familiar to all but the interior is wrapped in mystery. Its quadrangle and grand entrance is the centre piece of the nations welcome, be it to kings, queens presidents or diplomats. And it also provides the same welcome when for a select number of days a year, the doors of the grand entrance to open to recipients and their guests to receive their honor at the investiture ceremony.

Nowadays tens of thousands of people see the state rooms and gardens either as guests to one of the summer garden parties or as visitors to the summer opening, every August and September. But very few get this special invitation.

Path of Honour

25th October 2012

A short walk from Buckingham Palace across Green Park is St. James' Palace for the Central Order of Knighthood, it is part of the Lord Chancellor's Office and is for Orders of Chivalry, containing all records of appointments, promotions and deaths within the order. They also take the lead in organizing investitures and the sending out of invitations together with warrants signed by the Queen.

" How many have we got for tomorrow Rachel ? We were going to have 95 but I'm afraid we have lost one, Mr.Mason has gone into hospital so we are down to 94. And how many guests do you think ? 279 guests. 279 guests. One gentleman is slightly deaf but he wears a hearing aid. A hearing aid, so there's no need for a sign language interpreter. No not this time. Well I think that's it. I think we have covered all the points now. Yes. Thank you very much."

Following the compilation of the New year and the Queen's birthday honours lists, details of the awards are first checked against records at the Central Chancery before being sent for publication in the London Gazette.

When the insignias arrive from the manufacturers, each one is carefully scrutinized for blemishes and then carefully stored in the Central Chancery's vaults to await its recipient.

At 8 o'clock in the morning London is already awake to another working day. For the select one hundred men and women who are anxiously making their way to the nation's capital, it's the culmination of many weeks of preparation, it's the DAY of THEIR INVESTITURE at Buckingham Palace.