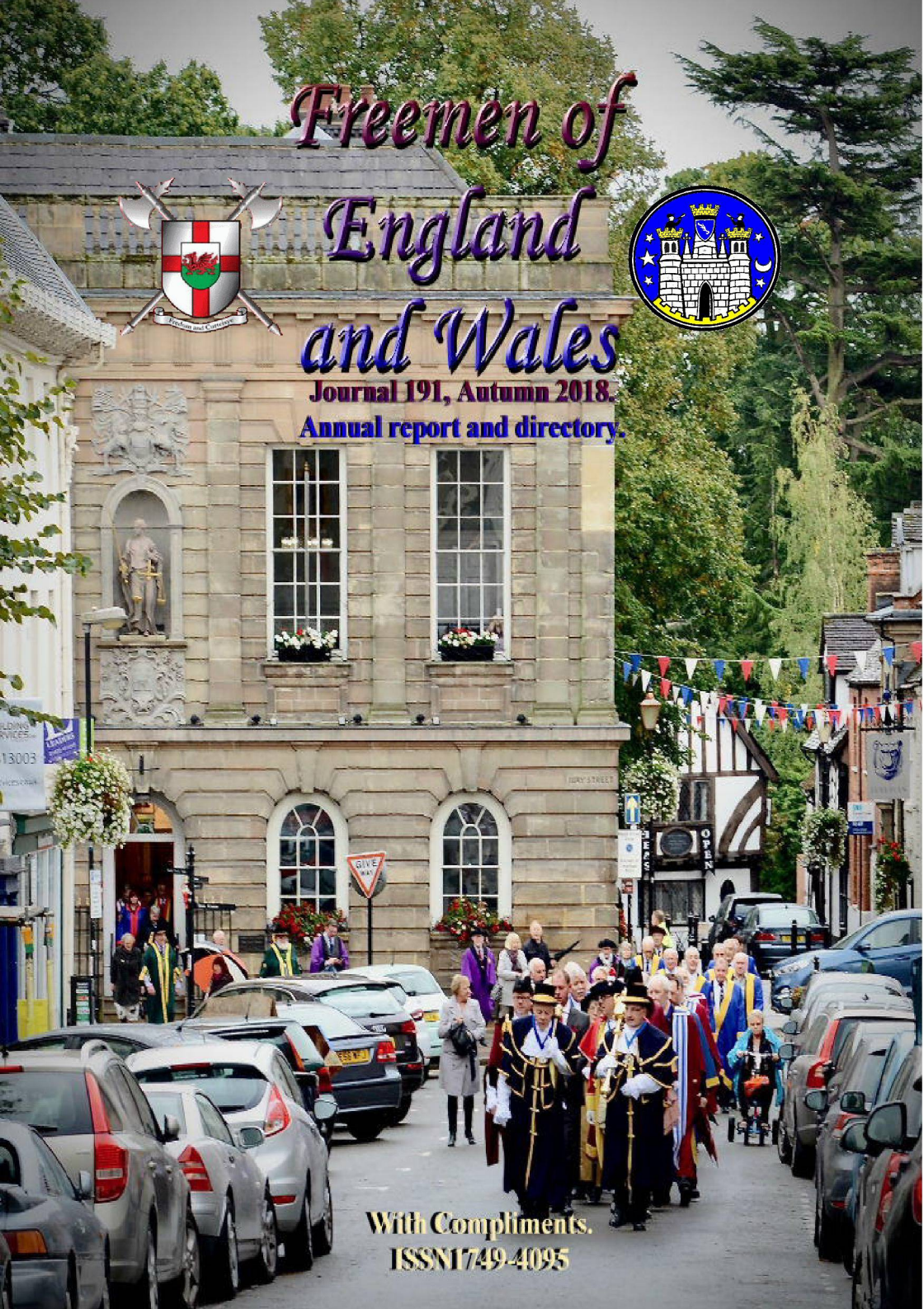


# Freemen of England and Wales

Journal 191, Autumn 2018.

Annual report and directory.



With Compliments.  
ISSN1749-4095

## *Presidents Letter.*

It was a great pleasure to see so many of you at our AGM in Warwick last month. It was also a pleasure to have out Patron with us in this occasion. Our thanks go to Warwick Court Leet and Warwick Town Council for their organisation in making it such a success. The venues of the Lord Leycester Hospital and Warwick Castle were impressive but we should always remember that these events only happen due to the dedicated work of the organisers. We did miss Howard Crapper who unfortunately had to return to hospital which prevented him from joining us.

The amended Constitution was approved and hopefully we shall not have to visit this again for some time. Some of you may not be receiving correspondence from FEW. We would remind you that owing to the new data protection regulations it is necessary to return the completed consent form before you can receive information. If any one does have a copy of this form please contact the Secretary.

Wardens are an important part of our Association keeping in touch with Guilds, encouraging additional Guilds to join us and on occasions help them to reconstitute themselves. We have not had a formal method of adopting Wardens. They are chosen by the Vice President and adopted by either the Court or AGM. It was suggested at the AGM that there should be a more formal method of electing Wardens and Our Vice President, Alan Shelley, and our Wardens have put a lot of work into drafting this scheme for approval at the Court Meeting. At the same time your Executive have been examining whether some other parts of the administration should altered or be made more formal. We are considering replacing the stand alone Executive Meetings with video links. This will not be applied to Court or General Meetings.

I would encourage all Guilds to become involved in our Archives project. The Freedom is an important part of our past, but is poorly understood by most of our population. There is much information but it is not always easy to find. It is part of the FEW objectives to improve this knowledge.

At the Warwick AGM I mentioned the appointment of Assistants to FEW Executive Officers. These can me appointed by your Executive and will give experience of the running of FEW to potential FEW Executive Members in the future. We are looking for volunteers.

I wish you all have a good winter and look forward to meeting many of you in Durham for our next Court Meeting.

J.Evans,  
President.

## *Open Forum.*

1) Alan Fallows, with the help of the slide show produced by Charlotte Yeates, explained to those at the open forum the changes to the constitution most of which were agreed at the court meeting in Gloucester. Alan went on further to say every effort had been taken by the secretary to ensure every member and guild representative was informed of the changes by post and email and documents were placed on the website for individuals to view. Alan explained the reason for the change in constitution as follows “it was felt necessary, due to the proposed actions of a member that we qualify our membership criteria further and expanded on our levels of membership to cover any future applications that seem feasible or might occur. The executive formulated a new criterion and issued a full set of revised membership forms to satisfy those future applications, unfortunately it was then realised that the constitution did not match the operational procedures of the association under the new forms, so here we are amending the constitution so both sides are synchronised, plus we have used the opportunity to amend other areas and tidy up some wording in the constitution.

Questions raised through the presentation are as follows: -

John Tolley raised the point on behalf of Denise Laver, that there was clarification of Court Leets that was said at the meeting in Gloucester, that has not quite turned up in the wording and asked Alan to comment, - Court Leets although unmentioned are included under section 4,1b bodies excepted prior to the 2011 changes that modified the membership criteria, but it was agreed that nobody would be disenfranchised by those changes so anybody in future that had been categorised as associate member guilds that had previously been excepted as a full member of FEW would stay as a full member of FEW. Further clarification in section 5.iii,

John Edwards raise a point (regarding point 6 2012 constitution) “you’ve removed the business of people being permitted to wear regalia is that because its redundant in respect of a later clause” – this is now covered in section 8 of the 2018 constitution.

2) John Edwards raised a point that he was approached by a member of Newcastle under Lyme burgess and informed that they have two groups, those that live in the town Group A, and those that live out of town Group B. Those in Group A are allowed to attend meetings and those in Group B are not, the member was concerned that he had been sworn in and yet was not permitted to attend their meetings. The member had queried was it legal? - The President Capt. James Evans stated that FEW will not interfere with the running of an individual guild, we are an association of guilds not some sort of overarching body.

John Edwards continued that the second part of his question was that they did not want anything to do with women joining. Is that alright? Is it legal? John Edwards said he appreciated FEW are not in a position to influence that but he wondered if people would consider if it is a legitimate standing to take, and as he did not have an answer could he have some guidance. Alan Fallows replied that it wasn’t strictly the case, as they (Newcastle under Lyme) have had no women apply yet and that they are fully prepared if the case should ever arise.

The President reiterated the stance of FEW, that we will not dictate to any association or comment on the running of any Guild.

John Edwards appreciated the advice given but as a warden stated it's a bit embarrassing to state its nothing to do with me, when asked the question.

Cpt. Stephen Healy reminded those present that the executive had compiled a statement in 2017 on behalf of FEW to specifically reply to such enquires as this for wardens to use. Unfortunately, the Hon Secretary did not have the wording to hand but would find it out and ensure it was sent round all wardens.

The statement to be used is as follows: -

“It is not the practice nor position of FEW to intervene in anyway, in the internal affairs of our individual member Guilds. FEW is a representative association and not a regulatory association”.

3) Capt. Steven Healy raised the question that there are a lot of points in the constitution, for example the appointment of wardens, the election of officers and that sort of thing that require a procedure and wondered if we were amending, recording, defining those procedures because somebody might say how did you get appointed as a warden and there should be a defined approach to that. The President responded that the executive had introduced standing orders amongst themselves which have no official standing but would explain how we do things and it would be covered under that. Also, Wardens would be appointed by the Vice President and confirmed by the court. Steven Healy replied it was all well having these standing orders but there may be people present that may want to know how exactly people are selected.

There being no further questions, the new draft constitution would be put to the AGM for approval.

***Minutes of the 52nd AGM***  
**of the Association of Freeman of England and Wales held on Saturday 22nd**  
**September 2018 in The Ballroom, The Court House, Jury Street, Warwick.**

Although produced as a meaningful record of the proceedings,  
these minutes in no way constitute a verbatim transcript of the meeting.

**Attendees:** Peter Ainsworth - Chester, Geoffrey Anderson – Alnwick, David Appleby – Alnwick, Derek Austin – Coventry, The Earl Bathurst-Patron of FEW, John Booth – Durham, Stewart Bristow – Lincoln, Eric Bulmer – Durham, Chris Butterfield – Oxford, Alex Christison - Berwick upon Tweed, Nic Christison - Berwick upon Tweed, Andrew Croose – Gloucester, John Edwards – Stafford, Robert Elliott – Durham, Capt. James Evans - Berwick upon Tweed, Patricia Evans - Berwick upon Tweed, David Fairnell - Berwick upon Tweed, Sheila Fairnell - Berwick upon Tweed, Alan Fallows-Shrewsbury Robin Folland - Pembroke, Roy Folland - Pembroke, Terry Griffin – Stafford, Mervyn Hall - Alnwick, David Hanlon - Stafford, Victor Alan Harrison - Lincoln, Julie Hayward - Gloucester, Capt. Steven Healy - Newcastle upon Tyne, Alan Heath - Gloucester, Jacky Heath - Gloucester, Lee Hensley - Gloucester, Fiona Hogg - Newcastle upon Tyne, Janet Honnoraty - Warwick & Southwark, Mike Honnoraty - Warwick & Southwark, John Keggins - Northampton, Phillip Kinnersley – Stafford, Ron Leek - Alcester & London, Spencer Loveridge - Sudbury, Carl Mattison – Alnwick, James Mattison - Alnwick, Thomas Mattison - Alnwick, Angela McClellan - Sudbury, Dors McElwee - Durham, Joe McElwee - Durham, Steven Morson - Coventry, Denis Nixon - Alnwick, Howard Pate - Chester, Valerie. J. Pettifer - York, Dinah Plumley - York, James Ross - Hale, Alan Shelley

- Sudbury, Caroline Shelley - Sudbury, Robert Shepherd - Alnwick, Carole Sibley - Northampton, Terry Sibley - Northampton, Ray Spurway - Stafford, Amanda Stevenson - Berwick upon Tweed, Mo Sutherland - Warwick, John Tolley - Altrincham, Jayne Topham - Warwick, Kathleen Vasey - Durham, Brian Weatherburn - Berwick upon Tweed, Sarah Weatherburn - Berwick upon Tweed, Lynda Weatherley - Berwick upon Tweed, Bridget White - Grimsby, Mathew White - Grimsby, Stephen White - Grimsby, Mac William - Durham, Charlotte Yeates - Berwick upon Tweed

Together with the Patron of FEW, Lord Bathurst and Warwick Court Leet Bailiff, Mo Sutherland, the President, Capt. James Evans, processed into The Ballroom preceded by the FEW Mace, having been announced by the Acting Macebearer, Hon Secretary Lee Hensley.

The President, before calling the meeting to order, welcomed the Patron of FEW, who then addressed the members and guests present. Following the address by the Patron, the Warwick Court Leet Bailiff addressed the members and guests, the President then called the meeting to order and declared the AGM in session.

Apologies for non-attendance were recorded from Tom Gibson, Honorary Editor; Gordon Varndell, Hon. Membership Secretary; Denise Laver, Warden for the North; Howard Crapper, Warden for the West; Nick Johnson, Warden for the South East; James Shepherd (Alnwick), William Strawn (Alnwick), Michael Herriot (Berwick), J Pinches (Chester), Eileen Reynolds (Coventry), Terence Aubrey (Gloucester), Charles Davies (Haverfordwest) Stella Machin (Stafford), Eileen Forth (York).

Following a proposal which was seconded, the Minutes of the 51st AGM held on September 16th, 2017 in the Cleddau Bridge Hotel, Pembroke Dock were approved as a correct record of the proceedings and were signed by the President. There were no matters arising.

The constitution, having been discussed during the open forum, with the following addendum added *"This constitution is subject to the regulation of the Charities Act 2006 and any subsequent legislation, plus any applicable statutes under the laws of England"*. was voted on by the guilds present. The President explained the voting procedure for the vote then the Hon Secretary read out the guild name, number of votes and guild rep, each guild rep replied with their guilds vote.

29 out of 37 Guilds voted in Favour of the changes (78% of guilds)

Which equated to 5815 votes for and 0 votes against out of a possible 6816 votes.

The motion was therefore carried and the new constitution was approved.

Alan Fallows explained why FEW had taken the approach they had with regards to GDPR, this included an introduction to GDPR, a policy statement, a website statement a letter to all member guilds, a letter to all individual members and a consent form, which satisfies all the requirements. He then went on to say if you have stopped receiving your copy of the journal it may well be due to you not signing and sending back your consent form.

The President reiterated that if you have not sent a completed consent form back you would not receive any information from FEW, he then asked the Deputy President

Stephen White to talk about the improvements made on communication. The Deputy President proceeded to explain that the website had moved to a new platform and Charlotte Yeates had been added to the admin team, the new webpage has the Facebook page integrated into it so anybody looking at the website has up to date information. John Edwards pointed out the colours of the website make it difficult for people with poor eyesight to read, the Deputy President responded that this is currently being looked in to.

Alan Fallows gave a brief update of the ongoing process and initial investigation on creating a central database for future generations of Freeman to glean information from, he stated they were following the guidelines of the national archives on how to set it up but response from guilds was slow, only 11 guilds had replied so far. Capt. Stephen Healy, who had been at the initial meeting with the national archives, made it clear that FEW were not after documents, it was just a database that indexed where the information could be found within the guilds.

The President informed the court that the next AGM 2019 was to take place in Gloucester, and the year after that, 2020, the AGM would be held in Grimsby, The Hon Secretary confirmed that the AGM in Gloucester would be held the weekend of 20th – 22nd September 2019. The President stated that he was still awaiting a date for the 2019 Court Meeting in Durham, he then asked if any guilds were willing to volunteer to host the 2020 court and the 2021 Court. Derek Austin explained to the court that Coventry were going to be the city of culture in 2021 and that it coincided with the Guilds 75th Anniversary and had asked the Coventry Committee to consider hosting the 2021 FEW AGM, as it was the 50th Anniversary of the Coventry guild when they last hosted a FEW AGM.

The President at this time informed the court that a change had been made to the host pack as follows: -

After division of Expenditure between host and Few

Several venues require booking ahead. There will be deposits to pay on these bookings. In the event of the host Guild being short of funds to pay these deposits a loan will be available from FEW.

This was due to a Guild asking for help to pay deposits to host an AGM, the executive agreed the request and have now added the Above statement to the host pack.

Capt. James Evans President's Report was tabled and noted. A copy is appended to these minutes.

Stephen White's Deputy President's Report was tabled and noted. A copy is appended to these minutes.

Alan Shelley's Vice President's Report was tabled and noted. A copy is appended to these minutes.

Stephen White presented the FEW Accounts. Following a satisfactory outline of the Accounts by the Deputy President, it was proposed and seconded that they be taken to be a true and accurate record and agreed unanimously. A copy is appended to these minutes.

Gordon Varndell's Membership Secretary's Report was tabled and noted that only two

Guilds were in arrears these being Chippenham and Montgomery. A copy is appended to these minutes.

Alan Fallows presented his Hon Archivist's Report was tabled and noted. A copy is appended to these minutes.

Tom Gibson's Editor's Report was tabled and noted. A copy is appended to these minutes.

Charlotte Yeates had no report to offer as Officer Without Portfolio Report.

The Vice President was asked by the President to introduce the Wardens and ask them to give their Reports.

North East: Capt. Stephen Healy. A copy is appended to these minutes.

North West: Denise Laver report was tabled and noted. A copy is appended to these minutes.

North Midlands: John Edwards. A copy is appended to these minutes.

West: Howard Crapper, report was tabled and noted. A copy is appended to these minutes.

East: Valerie Pettifer. A copy is appended to these minutes.

South East: Nick R.S. Johnson, report was tabled and noted. A copy is appended to these minutes.

South Midlands: Derek Austin. A copy is appended to these minutes. After his report Derek also explain to the court how Coventry were trying to get children interested in the freedom with various colouring books which explains some of the history.

Principality of Wales: Roy Folland. A copy is appended to these minutes.

North: Roger Sutton, report was tabled and noted. A copy is appended to these minutes.

The President then asked the Hon. Secretary to read out the Nominations for Executive office that he had received. The Secretary informed the Meeting that only one nomination has been received for each of the following Executive positions, and as no nominations had been received from the floor, that therefore an election would be unnecessary for these. For the year 2018 - 2019, they are: - Deputy President – Steve White; Vice President – Alan Shelley; Hon Treasurer – Stephen White; Hon Membership Secretary – Gordon Varndell; Hon Editor – Tom Gibson; Hon Archivist – Alan Fallows; Officer without Portfolio – Charlotte Yeates; Honorary Secretary – Lee Hensley.

The 2018- 2019 Wardens were confirmed as: - North East – Capt. Stephen Healy; North West – Denise Laver; North – Roger Sutton; North Midlands – John Edwards; South Midlands – Derek Austin; South East – Nick Johnson; West – Howard Crapper; Wales – Roy Folland; East – Vacant; South West – Vacant.

Any Other Business: -

- 1) Howard Pate informed the meeting that in 1992, to commemorate the 900th anniversary of Chester Cathedral, the Freeman had donated kneelers. Each one had a different livery's coat of arms on it, and these were used on a daily basis, due to changes in the seating at the Cathedral the kneelers are no longer required. One of the kneelers had the FEW crest on it, Howard asked if FEW would like it for the archives or would FEW prefer it to go to St Peters Church at the cross in

Chester as it's the Freeman's church. All members at the AGM agreed that it should be sent to the church.

There being no further business, the President declared the 52nd Annual General Meeting closed.

### *President's Report.*

It is with great sadness that we note the deaths during this year of Shirley Crapper and Norman Offield, both of whom have been good friends of FEW. Our sympathy goes to their families.

Your Executive during the year has tidied up the application forms for membership which have required some alterations to the Constitution. These are available on the website. We also have had to address data protection in the wake of the latest law on this subject.

We have taken forward the Archives project with a visit to the National Archives in KEW and the issue of letters to the Guilds to ascertain whether there is any enthusiasm for the project. Berwick Guild has obtained a grant to re-catalogue their archives in line with the recommendations of the National Archives, which shall be fed to the FEW Archivist.

There was concern at last year's AGM concerning communications. We have revised both the website and Facebook to improve matters. During the next year we will look at any additional improvements to communications.

Last year we had a problem filling all the posts on the Executive. Fortunately Lee and Charlotte came forward to complete the Executive. Your Executive can appoint assistants for the various posts which gives the opportunity for members to gain experience of the operation of FEW and hopefully go on to serve on the Executive. We would encourage members to put their names forward to fill these posts, none of which are filled at the present time.

There is always a limited time in our meetings to discuss the many important points arising. For the Executive Meetings at the beginning of the year we experimented with requesting Officers' reports before the meeting and tabling these at the end of the meeting. Officers then restricted their remarks to matters requiring attention. We also used emails to discuss matter in some detail before the meeting. This proved very successful and avoided the problem of important items being rushed as time became a premium. We also concluded the meetings earlier.

We tried a similar process with the March Court Meeting with some success. The number of reports at a Court Meeting is considerably greater than for the Executive. The Wardens are an invaluable asset to FEW being our main contact with Guilds. It is important we are aware of the work they put into these contacts and how much success they achieve. Thus these reports are vital. Long reports do take up valuable time at a Court or AGM. Reports are printed in full in the newsletter. The Wardens meeting is to consider how matters may be improved. It was unfortunate that a second Warden's meeting was overlooked and not scheduled into this year's AGM Weekend. This should and will be arranged in future. My own Guild always invites their Warden to our own events. I would encourage other Guilds to do the same. This will assist the Wardens and ensure a close contact between Guild and Warden.



I have visited a number of Guilds during the year and enjoyed good fellowship. We have also received visits from a number of Freemen. It is always a pleasure to receive freemen from another area. No two Guilds are alike and it is always good to hear about different Guilds.

### *Deputy President's Report.*

I have not been asked to deputise for the President since the AGM last year and so have nothing to report in this respect.

#### **Other matters:**

In relation to the Website, this has now been transferred to the new platform, with integrated live Facebook feed, and is working satisfactorily with the provisos that there may be some re-formatting required here and there and the hyperlinks need to be checked to ensure that they go to where they are supposed to.

The whole site needs to be thoroughly checked over to ensure that all of our documents are there, any missing ones up-loaded and any other anomalies noted and advised to the Administrators.

There is also the question of the “colour scheme” and whether it can be improved upon especially for anyone who may have a visual impairment.

In addition to myself, Tom and Charlotte now have full access and editing rights to the website. The Facebook page is managed by myself, Tom, Charlotte, Lee and Alex Christison set up as Administrators with Val Pettifer, Derek Austin, John Edwards, Roy Folland and Steve Healy having editorial access. Any other volunteers to help with these jobs would be welcome, it is not limited to Executive Officers.

Our Facebook page continues to receive regular posts from both FEW Officers and our member Guilds and so provides a steady stream of fresh information. The number of page “likes” now stands at 292, up from 289 in June.

### *Vice President's Report.*

During the past year, and in my role as Vice President, I have attended meetings with the Executive and as has been outlined by the President, we have had regular discussions over a range of matters specifically the Constitution, National archives and the updated handbook that may be discussed during today.

Over the past year, I have produced regular monthly updates for the Area Wardens to inform on matters affecting the Association, such as GDPR, recruitment, reports and relevant duties. Also, I maintain regular contact by both telephone and email in order to respond to any questions raised.

In July at the Sudbury Freemen's AGM I was requested to say a few words to explain our Association. This was generally well received, although it was kept brief due to the impending England v Sweden football match. At the beginning of this month, I was delighted to join with the Gloucester Freemen for their annual ‘Gloucester Day Parade’. Regrettably, our Warden for the south-west is moving away from the area and will therefore be giving up his role. Further, our Warden from the east has decided to concentrate more efforts on her business and will be stepping down. I wish to extend our very good

wishes and sincere thanks for their assistance to our Association. If we have any potential candidates for their roles, I would be very interested to speak with them. Lastly, I wish to extend my special regards to Howard, our warden for the west, who was recently bereaved of his dear wife in a tragic car accident. Shirley was a friend to us all and will be sadly missed. We were all put in a state of shock, but the response from our Association was a clear indication of the love and affection we feel towards them. This concludes my brief report to the AGM.

### *Treasurer's Report.*

## **Freemen Of England And Wales Annual Report And Accounts.**

### **SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION**

The Association was established under a Constitution adopted on 28th September 1985 and amended on 23rd September 1989, 19th September 1992, 21st September 1996, 17th September 2005, 17th September 2011 and 15th September 2012. The Association was registered as a Charity, with Registration Number 293536, on 29th January 1986.

### **ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE OFFICERS – 2017/2018 (TRUSTEES)**

President	- Capt J Evans
Deputy President	- Mr S P White
Vice President	- Mr A Shelley
Immediate Past President	- Mr R E Leek
Honorary Archivist	- Mr A G Fallows
Honorary Journal Editor	- Mr T Gibson
Honorary Membership Secretary	- Mr G A Varndell
Honorary Secretary	- Mr L Hensley
Honorary Treasurer	- Mr S P White
Officer without Portfolio	- Ms C Christison

### **BANK**

- NatWest Bank Plc  
39 Grimsby Road  
Cleethorpes  
North East Lincolnshire  
DN35 7GB

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS** - Forrester Boyd Chartered Accountants  
26 South Saint Mary's Gate  
Great Grimsby  
North East Lincolnshire  
DN31 1LW

### **PRINCIPAL OFFICE**

The Association does not have a Registered Office. All enquiries should be addressed to the Honorary Secretary:-

Mr L Hensley  
86 Painswick Road  
Gloucester  
Gloucestershire  
GL4 6PT

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT**

The Trustees present their report and the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2018.

## **TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCOUNTS**

Charities law requires the Trustees of the Association to prepare an Account of Receipts and Payments and a Statement of Assets and Liabilities for each financial year. In addition, the Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charity's transactions and to disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the Association. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity, and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

## **OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION**

The primary objects of the Freemen of England and Wales Association are to advance public education in the Freedom and to promote research into the history and legal customs of ancient towns of England and Wales and the legal institution of the Freedom, to publish the useful results of such research and, in furtherance of this object, to provide advice and information concerning the legal institution of the Freedom within each of those several places in England and Wales, being former boroughs or other places where that institution is to be found.

## **ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS & EVENTS DURING THE YEAR**

It is with great sadness that we note the deaths during this year of Shirley Crapper and Norman Offield, both of whom have been good friends of FEW. Our sympathy goes to their families.

Your Executive during the year has tidied up the application forms for membership which have required some alterations to the Constitution. These are available on the website. We also have had to address data protection in the wake of the latest legislation on this subject.

We have taken forward the Archives project with a visit to the National Archives in KEW and the issue of letters to the Guilds to ascertain whether there is any enthusiasm for the project. Berwick Guild has obtained a grant to re-catalogue their archives in line with the recommendations of the National Archives, which shall be fed to the FEW Archivist.

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Last year we had a problem filling all the posts on the Executive. Fortunately Lee Hensley and Charlotte Christison came forward to complete the Executive. Your Executive can

appoint assistants for the various posts which gives the opportunity for members to gain experience of the operation of FEW and hopefully go on to serve on the Executive. We would encourage members to put their names forward to fill these posts, none of which are filled at the present time.

There is always a limited time in our meetings to discuss the many important points arising. For the Executive Meetings at the beginning of the year we experimented with requesting Officers' reports before the meeting and tabling these at the end of the meeting. Officers then restricted their remarks to matters requiring attention. We also used emails to discuss matter in some detail before the meeting. This proved very successful and avoided the problem of important items being rushed as time became a premium. We also concluded the meetings earlier.

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Capt. Jim Evans  
President

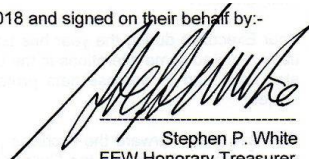
## FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES AND AFFAIRS

The attached accounts show the transactions for the year and state of affairs, which the Trustees consider to be sound.

Approved by the Trustees on the 21st September 2018 and signed on their behalf by:-



\_\_\_\_\_  
Capt Jim Evans  
FEW President



\_\_\_\_\_  
Stephen P. White  
FEW Honorary Treasurer

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

### 1. Subscriptions

Subscriptions are as they are received in the year; arrears may occur one year and made up the next. The increase in subscription rate from £8 to £10 is still

catching some members out. The Membership Secretary will report further on this subject.

**2. Donations to Funds**

Any payment received over £10 basic subscription is applied to the Legal, Regalia or General Fund as directed. The total income is better than 2016/17.

**3. Sales**

Income from sales items has varied, but is generally lower than 2016/17, as indicated by the detailed figures. The cost of a silver-gilt medallion, which went missing from the display, has had to be written off.

**4. Interest Received**

Interest on our COIF Account reduced to a low of 0.19% but ended the year at 0.318% which is still low, reflecting the Bank of England base rate, but may be regarded as a secure investment. There were no withdrawals from COIF during the year. Interest was received from HMRC on claims made for previous years.

**5. Income Tax Recovered**

Gift Aid is claimed on all eligible receipts other than sales. Bank interest is now received gross following a change in banking policy but is negligible.

**6. Administrative Expenses**

This includes postage, archives, stationery, printing and on-going website hosting costs. Rather more than in 2016/17, but includes the visit to the National Archives Office and travel for the handover of Secretarial materials.

**7. Purchases**

Costs were incurred in re-stocking Members Medallions and Robe and Blazer Badges. There is an ongoing order for ties and some other items are running low. Some of the Anniversary Souvenirs are to be written off or sold at reduced rates.

**8. Journal**

Three Journals were produced, the same as in the previous year, (total 1,240 copies in 2017/18, 1,350 in 2016/17). Overall, both Printing and Postage costs have again increased by around 6%, or 10p per copy.

**9. Annual General Meetings**

Costs include those directly incurred by FEW and those reimbursed to Hosts. A small surplus was made by the Host Gild last year and paid to FEW which partially offset the direct costs: the total costs for 2018 not yet known.

**10. Legal & Regalia Expenses**

There were no Legal expenses during the year; the £807 Regalia expenses were in respect of purchasing 2 Past President Medallions for future presentations.

**11. Court & Executive Officers Meetings**

These costs relate to the Executive Meetings held in Lincoln in June 2017 and York February 2018, and the Court Meeting held at Gloucester in March 2018.

## April to March

### INCOME

### EXPENDITURE

2016/17		2017/18
£		£
<b>Note 1</b>		
<b><u>SUBSCRIPTIONS</u></b>		
3,255.00	Individual	3,241.00
1,500.00	Guilds	1,145.00
<b><u>4,755.00</u></b>		<b><u>4,386.00</u></b>
<p>Annual Subscriptions are taken at £10.00 for each individual and the set level for Guilds. Any donation above this amount is, in the absence of any other instructions split equally between the Legal and Regalia Funds</p>		
<b>Note 2</b>		
<b><u>DONATIONS TO:-</u></b>		
196.50	General Fund	242.70
169.50	Legal Fund	211.50
153.25	Regalia Fund	201.50
<b><u>519.25</u></b>		<b><u>655.70</u></b>
<b>Note 3</b>		
<b><u>SALES</u></b>		
-	Robes	-
41.40	Ties	124.20
269.00	Members Medallions	100.00
131.40	Robe badges	219.00
31.60	Blazer badges	-
39.50	Lapel badges	6.60
-	Wall plaques	-
12.90	Stickers	6.60
19.70	Headsquares	-
19.00	Books	-
49.00	Pens	7.00
67.50	Cuff Links	13.50
33.00	Membership Wallets	-
22.00	"The Guilds" - M E Pickering	-
-	Aspects of the Freedom	-
8.40	Membership Certificates	2.80
255.81	50th Anniversary Pens	77.00
281.35	50th Anniversary Badges	112.00
236.45	50th Anniversary Mugs	100.00
<b><u>1,518.01</u></b>		<b><u>768.70</u></b>
<b>Note 4</b>		
<b><u>INTEREST RECEIVED</u></b>		
170.21	COIF Deposit A/c	104.51
2.35	NatWest Reserve A/c	1.79
-	Gift Aid Tax Refund Interest	21.50
<b><u>172.56</u></b>		<b><u>127.80</u></b>
<b>Note 5</b>		
<b><u>INCOME TAX RECOVERED</u></b>		
494.25	Re: Gift Aid Declarations 2016/2017	-
0.00	Re: Gift Aid Declarations 2017/2018	486.10
<b><u>494.25</u></b>		<b><u>486.10</u></b>
<b><u>7,459.07</u></b>	<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b><u>6,424.30</u></b>

2016/17		2017/18
£		£
<b>Note 6</b>		
<b><u>ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES</u></b>		
412.99	Postage	532.10
152.08	Archives	53.40
-	National Archives - Travel	269.24
-	Other Travel	93.10
107.94	Stationery	306.46
66.05	Printing/photocopying	140.00
240.00	Website	144.00
35.00	Data Protection Registration Fee	35.00
<b><u>1,014.06</u></b>		<b><u>1,573.30</u></b>
<b>Note 7</b>		
<b><u>PURCHASES</u></b>		
-	Robes	-
-	Ties	-
-	Members Medallions	1,044.82
-	Robe Badges	333.75
-	Blazer badges	318.75
-	Lapel badges	-
-	Wall Plaques	-
-	Pens	-
-	Cufflinks	-
-	Membership Wallets	-
-	<b><u>50th Anniversary Souvenirs</u></b>	-
643.14	Pens	-
719.03	Badges	-
1,677.60	Mugs	-
<b><u>3,039.77</u></b>		<b><u>1,697.32</u></b>
<b>Note 8</b>		
<b><u>JOURNAL (3/3 editions in period)</u></b>		
1,650.00	Production	1,625.00
1,003.09	Postage/distribution	960.34
<b><u>2,653.09</u></b>		<b><u>2,585.34</u></b>
<b>Note 9</b>		
<b><u>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS</u></b>		
-63.54	2016 ~ York	-
-	2017 ~ Pembroke	43.25
-	2018 ~ Warwick	173.10
<b><u>-63.54</u></b>		<b><u>216.35</u></b>
<b>Note 10</b>		
<b><u>LEGAL &amp; REGALIA EXPENSES</u></b>		
-	Legal Expenses	-
-	Past-President & Lady's Medallions	806.85
1,069.60	Rep. Pres. Chain/Warden Medallions	-
<b><u>1,069.60</u></b>		<b><u>806.85</u></b>
<b>Note 11</b>		
<b><u>COURT &amp; OFFICERS' MEETINGS</u></b>		
210.00	Court/Exec Meeting Room Hire	150.00
389.69	Court/Exec Catering - Nett	357.45
-	Other Court/Exec Meeting Expenses	-
<b><u>599.69</u></b>		<b><u>507.45</u></b>
<b><u>8,312.67</u></b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b><u>7,386.61</u></b>
<b>-853.60</b>	<b>SURPLUS FOR YEAR</b>	<b>-962.31</b>
<b>433.65</b>	Less transfers to Designated Funds	<b>860.65</b>
<b><u>-1,287.25</u></b>	<b>AVAILABLE SURPLUS</b>	<b><u>-1,822.96</u></b>

End March 2018 for AGM

## MOVEMENT OF DESIGNATED FUNDS - 2016/17 to 2017/18

	2016/17	2017/18
<b>Legal Fund</b>		
Balance brought forward, 1st April	4,384.24	4,580.24
Donations received	169.50	211.50
Tax recovered	26.50	35.50
Addnl Tax recovered	-	-
LESS: Costs Incurred	-	-
Balance at 31st March	4,580.24	4,827.24
<b>Regalia Fund</b>		
Balance brought forward, 1st April	411.71	588.96
Donations received	153.25	201.50
Tax recovered	24.00	33.00
Addnl Tax recovered	-	-
LESS: Purchases made	-	-806.85
Balance at 31st March	588.96	16.61
<b>Regalia Self-Insurance Fund</b>		
Balance brought forward, 1st April	6,886.00	6,946.40
Amount Provided	1,130.00	1,186.00
Amount set against Fund	-1,069.60	-
Balance at 31st March	6,946.40	8,132.40
<b>TOTAL DESIGNATED FUNDS</b>	<b>12,115.60</b>	<b>12,976.25</b>

## FREEMEN OF ENGLAND AND WALES

### STATEMENT OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES AS AT THE FINANCIAL YEAR END

	31.3.2017	31.3.2018
<b>Monetary Assets</b>		
<b>GENERAL PURPOSE FUND</b>		
National Westminster Bank - Current A/C	383.91	86.67
National Westminster Bank - Reserve A/C	367.01	518.80
COIF Charity Deposit Fund	38,000.00	38,000.00
	<u>38,750.92</u>	<u>38,605.47</u>
<b>DESIGNATED FUNDS</b>		
National Westminster Bank - Current A/C	715.60	226.25
National Westminster Bank - Reserve A/C	5,400.00	6,750.00
COIF Charity Deposit Fund	6,000.00	6,000.00
	<u>12,115.60</u>	<u>12,976.25</u>
<b>DEBTORS / CREDITORS</b>		
Amounts owed to FEW at 31st March	2,053.95	1,135.25
LESS: Amounts owed by FEW at 31st March	0.00	-758.81
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u>52,920.47</u>	<u>51,958.16</u>
<b>Other Assets</b>		
Stocks of resale items (cost, not realisable value)	3,975.90	5,156.56
Officers' regalia (insured/replacement value)	22,593.00	23,722.00
Other Assets	195.00	195.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u>26,763.90</u>	<u>29,073.56</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u>79,684.37</u>	<u>81,031.72</u>

#### Liabilities

##### Short Term

At 31st March 2018, the only short term commitments were in connection with usual ongoing transactions such as unrepresented payments and purchase of Regalia.

##### Long Term

At 31st March 2018, the Officers of the Association have not made any long term commitments.



## *Hon. Membership Secretary's Report.*

**Guilds.** We have 38 Guilds on the books with currently 4 Guilds are still to pay Subscriptions. (Details below).

**Individual Membership.** The current membership stands at 322

### **Since September 2017.**

- 7 Members notified as Deceased.
- 5 New Full individual members.
- 5 New Associate members.
- 3 Members have resigned
- 14 Members deleted under rule 9 of the constitution.

**Current Payments.** Late payments. Reminders have been sent out in the past but responses are very slow and some have been ignored.

15 of the members in arrears have not expressed a wish to be contacted and 1 is to be contacted by email only. (Do we delete the members that do not wish to be contacted?)

**Arrears.** At present to the end of August 2018 there are 37 members in arrears. April 2018 to April 2019 and 6 members in Arrears September 2017 to September 2018.

Also 7 members owing 2 years April 2017 to April 2018 and April 2018 to April 2019.

13 of all these payments were standing orders.

### **Guilds in arrears are:**

Chippenham Three payments April 2016 to 2017, April 2017 to 2018 and April 2018 to 2019

Montgomery One payment April 2018 to 2019

Master Pilots & Seamen Trinity House One payment April 2018 to 2019

Company of Freemen Trinity House One payment April 2018 to 2019

## *Archivist's Report.*

During the period since the last Court meeting I have responded to queries from Bridgnorth and Northampton. The President responded to a query from Chippenham.

We also received a slow but steady response to our Gild Archives enquiry, so we will continue to correlate information received. Progress on funding has been successfully achieved by Berwick upon Tweed, so this may guide us on future application criteria.

The process of moving the FEW Archives to a separate facility at my office has now been completed and up-dated cataloguing is in progress to add FEW details to the Gild Archives list.

Constitutional review details have been completed and this will be dealt with separately.

## *"Hon. Editors report.*

Another Three editions of the journal have been issued in the past 12 months, with contributions from a number of individuals and member Gilds/Guilds. Last years post AGM edition was larger than usual, but that was balanced by the slimmer edition, No,189. Edition 190 was what has become the standard size, however both it and the AGM editions are usually full, containing the reports from the meetings they cover. It is the

middle one which gives us the most scope to include news from the Guilds and other articles, please bear this in mind in the new year.

I think it fair to say that the last issue was the most eventful we have published and distributed during my tenure as Editor, as we trod through the new laws dictating who it could be sent to and how. I think it fair to say that the dust is still settling for us in common with many similar groups to us across Europe. For example those who send photographs for publication, if they are of attendees at events or individuals, the new regulations mean that sadly I cannot publish them in the journal unless the individual has indicated we may on the FEW GDPR form, which will inevitably restrict what I can include. Despite these challenges on the positive side the return of the forms has meant an increase in the number of people now receiving the journal via email.

My thanks to all who have contributed in the past year to the Journal, which even in this electronic age, remains an important means of communication, I look forward to receiving items for the next 3 editions.

### *The Reports From the Wardens.*

#### **THE NORTH EAST:**

##### **Alnwick:**

The Chamberlain's Common Council and Freemen of the Borough of Alnwick report 'business as usual' over the Summer months, although to others, that business, might appear quite involved, especially as far as estates go: Alnwick Moor itself, 8 farms, various monuments, some 40 houses, clock towers, the historic St. Michael's Pant (horse trough) and the Town Hall all being, to one degree or another, under their care. Of particular note is a new bungalow, replacing an older residence on the same site on the Moor, which is now occupied by a Freeman of the Borough.

3 new Freemen were admitted in April 2018.

##### **Berwick-upon-Tweed:**

The Berwick Guild is also into building projects and continues to actively seek a suitable site for potential future development as further housing for Freemen and others within local community.

Steps are also underway to extend an existing scheme of financial support offered to assist further education of children of resident Freemen.

Talks are being held with local Riders Association to further strengthen support for, and participation in, the annual commemoration of the Riding of the Bounds held on 1st May each year.

The Berwick Record Office has recently been successful in making a bid to 'Archives Revealed', resulting in a grant of £31,000 being awarded towards the re-cataloguing of the Berwick Borough Archives collection. Only nine such applications were successful nationally and it is testament to the quality of the bid lodged by Berwick. The ambitious project will ensure that the Records Office can provide much improved access to the collection by a far wider audience and is of particular interest, given the amount of material related directly to the Freemen. The support of the Guild has been deemed crucial

in securing this initial grant and the Freemen now stand ready to offer further financial and other support as the project develops.

The Guild has pledged support for the upcoming “Tweed 1000” celebrations in July 2019, commemorating the anniversary of The Battle of Carham (or Coldstream) in 1018, which first put Berwick under Scottish control, with the result that it grew to become Scotland's most important trading port and one of the first Scottish Royal burghs. That would make it 1001 years for me, but then I learned my mathematics in England.....

The 2018 summer outing saw over 40 Freemen and their families members make a most enjoyable visit to Durham on 7th July, visiting as guests of the Freemen of that City. This followed on from the Durham Freemen visiting Berwick last year.

### **Durham:**

More detail of the above visit from the Durham side: the visit comprised a mid-morning sherry reception and welcome by the Chairman of the Wardens (yes – mid-morning, they know how to do things in Durham!); escorted tours of the Town Hall and Guild Hall, followed by a buffet lunch; guided Tours of the Cathedral and River Banks in the afternoon; followed by refreshments in the Town Hall and an impromptu opportunity to watch the final stages of England’s quarter-final World Cup match with Sweden! I thank the Durham Chairman of the Wardens for the invitation to join that visit and congratulate him and his fellow Wardens for a most successful example of continuing local interaction between Guilds of Freemen in the same region.

In June, the Chairmen of the Durham Freemen, Mr Eric Bulmer, represented his Guild at a dinner held by Clothworkers’ Guild Trustees in the Clothworkers’ Hall in the City of London. This gave Eric the opportunity to inform other guests of the history and heritage of the Durham City Freemen, as well as discuss current activity and projects. A guided tour of the Guildhall followed, during which a recently commissioned tapestry ‘The Caged Bird’s Song’, designed by Turner Prize-winning artist, Chris Ofili CBE and hand-woven by the internationally renowned Dovecot Tapestry Studio in Edinburgh, previously exhibited in the National Galley, was a stand-out memory.

In July, the Durham Freemen lost another stalwart, Harry Robson, a proud member of the Durham City Freemen and dedicated Warden of the Plumbers Guild. Generous with his time and experience, Harry was considered one of the “last true gentlemen” by his fellow Freemen and will be sorely missed.

**Newcastle upon Tyne:** Nothing to report.

### **THE NORTH WEST:**

#### **Altrincham**

This year has been tinged with sadness as 8 Freemen have passed away. It has proved to be a most stressful time. A Court Leet Flag was designed and was first used to cover the coffin of Alderman Mark Rae, this now has been offered for other funerals. Mark Rae’s sudden death shook Altrincham to the core. He was aged 57 and had been actively involved with so much around the town since an early age. He was a past secretary of FEW. For those departed we offer a Court Leet funeral, as part of which the Freemen form a Guard of Honour.

Another of the recently departed was Bill Speakman VC who was the first investiture by the Queen. A military funeral took place at Royal Chelsea Hospital. Later this Autumn there is to be a blue plaque & a memorial service in Altrincham.

Coping with so many has made the Court take stock and re-evaluate itself. A necessary step is to gather archives and lay firmer foundations. Research is continuing with the Roll of Honour from 1977 & looking towards a permanent recording of the Mayors of Altrincham since 1452.

Now having the flag it adds to our local history & when it is seen flying over Altrincham Town Hall at an Assize causes people to question.

The Lord of the Manor, who lives in Dorset, is 90 this Autumn and hopes to re-visit Dunham particularly after seeing it featured on Secrets of the National Trust recently.

The Court has continued with its general business and have added further to the ranks this year by making nine people Freeman of Altrincham. At the Michaelmas Assize a week ago a new Provost was sworn in as Mayor of Altrincham, Burgess Ken Garrity.

Altrincham Court Leet are to be involved in a unique commemorative event as part of Armistice 100.

### **Chester**

In April new freemen were welcomed at the Mayor's Pentice Court. Over the past two years over 40 new freemen have been sworn in.

The Vice President had been liaising with a potential Guildhall tenant, Mark Jarvis owner of Chester Fields, announced in April that Mark had organised a TV article about the Guildhall possible reopening to be shown on the local news programme, Granada Reports.

A call was sent out for volunteer gowned Freeman to muster at the Guildhall on the 17th when filming took place. The feature article was broadcast later that month.

The Freeman and Guilds continued to support the Lord Mayor and Civic life of Chester, when two of their own guarded the Council Chamber doors in May when Lord Mayor Razia Daniels finished her year in office and the City's new Lord Mayor, Councillor Alex Black, was invested. The following Sunday gowned Freeman formed a Guard of Honour at the annual Civic Service at the Cathedral.

The Chester Mystery Plays pre-opening publicity started in earnest in May. As supporters of the Plays, the President, David Starbucks Edwards took part in the Reading of the Bans, where the Lord Mayor grants permission for the Plays to be held.

A new initiative for Chester, was promoted by David Pickering and Gordon Vickers, to start a 'Ceremony of the Gates' at the Eastgate, to promote tourism and was boosted with a public demonstration of how such an event may look. The President was asked to take part and joined the organisers, Town Crier, Civil Reenactment society and Roman Soldiers

on a sunny Saturday morning in May, to the astonishment, of a largely delighted audience. On Thursday June 14th Her Majesty The Queen accompanied by Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Sussex visited Chester to officially open The Storyhouse. The President received an invitation to the Civic Lunch that was held. Security was rigorous with guests being required to arrive at the Racecourse by 9:30am to be 'checked in' and then taken by coach to the Town Hall for a rather long wait as the crowds gathered outside; no one was allowed to leave & photography inside the Assemble Hall was forbidden. The receipt of the invitation demonstrated the esteem and appreciation the Freeman and Guilds has with the Chester Civic Team and Lord Mayor's office.

At the AGM in June, Ian Dutton, was sworn in as the new President. As should befit such

an appointment, this year's investiture adopted a more formally and traditional ceremony. A Presidents oath was sworn on a copy of the Bible, provided by St. Peter's at The Cross, the Freeman's Church. The outgoing President clothed the new President in his gowns of office, placed the Jewel of office around his neck and proffered the Freeman's gavel, as a sign of the new Presidents authority to preside over our meetings. Ian was then declared President which was met with a round of applause

The Chester Guild was fortunate to be offered 7 ceremonial gowns, by the Ellesmere Port Charter Trustees. These gowns were former Ellesmere Port Councillor gowns. They date from the late 1950's and are expertly made and trimmed in rabbit fur. They have had them professionally cleaned by a specialist cleaner and with the addition of a Freeman and Guilds crest badges on one arm and Freeman of England and Wales crest on the other. These gowns will become our officer's gowns.

The next event on the Guild Calendar is to be the Banquet Weekend 13-15 October

## **Hale**

Autumn 2017 James Ross was installed as the new Lord Mayor of Hale and held his first annual Court at the beginning of 2018. They have held their usual social and fundraising activities, the Valentines Social, the Family Pancake Dash [walk] Clay Pigeon Shoot and importantly the Hale Carnival. Funds raised by the Freeman, are distributed back into the village - to village groups and organisations. Any group or organisation - charitable or non charitable, can apply for a Freemens Grant/Donation.

The Freemens Archive, is a vast collection of historical archive material, dating back over 200 years, from historical township maps -from the 1800's, to recent and old photographs of Hale Village... was on display for Heritage Open Days

In May the Freeman Of Hale were contacted by the Friends of Real Lancashire who wished the Freeman of Hale to be part of their efforts to install a new Boundary Post at Hale Lighthouse to replace the existing plaque which marks the most Westerly point of Lancashire.

On 29th May there was a significant event connected with a Past Mayor of Hale, Alderman Eric Goldrein, (1999-2002) almost 74 years after he had shown bravery, initiative and ingenuity during the battle to liberate Normandy he was presented with the Legion d'honneur, Frances highest award for bravery. Eric's story reads like a story from a Boys Own comic. A few years ago the French government decided they needed to acknowledge the debt they owed to men like Eric and that all those still living who took part in the Normandy campaign in 1944 should be awarded their Legion d'honneur. Many were sent by post, many went astray. Those that knew Eric's story tried applying on Eric's behalf

Recent enquiries showed that a medal had in fact been sent to Eric in 2015 but had never arrived, and a second medal was quickly despatched. To coincide with Eric's 97th birthday a party was arranged at Hale Village Hall and Eric was surprised by Honorary French Consul Philip Daniel presented him with the coveted medal.. The ceremony was impressive, with a piper (Tom Savage) leading Eric into the Village Hall between two ranks of standard bearers, to be greeted by over 100 of his family and friends – a total surprise to Eric and his wife, Inge! Speeches were made by several of the dignitaries present, including the Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire (David Briggs MBE), the West Lancashire County President of the Royal British Legion (Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Tony Hollingsworth MBE) and the President of the Queen's Bench Division (Sir Brian Leveson

PC, one of the country's foremost members of the legal profession and one of Eric's former pupils!). The audience included the Mayor of Halton, the Deputy Lord Mayor of Liverpool and the Lord Mayor of Hale.

### **THE NORTH MIDLANDS:**

My usual complaint is that I am not sure what my guilds want from me, or indeed from FEW in general. The active guilds have their own programme of events and have no need to involve me. However, they do often inform me of their events and indeed I have received several invitations to social activities. For example, the Freemen of Bridgnorth have just invited me to their annual dinner, but sadly I am unable to attend this year. However, such events are a good way of finding out whether the guild is thriving, which you can only do by talking to people. Some guilds submit articles or reports to the journal, giving details of new members or civic occasions. These are interesting and I am pleased to read what has been going on, but they do not require my intervention.

One guild where I feel I may have been of some use is at Derby, which had been very active at one time then became dormant. Fortunately, a group led by a few key individuals decided to revive the guild and sought my help on a number of matters. This year I was invited to give a talk, for an hour or so after their AGM business meeting. I was delighted to find that some 50 people attended and apparently appreciated what I had to say. The PowerPoint presentation, via an overhead projector worked well, but due to a venue change, their plan to record the talk for the benefit of their members in Canada and elsewhere could not be done. However, I propose to add a commentary to the presentation, which may be useful to other members of FEW, since digital communication seems now the way to go.

At Derby, I met a freeman of Newcastle-under-Lyme and he gave me the contact details of the solicitor who acts for their Trust. A response from him indicates that all is well with this group and that they continue to thrive and participate in various civic functions. Evidently, the FEW contact details need updating and I will try to re-establish contact and provide more positive reports on Newcastle in future.

Shrewsbury has an active programme and in my last report I was very complimentary about their new web site. Unfortunately, that does not seem to be keeping up to date and, if there is a recent edition of their excellent newsletter, it has not appeared on the web site. As anyone who compiles such web sites will know, it's a nightmare getting information and finding time to do the updates, but it is important.

Stafford continues with quite a full programme of events, although several have had to be cancelled recently due to lack of numbers. Possibly due to charges made by the likes of JCB or Jaguar for visits, or simply that it is busy people who like to attend these functions and they have many other commitments. At last week's Battle of Britain commemoration and the 100 years of the RAF anniversary, there was a change and the civic representatives, (including the burgesses' representatives), were given a reception at the HQ of the RAF Tactical Supply Wing. They had earlier exercised their right to march through Stafford with bayonets fixed, in line with their Honorary Freedom granted some years ago.

The work of the trustees of the Stafford Freemen's Allotments is never simple. On the positive side a new store has been erected and CCTV cameras installed, However, they still have antisocial behaviour to deal with. The latest problem concerns the site being slowly overrun with badgers. You would not believe the complexities of trying to move a

protected species, to say nothing of the public relations problems.

I was pleased to attend the commemoration of the 1,100th anniversary of the death of Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians, who founded Bridgnorth, Warwick and Stafford amongst many other towns in the midlands. It was held in Tamworth, where she died, and was attended by an amazing number of VIP guests, including Prince Edward, an archbishop, seven bishops, three archdeacons, many civic heads and numerous professors of the period. Turning up in robes put me in the front rows, so they do have an impact! Tamworth seems like the sort of place that should have a freemen's guild, so I have made some enquiries and have been asked to speak to their Civic Society next year. Maybe we can reawaken another guild.

### **THE WEST:**

My report must begin with a huge thankyou to members of FEW who have helped me so much through the shock bereavement of my dear wife Shirley in May this year. Your support has been overwhelming and magnificent. I weep every day, but life ,however difficult , goes on.

In Oxford , the World War 1 Memorial committee finally celebrated the unveiling of the Memorial to the seventeen Royal Flying Corps airmen who were previously not recorded as killed in training upon the Port Meadow grass airfield . On 23rd May , in brilliant sunny weather , the Lord Lieutenant, unveiled the splendid stone memorial in front of the 60 invited guests and 40 school children together with the fantastic replica flying aircraft from the day with the most exciting cracking engine noise the children could ever imagine. I was so pleased Stephen Healey, our Warden for the North East, originally from Oxford, was able to join the celebration.

On 23rd June , the Freemen accompanied the Lord Mayor on the annual inspection of Port Meadow. It was the first outing for our Chairman following his discharge from hospital. Our main concern was the ever larger sand bank in the river. the sand deposit has been caused by Environment Agency engineering work to the nearby weir. The Port Meadow cattle use the sand bank to explore fields on the far river bank and chaos ensues . The EA have agreed to dredge the river but as yet , no start date is forthcoming. The situation is so serious that our main Freemen grazier has withdrawn his animals until the situation is rectified . Our MP , whose constituency covers Port Meadow, has written to the EA demanding answers.

After the Inspection the Freemen played the Sheriff's team for the Aunt Sally trophy. A huge crowd at the nearby hostelry ,witnessed a win for the Freemen following a match that went on for two and a half hours . Thanks to fellow Freeman Chris Cox for organising the teams and to Greene King for the beer.

Malmesbury continue to continue with their land and properties on a sound basis. Their membership base is solid and they continue to welcome new Freemen. The Warden and Freemen were particularly pleased this year to make a sizeable grant to enable the museum to restore some stained-glass windows of historical importance. We have joined forces with other organisations in the town in what has now become an annual Wessex Week celebration of the history and contribution of King Athelstan. They have also had their ceremonial maces professionally restored.

In Chippenham, it would appear that the Town Council are keen to look at the Freemen situation and work with the Freemen to revive traditional aspects of the Burgess Guild within the town .

The Freeman and Women of Gloucester have been busy . Not only hosting our Spring Court Meeting but supporting new Admission Ceremonies. One Admission Ceremony for the current Lord Lieutenant, was held in the Gloucester Cathedral where she was made an Honorary Freewoman of the City in recognition of her services to Gloucester . I look forward to the Annual Dinner in October and wish the President well in his dual role as Hon. Secretary of FEW.

## **THE EAST:**

### **Sudbury**

On the 3rd July the Sudbury Freeman's Annual General Meeting was held in the Town Hall, hosted by the Chairman Mr Michael Wheeler. Prior to the AGM, the Freeman, Widows and guests were invited to join the annual guided walk over the Meadows, hosted by Honorary Freeman Adrian Walters, the Clerk/Ranger to the Common Lands. After a very interesting and enjoyable 2 hour walk a very welcome afternoon tea was taken at the Christopher Centre. The AGM started with the Payment of Common Money; £4.00 to Freeman and £2.00 to Widows of Freeman. After the usual business, Michael Wheeler announced that next year will be their Quinquennial Meeting and all Trustees and Committee members will retire and if they wish offer themselves for re-election. However, Michael Wheeler stated that he would be retiring from the post of Chairman as he has served two full five year terms, but will still be happy to serve the Committee in any way that his 'humble abilities' provide.

### **Lincoln**

The City of Lincoln Freeman held their Annual General Meeting and Investitures on Saturday the 14th April 2018, which once again coincided with the annual Guild of Freeman of the City of York Banquet. However, this year I was able to attend the event which takes place at 11 am, before continuing my journey onward to York. The meeting was held in the splendid Lincoln Guild Hall, and attended by The Right Worshipful The Mayor of Lincoln, Councillor Chris Burke. Also present were Jo Rimmer, Sheriff of the City of Lincoln, Stewart Bristow, President of the Lincoln Freeman, Angela Priestley-Gibbins, Master of the Freeman of Lincoln, and a number of others. After the Minutes of the EGM from October 2017 were read out, the general business of the meeting followed, including the investitures of a small number of new Freeman. Photographs were then taken outside the Guild Hall, and then there was time to partake of a splendid buffet lunch.

### **My Resignation**

This is my third year as the acting FEW Warden for the East, and it has been a great pleasure to meet so many friendly and interesting Freeman and their families. However, although officially retired, I run my own art studio business, which has now effectively developed into what I can only describe as a full time job! I've recently realised that I've over stretched myself to the point where I feel I can no longer give enough time to the FEW, without the business suffering, so it is with regret that I am standing down from the role as of this AGM. I will continue my membership of the FEW and endeavour to attend as many Freeman events as my time permits in the future.

## **THE SOUTH EAST:**

### **The Rochester Oyster and Floating Fishery.**

On Saturday 23rd June 2018, the Admiralty Court of the Mayor and Citizens of the River Medway, announced by the Principal Water Bailiff Mr Dean Caston, were convened by



Statute under the auspices of the Mayor, Cllr Steve Iles (who is also the Admiral of the River Medway) in the Rochester Guildhall, and then commenced its business with Registrar Neil Davies requiring Freeman Chamberlain Shane Hales to take the Oath and be sworn in, followed by the sixteen members of the Jury who were then sworn in and were required to sign the Register of Jurymen.

The business of the Court included two presentments from the Chamberlain, including the opening of the oyster grounds in October 2018, and the reconfirmation of the 'No Take' Zone on the north shore of the River Medway, to prohibit all fishing from July 1st 2018 to 30th June 2019.

The fishing boats and dredgers of ROFF, accompanied by a large number of inland cruisers owned by friends, colleagues, and fellow Freemen from Rochester Cruising Club and Allington Marina, then beat the bounds from Rochester up river to Hawkwood Stone, before returning to Rochester Cruising Club for refreshments.

### **The Guildable Manor of Southwark**

The combined Thanksgiving Service and Quit Rents Ceremony was held on Wednesday 14th March 2018. The quit rent dates from 1327, and is for £11 in regard to the reserved interest of the Crown for the 'town of Southwark'.

In that year the City was granted its fourth-oldest Royal Charter to acquire Southwark from Edward III for this annual payment. It was specifically retained by Edward VI in the 1550 charter to the City, which extended its jurisdiction over the outlying parts of Southwark. This quit is rendered by the Foreman of the City's Court Leet Jury of the "Town and Borough of Southwark", alias Guildable Manor, which is the area as defined in 1327. The continuation of this body is sanctioned under the Administration of Justice Act 1977.

The ceremonial Court of Exchequer takes place in St George the Martyr Anglican church in Southwark. This sum is rendered onto the Exchequer Cloth in the form of Crowns (5 shilling / 25 pence pieces), which remain legal tender. The Queen's Remembrancer (Mrs Barbara Janet Fontaine) pronounces "Good service" and this is witnessed by the Clerk of the City's Chamberlain's Court and the manor jurors to note that the payment has been made.

### **THE SOUTH MIDLANDS:**

Starting with our hosts this weekend:

**Warwick Court Leet** is a different organisation to the one I first witnessed in 2003. Then the Court AGM focussed almost entirely on its legal duty on 'Presentments for the Good of the Town', requiring the Steward to pass concerns on items such as parking/building deterioration/blocked watercourses/etc to the relevant Council for action. Now we have a Leet which, whilst dealing with Presentments as before, has a social programme, a fund raising Beer festival, and hence can issue grants to local worthy causes. These latter activities allow good publicity in the local 'Courier' newspaper. New activities this year include the organisation of the Warwick Classic Car festival, which again generates good coverage in local news reports, and also on the centenary of the 1st World War, a visit to the battlegrounds of France and Belgium to lay a wreath to honour the fallen from the local Royal Warwickshire regiment.

**Alcester Court Leet & Court Baron.** From first being invited by Ron Leek to the annual meeting in 2003, I can report that this Leet plays a very active part in Town life. Whilst I can't recall any presentments, there is an annual calendar of events ranging from Pancake Races to the Town Mop, and includes closing the High Street to traffic for the Bailiffs procession to St Nicholas church for annual service, with many Town organisations also processing, for a march past reviewed by the Lord of the Manor after the service. Local organisations also benefit from charitable grants awarded by the Leet. The Town Hall has also been the venue for FEW Court Meetings in 2006 and 2016.

**Henley-in-Arden Court Leet & Court Baron.** Whilst a relative newcomer to the FEW fraternity, having been joined by the then High Bailiff Roger Sutton in 2009, who incidentally is now a fellow FEW Area Warden, this Leet has a particular responsibility to maintain the medieval half timbered Guildhall, first erected by the pre Reformation Guild of the Holy Trinity & St John in the 14th century. Up until late last year this Leet was locally unique in having several American Lords of the Manor, but this title was gifted to the Steward David Lodder by means of a video address at the annual meeting. Members may recall the FEW Court Meeting last year was hosted by this Leet

Turning now to the local Freemen's Guilds:

**Coventry Freemen's Guild.** As some of you know, the Coventry Freedom is not hereditary, it is only gained by completing a five year apprenticeship with indentures initially logged with the Lord Mayor's secretariat. The industrial boom years of machine tools – cars – aircraft and possibly 500 Freemen a year are long gone, so less than 100 per year is more realistic now. These often include former apprentices who did not take up the Freedom when completing their apprenticeships, perhaps attracted by the charitable awards available to senior Freemen from the stand alone Coventry Freemen's Charity. Coventry Guild has a Facebook site and website which, together with the biannual 'Guildsman' magazine, promotes events to members.

**Leicester Gild of Freemen.** With most of the 1976 founding Gild Court members now in a well earned retirement, Leicester Gild Court has a younger profile, with Lady Freemen now taking up more roles. The Leicester Gild Banquet Weekend events are supported by other Guilds, including Coventry & York, London & Lincoln, which all helps to make the events financially viable. The Leicester Freemen's Garden Party was also held this year, at the Freemen's Holt bungalow facility.

**Northampton Guild of Freemen** are justifiably concerned regarding the continuation of the Town Freedom. As you may have seen on the national news, the County Council are in serious financial difficulty, and Government Commissioners monitor affairs whilst progress towards two Unitary Authorities will lead to the demise of the eight Northamptonshire District and Borough Councils. Hence Northampton Borough Council which currently awards the Town Freedom, will disappear. I have advised them that FEW experience elsewhere, such as Sudbury and Shrewsbury, indicates that Unitary Authorities can continue to award the Freedom, and also delegate the award process back to the Town Council – should one be created in place of the current Borough Council.

Finally a plea to all Guilds – please get the date of your major events listed in the FEW Journal, to help stop the clashing events that led this year to the cancellation of the Northampton Freemen's Charity Dinner weekend events.

## **WALES:**

### **The Guild of Freemen of Pembroke.**

At the Court meeting of the 22nd March it was agreed that the Guild's Constitution needed to be amended, a committee of 6 members should be responsible for those amendments and for it to be ready to be put before the July meeting.

Members of the Guild attended the Memorial Service at Freshwater West and a wreath was laid on behalf of the Guild.

The Master represented the Guild at the Mayor making ceremony held in the Chamber of Pembroke Town Hall, which was followed by the Mayor's luncheon.

The Master of the Guild spent a very interesting and enjoyable evening attending the Haverfordwest Guild's Summer Evening, which was held at the Haverfordwest Golf Club, where six new Burgesses were installed.

At the Court meeting in July which was held in the Chamber of Pembroke Town Council the amendments to the Constitution were placed before the members, and apart from two alterations to the amendments which were suggested and accepted by those present, it was agreed that the new Constitution in its present form with the alterations, should now be put to the members at the AGM meeting in October for it to be ratified.

The Guild's annual service will be held at St. Mary's Church, Pembroke on the 18th November 2018 this will be followed by the annual luncheon, and because of the closure of the Cleddau Bridge Hotel. Our new home will be the Coach House Hotel, Pembroke.

### **The Haverfordwest Guild of Freemen.**

The Guild of Freemen of Haverfordwest put the accent on youthful achievement when they installed new Burgesses at the annual Summer Evening at the Haverfordwest Golf Club.

Connie Fisher, who put the County Town on the map when she was given the prestigious role of Maria in the London production of Lloyd Webber's 'Sound of Music,' is a local girl, as are three young sporting achievers who were sworn in by the Guild Master Charles Davies. They were young race walker Heather Katie Lewis, clay pigeon champion and record-holder Ben Llewelin, son of former champion Rally driver Dai Llewelin, and talented amateur boxer Mickey McDonagh of Pembroke Dock, who trains at Haverfordwest's Merlin's Bridge Boxing Club and is aiming for Olympic success. Also installed were the Guild's indefatigable Administrative Officer, Mrs Eirwen Lucas, wife of the Guild Clerk Paul Lucas, and in accordance with long tradition, the Chairmen of Pembrokeshire County Council, Cllr. Aden Brinn JP, who holds the position for the duration of his year of office. Burgesses are Honorary Freemen on whom the honour is bestowed for services or meritorious achievements which bring credit to the town. Each new Burgess expressed gratitude and pride on receiving the honour.

## **THE NORTH:**

### **The Freemen of Beverley**

Since my last report I have tried to make contact for a visit through their secretary Marjorie Gabbitas, but with no success. I tried a second attempt this time via the Clerk to the B.P.M, Maxine Taylor, with some success. She replied saying, 'that if it was appropriate and the chair agreed, I would be invited to attend one of their meetings. Fingers crossed!

### **The Enrolled Freemen of Grimsby.**

The Annual General Meeting was held on the 4th June'18.

The Freemen continue their work, working with the local authority, their two MPs and other partners on multi-million pound regeneration and renewable energy initiatives; continuing also their Day Services on the market. Events to date have been as occasion to mark the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme in which most of The Grimsby Chums Regiment were killed.

The E.F of Grimsby will be hosting the FEW AGM in 2020.

### **The Gild of Freemen of the City of York.**

The Annual General Meeting of the Gild was held on the 29th June'18 when Mrs Andrea Smith was elected Master for 2018/19. The Master's charity for the year was to be Martin House, a children's hospice.

The Immediate Past Master, Alan Banks, handed over a cheque for £1,123,70 to Carolyn Blain of the York Blind and Partially Sighted Society; money raised during his term of office.

The Master has attended many local events: services of the Scriveners and St Peter's School Prize Giving, York Mystery Plays with the Gild sharing a wagon with the Cordwainers and the York Civic programme.

Forthcoming events are : the St Crux Fundraising Day ( 29th Sept); Streets of York Art Exhibition(20th Nov.) and " There's More to Pies Than You Realise"(23rd Nov.).

### **This concludes the record of the 2018 AGM.**



The Baton being handed over to Lee Hensley, President of the Chartered Freemen and Women of the City of Gloucester, hosts of the 2019 AGM.

Photograph by Gill Fletcher.

### **Situations Vacant.**

#### **Area Warden for the East required.**

This is an interesting and very important role for a Freeman with some experience.  
Will any interested candidates/proposers please contact the Vice President.

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**Front Cover:** The Procession sets out. **Back Cover:** The Robed Delegates at this Years AGM. Both photographs by Gill Fletcher

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**Please note the closing date for the editor to receive items for the next issue (No. 192) is the 25/1/19.**

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