

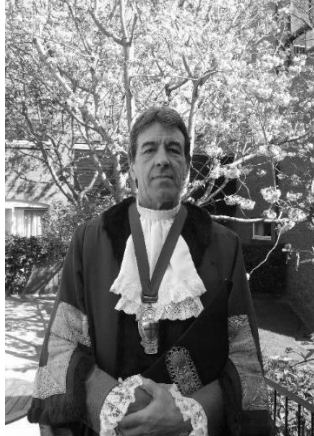
Freemen of England and Wales:



MARTINS WEST

Journal 173. April 2013.
With Compliments.
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Letter from the President.



Dear Members,

The Executive officers have just completed their January meeting and I am sure they join with me in wishing you all a happy new year.

Various issues were discussed regarding the profile of FEW and meeting venues and these are addressed by our Vice President in this issue so I will defer to his entry for you to read and hopefully respond to.

The costs of producing the journal are high; and now we only need one Court meeting each year combined with the AGM, it seems logical to just publish three issues annually to fall in line with the reports of these meetings and a calling notice for the AGM. We are also considering that as some members seem to prefer to keep their meeting minutes apart from the journal, we could accommodate that by these being printed separately and then inserted with the journal prior to mailing. These proposals will be discussed fully at the March Court meeting in York so I would be grateful if you could let me know your views before March 7th.

The March Court will also discuss the modernisation of apprenticeship upon which we are consulting with all Gilds. If any Gilds are still to respond to my initial questionnaire I would be most grateful if they could send in a return to enable me to collate all the details and prepare suggestions and guidelines. Remember it will be your Gilds decision how to apply this method of admission but we are keen to offer any advice that we can.

Don't forget the FEW website has a diary page where you can list your events and hopefully encourage new attendees. As many Gilds events seem to clash (especially within April) it is always useful to compare your dates and perhaps modify some to prevent members having to choose and possibly miss your event. The early bird catches the worm!!

I look forward to meeting as many members as possible over the year (Don't forget the AGM in September is in Oxford and should be excellent value in splendid settings) before my Presidency concludes.

Best wishes,
Alan

Regalia Items for Sale

Elsewhere in this edition of the Journal you will find a full list of Association Regalia that is available from the Hon. Membership Secretary. Since it has been a while since this was last included you may like to take a few minutes perusing what's on offer, noting that we do now have **cufflinks** at £13.50 including P&P. These are similar, but smaller, in design to our lapel badges made in metal with a 3 colour enamelled finish, supplied complete in a presentation box making them suitable for purchasing as gifts.

"Harry Ward 2 - Freemen in England and Wales"

As noted in Journal 171, all material collected by Alan Robson, Past President, has been added to the FEW Website. However, by virtue of the time that has elapsed since this was originally sent to Alan, and combined with the unquestionable effects of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill (HL), it is most likely that this is in need of revision in order to keep it up-to-date and relevant. The onus is now **on the Guilds** to advise of any amendments which need to be made and these may be sent to Stephen White.

The Website

We are grateful to Alan Shelley, Officer without Portfolio, for his further "Viewpoint" contributions covering such topics as "The Localism Bill", "Freedom through Apprenticeship", and a "Glossary of Freemen Terms" which was requested during the 2012 AGM.

We continue to add new Journals as they are published and eventually hope to have all previous content available on-line. However, a glimpse into the Archives has revealed that we do not have copies of numbers 1 to 11, 39, 42, 44 to 65, 67 to 71 and 73. Obviously, the earliest of these goes back to 1966, and the more recent to 1982, but we are hopeful that there is someone out there who has studiously filed their copies away and will be prepared to lend them to us for copying.

Some Diary Events have now been added but there must be more going on, please let Stephen White know so that they can be included on a rolling basis.

In order to strike a balance in the website content, we also wish to present the "human face" of the Association and so have started a "Presidents on Parade" page. Over the years a number of "Profiles on..." have appeared in the Newsletter/Journal but most of these are now out of date. We have also published printed obituaries for those who have since died so we shall be reproducing those as a permanent testament to the contribution each made to FEW and have started with Maurice Pickering. Up-dated profiles, together with a suitable photograph, will be requested from those Past President's who are still with us so that each may have the recognition that they deserve.

The Association now also has a Facebook page. There is a link to it from the website homepage or you may find it at:-

<https://www.facebook.com/FreemenOfEnglandWales>

Alex Christison, Tom Gibson and Stephen White are administering the site and would welcome any photographs of FEW Events, i.e. AGM's Court Meetings, etc. to add to the timeline and to the website.

Members Voting Cards

It has been reported by one of the wardens that some Gilds have mislaid their voting cards which should be carried by their representative for Court and Annual General Meetings.

Any Gilds in this situation should let the membership secretary know so she can send a replacement. They only show the Gild name so can be passed on when the representative changes and are laminated so they should be durable enough to last many years.

Of course with the advent of postal and e-mail voting now being acceptable many Gilds will find the card carrying option to be no longer required; however if you wish to send a voting representative and cannot find the card on the day this will not be a problem as the membership secretary will also carry a duplicate.

Alan Fallows. President.

Land Registration

The problems of registration of Freemens Lands and Rights under the Land Registration Act are still ongoing as we approach the deadline of October 13th this year.

I have recently sent a communication to our Hon QC to up-date him of the situation but as he is frequently working out of the country there may be a delay in any response.

I would be grateful if those Gilds who have members listed as willing to form a legal panel could respond to me with any queries or suggestions on this matter. Alternatively if there are any Gilds who may be able to provide an expert in the field who can give the matter consideration we would be grateful for details so we can appraise them. All is not lost – but time is short.

Alan Fallows. President.

News from the Guilds.

Leicester:

Friday 29th June. Our ties with the Freemen of York were drawn even closer with eight members of the Leicester Gild visiting York for the inauguration of the new Master of the York Gild, Hazel Hague, along with her consort for the year, our own Tony Chettle, a Freeman of Leicester. Congratulations to Hazel on becoming Master of the York Gild and to Tony on becoming her Consort.

Saturday 7th July. The Leicester Gild played host to a group of Freemen from Bridgenorth, Gloucester, Oxford and Shrewsbury, on their arrival they were given a talk by the Master of Leicester Gild on the history of the Freemen of Leicester; this was followed with a tour of Freemen's Holt. After lunch because of the dreadful weather we were experiencing at the time we had to cancel our planned tour of Leicester, but fortunately we had invited Bob Gregory a blue badge guide, who gave a talk and slide show on the history of Leicester. After tea the visitors began their journey home while the sun was shining.

Sunday 19th August. For our second coach outing of the year we visited the deep sea Fishing Heritage Centre at Grimsby. On our arrival in Grimsby at 12 noon we had plenty

of time to view the multi-award winning museum which re-creates Grimsby's maritime history. Deep sea fishing described as one of the toughest jobs in the world. The centre invites you to witness first-hand what life was like for the trawler men and their families in the 1950s. At 1 30 pm we all assembled to board the "Ross Tiger" trawler moored alongside the Centre, once on board we were taken for a guided tour of the trawler, our guide was an ex trawler man who had sailed on the Ross Tiger for over 20 years. He gave a most detailed guide of the trawler and his experiences on life on a trawler spending seventeen days round voyages to Iceland with the decks covered in ice and snow during the winter months. On the completion of our tour of Grimsby we travelled along the coast to Cleethorpes with time for a walk along the sea front before our fish and chip meal. Our many thanks to Stephen White a Freeman of Grimsby who recommended the restaurant. Stephen joined us in the restaurant for a chat and to meet with the Leicester freemen. Thank you for your help Stephen

Friday 7th September. On the invitation of the Coventry Freeman's Guild thirteen members of the Leicester Gild made our way to Barnacle Village Hall for a fish and chip supper, and an evening of games, consisting of table skittles, long alley skittles and the devil among tailors. Challenging Coventry's five teams. Unfortunately at the end of the evening the Leicester team came last. But we did have the best gentleman and lady players in our team scoring the highest number of points throughout the evening. We also won four of the raffle prizes. The Leicester Gild wish to thank the Coventry Freeman for arranging the evening.

Saturday 8th September. The Master of the Leicester Gild John Tolton myself and our ladies were invited to a cheese and wine evening, at St Mary de Castro church in Leicester, for the launch of the Save our Spire appeal. The church is a Grade 1 listed building over 900 years old, dating back to 1107 the same year as the first recorded entry of the freemen of Leicester. The Deputy Lord Mayor and the City Mayor were also present on the evening.

Saturday 10th November 2012 We held a fish and chip supper at Freeman's Holt, this was followed by a very interesting talk by a well known Historian and author Brian Johnson on researching your family history, Brian's highly informative talk took every one down memory lane, with useful tips and guidance to get you started on tracing your family tree.

Sunday 11th November 2012 The Lord Mayor of Leicester invited twelve robed Freeman to join him and Civic Dignitaries 'at the Remembrance Day service held at the war memorial in Victoria Park. Before the service we were invited to join the Civic Dignitaries' for coffee in the Victoria Suite.

Friday 14th December 2012 Once again we arranged our yearly outing to the Little Theatre to see the traditional Pantomime Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood. The evening once again being enjoyed by the Grandparents, Parents and Children alike with the Parents shouting louder than the Children, 'he is behind you'.

Friday 14th December 2012 The Master of Leicester Gild John Tolton with his wife Josie, Tony Chettle, Consort to the Master of York Hazel Hague with Michael and Jean Ayres. joined the Coventry Freeman's Guild for their Christmas Dinner held in St Mary's Guildhall, the evening began with the Master, Charlie Platts extending a warm welcome to all Guild Members and Guests, this was followed by a three course traditional Christmas dinner of Roast Turkey and Christmas Pudding.

The Leicester Gild would like to take this opportunity to wish all members of the FEW a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

The Master of the Leicester Gild and the Wardens of the Court have very much pleasure in notifying you of our forthcoming Annual Banquet to be held on Friday 7th June 2013 Saturday 8th June and Sunday 9th June. The weekend will begin with a Fish and Chips or Chicken and Chips welcome supper on Friday evening at Freeman's Holt, at the cost of £10 per person.

The Saturday evening Banquet will be held at Devonshire Place London Road Leicester. At the price of £39 per person including a reception drink on arrival. On Sunday morning the Leicester Freeman's Annual Service will be held at St Mary de Castro Church. For further information and booking form please contact Maurice Hill, Chamberlain of the Gild at 33 Mossdale Road Kingsway Leicester LE3 2UT. Telephone 0116 2895394 or E-mail: mozjune@talktalk.net

Coventry:

The wettest summer since 1910 saw the Coventry Godiva Festival weekend's events at the end of June cancelled due to boggy conditions in the Memorial Park. The Guild usually has a stand to promote its activities and the City Freedom.

On **18th July** the Guild church of Holy Trinity was filled for the funeral of Barbara Wilkinson, the wife of Past Master and former Clerk George Wilkinson. Guildsmen and partners from York, Leicester and Chester also attended the wake at the RAFA club.

On **29th July** robed members of the Guild Court were in the 'Godiva Awakes' city procession, featuring the huge puppet representation of Lady Godiva, complete with cycle powered cyclopedia, prior to its departure for the 2012 London Cultural Olympiad

On **19th August** our Master Charlie Platts held a Garden Party at the RAFA club, which raised over £300 for his Charities Fund.

On **7th September** the annual Barnacle Village Hall Skittles & Supper event attracted 70 skittlers, including 13 from the Leicester Gild. Long alley, table and bar skittles were all vigorously contested before a welcome fish & chip supper. A raffle raised over £200 for the Master's Charities.

The Heritage Open Days weekend of 8-9th September saw our medieval Guild room open as part of the civic St Mary's Hall complex. This is a helpful promotional event to encourage Coventry Freeman to join the Guild.

On **11th October** the annual Guild Admission Court saw over 20 new members take an oath in the Council House Chamber, before collecting their badge and booklets prior to refreshments in the Crypt.

On **12-14th October**, 20 Coventry Guildsmen and partners motored north for the Chester Guilds weekend. With their Guildhall in new hands, it was pleasing to see it available for the Friday night supper, Saturday banquet, and Sunday robing for the church procession and service. Our thanks to PM Duncan Hall for arranging our stay at the Mill Hotel, together with the Leicester Gild contingent.

On **30th October** a Freeman's Admission Court was chaired by the Lord Mayor and Guild President Tim Sawdon in the Council Chamber. All new Freeman receive a complimentary Guild magazine and Guild Admission form.

On **11th November** our Master and Clerk were invited to join the civic party at the War Memorial Park Cenotaph, for the service by the Bishop of Coventry.

On **13th November** a special Admission Court was held for employees of the Council to

receive their Freedom scroll.

On **15th November** a ‘Horse Race’ night was organised by our Master and Almoner at the Coundon Social Club. Useful funds were raised for the Master’s Charities, and a buffet was enjoyed by over 50 members and friends

On **14th December** the annual Christmas Dinner in St Mary’s Greathall attracted a capacity audience to enjoy the festive five course fare, and entertainment. by a Ladies Barbershop group.

On **18th December** the Lord Mayor held a special Admission Court for an eligible visitor from overseas.

Our congratulations to Bishop Justin Welby on his appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury. He was Chaplain to the Guild in 2007, and is the third Chaplain in recent years to achieve Bishop status. Clearly ‘Chaplain to the Coventry Guild’ is a must have on the CV for aspiring Bishops.

Henley-In-Arden Court Leet:

The annual meeting of the Henley-In-Arden Court Leet took place at GuildHall on Wednesday 13th November. **Fred Dowling** was appointed as the new High Bailiff. He is well known in the town, having served as Low Bailiff in the past year & his “theatrical bent“ (Henley Amateur Dramatics) will certainly help him to “present the Court“ with flair. **Dawn Leech**, was appointed as the new Low Bailiff, which is the first time in 800 years that Henley has a female High Bailiff in the making. Dawn has been very active in the Court in recent years and has done a superb job in raising funds – notably for the Guildhall which is a key feature of the antiquity of Henley. Dawn is someone who likes to get things done in an efficient and professional way – she will be a great asset to Fred in the forthcoming year.

Four new Honorary Burgesses were appointed (which was unprecedented) – **Duncan Bainbridge, Brian Jackson, John Latham & Douglas Bridgewater** – all of whom were ex High Bailiffs, but all have continued to make major contributions after their years in Office to the Court Leet, the Guildhall and Henley-In-Arden.

As is tradition, each of the Court’s officers presented their activities to the Members of the Court, the Visiting Courts of Alcester, Warwick, Stratford & Bromsgrove and the members of the Jury, local people who have been in the area for a minimum of five years and who vote for Members of the Court. Voting took place after the business had been concluded – with two places on the Court being contested by five people, all of whom were keen to join. The two new members elected were Norman Kench, who has lived in Henley for many years, and Alistair Price, who was on the Court for 12 years until 2007, when he resigned for personal reasons. Alistair will bring much past experience with him and he was the driver in getting *Heart Start* set up in Henley.

Finally Dr Douglas Bridgewater, a new Honorary Burgess, made a presentment about an issue concerning the proposed blocking of a footpath in Edge Lane, Beaudesert. This was noted by the Steward David Lodder and will be forwarded to the appropriate authorities.

Pembroke:

A cheque for £250 was recently presented to the H.O.P.E. Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre based at Honeyborough Business Park, Neyland by The Master of the Gild of Freemen of Pembroke Mr Roy Folland to Mr Ken Brombley the Chairman of H.O.P.E.

Also in attendance were other Gild members and H.O.P.E. Associates. (*See Photograph on Back cover*).

H.O.P.E. was initially formed in 1984 when a group of local people, some with MS, began raising funds to establish an Oxygen Treatment (O2T) Centre close to home. After hectic fund raising over two years, the Centre at Honeyborough was finally established on January 6th 1986. The treatment consists of breathing pure medical oxygen whilst in a pressurised environment of up to two atmospheres for an hour each time scheduled for once or twice a week. Benefits can include: improved mobility, improved speech, better control of incontinence, improved eyesight and a general feeling of well being. In the very well equipped unit where those suffering from Multiple Sclerosis and Motor Neuron Disease receive oxygen treatment, there is also Neurological Physiotherapy and other treatment supervised by qualified staff.

A quote from one member says " Following MS attacks, Oxygen Treatment has enabled me to regain energy levels and improve my co-ordination and confidence. Also of tremendous benefit is the fun that we all enjoy at H.O.P.E. There is certainly life after diagnosis" In the H.O.P.E. Centre, people undergoing treatment can gather in a comfortable friendly environment along with their carers, friends and family just to relax and enjoy each others company.

The Centre is open to all those with MS or related diseases in Pembrokeshire and can be contacted on telephone number 01646 600384.

Chester:

The Freemen and Guilds of Chester have now relinquished their lease on the Guildhall, but have obtained favourable conditions from Cheshire West and Chester Council to carry on using the Guildhall for their functions and meetings.

The Guildhall, formerly Holy Trinity Church, is, as many members of FEW will know, a large and handsome nineteenth century building, with medieval foundations. For fifty years the Guildhall was occupied by the Freemen and Guilds, who transformed the abandoned church building into the building we know today, and maintained it, mainly through voluntary effort, as the fine venue it is.

Ian Sumpter has completed his second full term as our President, steering us through the last few years of financial difficulty, and, with Brian Evans, David Starbuck Edwards and others, the negotiations over the future of the Guildhall. Ian, and his wife Liz, for many years, have given enormously to the presence and profile of the Freemen and Guilds in Chester. We owe Ian and Liz a great dept of gratitude.

Cyril Chesters recently retired as Hon. Secretary to the Guilds, after many years, including the managing of the move of the Guilds administrative and secretarial operation to the Forum offices.

We have no President at the moment, but Brian Evans, our Vice President, has stepped into the breach, together with several Past Presidents, to carry out the duties of President. Brian was born and brought up in Chester, and was made free in 1971. He was educated at the King's School, Chester, and the University of Sheffield where he read civil and structural engineering. He has travelled widely, and worked in Libya and Qatar. Brian is married to Sheila, and has a daughter Claire. He is a Chartered Civil Engineer, and a Fellow of the Institute of Arbitrators. He enjoys golf.

Brian has carried out a thorough overhaul of the accounts, and initiated a number of Committees to run the Guilds, in tandem with the elected officers and the Guilds Council.

There is also to be a revision of the Constitution.

On 30 May members of the Freemen and Guilds welcomed the Olympic Torch to the city, carried by Beth Tweddle, a world champion gymnast.



Freemen were also, on Jubilee Weekend, involved, as were the freemen of old, in the parade of Giants through the city streets. On this occasion, the giants were of H.M.the Queen, and were very attractive and imposing.

We look forward to welcoming our many friends from FEW to our Annual Banquet in October.

Our Contact details are as follows: Peter Thompson, Asst. Hon. Secretary, Chester Freemen and Guilds, Floor 2, The Forum Offices, CHESTER CH1 5HS

Tel: 01244 977280 chesterfreemenandguilds@gmail.com

Haverfordwest:

The dramatic decline in trade and population in Haverfordwest's High Street during the last couple of decades was highlighted at the AGM of the Haverfordwest Gild of Freemen. Burgess and former High Street businesswoman for half a century, Pat Swales Barker, in a talk on the history of the town centre commerce, said that in the 1860s there were 291 people living and carrying on business in the High Street. It was at the centre of the town's commerce and large families and staff lived 'above the shop.'

She said the sale in the 1980s of the old Market Hall in Market Street and its relocation on the Riverside had been the start of the downward trend in trade and commerce when major local stores began to move down from the High Street and some even out of town.

Businesses were still closing or relocating.

"By September over £2.8m in grant aid had been spent on refurbishing historic properties in High Street and Market Street, but, unfortunately, this coincided with a serious worldwide financial crisis, and a shift of the town centre downhill," she said.

The AGM was the opening event of the Gild's Annual Weekend, attended by Freemen and

Burgesses, some of them having travelled long distances to claim their traditional cash hand-outs. One Freeman, John Edmund and his wife, crossed over from Canada to attend. It was an historic meeting as 14 new Lady Freeman were welcomed on their first appearance since new laws opened admission to the female line.

Held in County Hall the AGM Gild members received a welcome from Town Mayor Councillor Ken Wyburn and apology for absence from one of its latest Burgesses, Cllr Peter Morgan, chairman of Pembrokeshire County Council, who is making a good recovery from illness.

Gild Master Charles Davies, who opened proceedings with a silent tribute to Freeman who had died since last year, including former Master Malcolm Green, former Deputy Master Lewis Thomas, Freeman Tom Hughes and Freeman Bill Phillips and Bishop Ivor Rees, reported that the Gild Court had decided to offer the site of Haroldston House, home of benefactor Sir John Perrot, to CADW as its restoration was beyond the Gild's resources.

Roy Folland, Master of the Pembroke Gild and Welsh Warden for the Freeman of England Wales, reported on a recent visit to wealthy Leicester Gild, which had retained some of its land on which 37 bungalows had been built for retired Freeman at a rent of £12.50 a week.

"Many Gilds lost their land under the 1835 Municipal Reform Act, but I am glad to say that Haverfordwest was not one of them," he said.

Chairman of Estates, Freeman Malcom Thomas, reported that 16 new Freeman were admitted, 14 of whom were women, with 25 Lady Freeman now members. Of the 253 acre estate extending from Portfield Gate to Brooksgrove, he said everything was in order. £500 had been donated to the Town Museum and £100 to help a young Haverfordwest golfer compete. The Freeman's Roll, a large tome opened in 1881, had been completed and a replacement, at a cost of over £600 was necessary.

Around 140 members and guests attended the annual banquet at Wolfscastle Country Hotel when the toast to the Gild was proposed by the vice-chairman of Pembrokeshire County Council, Cllr Arwyn Williams, who said chairman Cllr Peter Morgan was proud to have become a Burgess and sent his regards. It was a tribute to the Gild that 12 years into the 21st century it remained as successful as ever. The enrolment of female Freeman augured well for the future.

Responding, the Master commented on the controversial proposal at Haverfordwest castle and said: "The Gild will do everything in its power to ensure that whatever is done is in the best interests of the town." There was no objection to the development of the old gaol but to the loss of public access. Burgess Major John Warren proposed the toast to the guests, including the Lord Lieutenant, The Hon Robin Lewis and Mrs Lewis, and the Mayor.

Guest speaker Richard Palmer, Executive Director of the British Olympic Committee, referred to the success of both the 2012 Olympic Games and the Paralympics which followed, and revealed that the bid was so technical and complex that it cost £500,000 to produce. Nothing untoward happened, the biggest crisis being the security company's failure to provide cover, the Navy, Army and Airforce coming in to assist. Transportation worked seamlessly, moving thousands of people all over London, the athletes performed better than ever before, the crowds were brilliant and a legacy of provision of sports facilities promised every support for sports clubs for young people.

“I believe that the 2012 Olympics, more than any politician can ever do, has made this country one nation,” he said.

The annual Church Service at St Martins on the Sunday was well attended and the retired Bishop of Lincoln, The Right Rev Dr John Saxbee preached an impressive sermon, the Master Charles Davies and Trustees Chairman Malcolm Thomas reading the lessons.

York:

Since welcoming many of you to the FEW AGM the York Gild has of course been very active, despite the floods which have twice now closed several riverside streets.

Thankfully our events have not been affected.

Since the council have accepted that the 2009 bill does apply to York (thanks to the efforts of Richard Helstrip, Tom Gibson and June Smith Parker) they have received numerous applications from people who previously were not eligible. The main change in York that the Bill has brought about has been the removal of the requirement for the applicant to have been born after the Freeman they are claiming from was made free. In December the first full freedom court was held under this change and some 58 applicants were admitted (Including the Hon. Editors Wife and Daughter).



Photograph: Hazel Hague, Master of the York Gild (Robed Left) and Tom Gibson (Robed Right) congratulate Donna Gibson and Christine Gibson on their admission as freemen of the City of York in December 2012.

Mrs. Smith Parker is currently researching and digitising the Freemans Rolls on behalf of the City Archives, during this research she discovered that people claiming from a generation further back than had previously been known had been admitted in the past.

The December court also saw the first applicants claiming from Great Great grandparent being admitted. We have a further freedom Court with a larger number (69) to be admitted in February, hopefully this will mean some of them join the Gild.

The festive season saw our usual Lunch and Dinner, which were well attended and we also hosted the Carol service for York's Guilds. This event is always sees All saints packed with most in good voice rewarded by refreshments of mulled wine and mince pies

afterwards.

By the time you read this (though still in the future as this is written) we shall have held two events in January, our first Burns night Celebration and we shall have participated with the other Bedern Guilds in the York Residents festival, an opportunity to showcase the Gild to the public.

Looking forward the annual Harry Ward Lecture this year will be held on the evening of the 26th February, it will be a talk and slide show by Mr. Paul Deamer, Master Mason, giving a Stone Masons view of York Minster.

Our Banquet weekend will begin with a Pie and Pea supper at Clifton Park Sports club on the evening of Friday 19th April, tickets £8. On Saturday 20th there are opportunities to visit the Mansion House for a guided tour (£5 per person or £4 concessions) or take a trip on the Ouse (£7.50 per person). That evening the 58th Annual Banquet will be held at the Merchant Adventurers Hall, 7pm for 7.30pm tickets £50 each. Our Annual service will be held the following day. For full details and bookings please contact:

Mr. Steve Hornby, 12 Marlborough Close. Rawcliffe Manor. York. YO30 5WA.

Or email: hornby.steven@yahoo.co.uk

Finally we now have a new website and a facebook group which are regularly updated with news and forthcoming event details from the Gild they can be found at:

Website: www.freemenofyork.com Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/freemenyork

We look forward to welcoming F.E.W. Back to Bedern Hall for your meeting in March.

York Stray's Council:

It has been some time since we have reported any news from The Stray's council, however the past year or so has been worthy of note.

After some considerable work by the Pasture Masters and Wardens, the Council at last has a constitution. It was formally adopted at a special meeting held immediately before the Gild Court meeting in May 2011. Sadly this proved to be the last meeting attended by our long time Secretary, Moyra Johnson, who became ill shortly afterwards and later passed away. Most of the Stray's Council members were amongst those at her funeral which was extremely well attended. there can be no doubt of the value of Moyra's devotion to the work of the Stray's Council.

Our first AGM under the new constitution, saw Mrs. June Smith Parker elected as Secretary and re elected Tom Gibson, as Chairman.

One of our main tasks continues to be trawling through the red tape of Land registry, made all the more difficult since the York office closed and we must now deal with the regional office in Durham. This work is ongoing ,after having to restart it all when all previous details we had provided were mislaid between the York office and Durham during the move.

The pasture Masters and Wardens who attend our twice yearly meetings keep a useful watching brief over the Stray's here in York, reporting problems to The City of York Council, our relationship with whom has improved and continues to do so.

Shrewsbury:

The Shrewsbury Gild held their Christmas dinner at a new venue this year of The Corbet Arms at Uckington just outside the town.

The Gild were pleased to welcome Freemen from Bridgnorth, London, Newcastle under

Lyme and our FEW rep from Stafford with their wives and partners to enjoy a most relaxed and convivial evening.

Our AGM weekend will be held on Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st April this year at the Lord Hill Hotel and Abbey Church. We will welcome any Freemen to come and join us and enjoy our beautiful town. Full details will be included on the FEW website or you can contact FEW President Alan Fallows who will be pleased to pass on information.

Bridgnorth:

Saturday 24th November 2012. Bridgnorth Freeman Held there 31st Banquet at The Mill Hotel Alveley. 60 people attended the evening including The Town Mayor Con Norman Cottrall, The President of The Freeman of England and Wales Mr Alan Fallows, Shrewsbury Freeman, Bridgnorth Freeman and Guests. Also present at the banquet were some of the newly enrolled Lady Freeman of Bridgnorth.



Pictured: Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth Freeman. (Photograph by Eddie Brown).

Back row: Lionel Morris, Mike Jenks, Tony Head Master of Bridgnorth Gild of Freemen, Alan Fallows President of Freemen of England & Wales, Mrs Val Fallows, Douglas Crumpton.

Middle row: Robin Spickernell, Norman Head, Robert Davies, Bill Head, Richard Foxall, Jim Head, Jeremy Rogers, Peter Spickernell, Eddie Brown.

Front row: Elizabeth Stenning, Thelma Pugh, Freda Spickernell, Nicola Robbins, Jennifer Ridley, Katy Rogers, Jennifer Rogers.

Great Grimsby:

A rather belated piece of news from the last Mayor's Court which was held on 30th August 2012. Your Vice President, Stephen White, was originally admitted a Freeman under the unique-to-Grimsby rule of being married to a Freeman's daughter. In fact, Stephen's father was also a Freeman but owing to National Service was not entered onto

the Pastures Roll until after Stephen's birth. Under the provisions of the recent Local Democracy Bill Stephen successfully applied for re-admittance to the Roll by Birth and so became the first, and only so far, person to be admitted under different rules. Stephen's son-in-law, John Pywell, was admitted at the same time.

The improvements to the market are now nearing completion with the installation of new refrigeration units due to take place soon. New doors and fascias have been fitted to improve the front elevation and the income from the solar panel installation on the roof during the first year of operation has met expectations.

Contracts were signed with the Government at the end of October for the European Regional Development Funding that will lead to a £1.3m investment to create a Business and Media Hub in a disused part of the market. Tenders for a Professional Contract Team have recently been received and appointments made and we are now awaiting an evaluation visit before we tender out the construction work which needs to be completed by the end of December 2013

Whilst all retail has been hard-hit, and markets especially, we are "holding our own" with an even greater variety of stalls and goods on offer that can't be found on the typical high street. The second round of Mary Portas Funding, that we worked on with the Council, was unsuccessful but the Council have announced Grants to renovate shop fronts along Freeman Street to complement the environmental works that they will be carrying out.

Altrincham and its Court Leet.

By, Alderman Chris Hill, Recorder, Archivist & Bye-law man.



Prior to the Assize, Burgess David Eastwood, at the Mayors request, unveils a Golden Jubilee Comemorative Stone. Members of the Altrincham Court Leet are in attendance to the left. Picture courtesy Ald. Chris Hill.

Altrincham is a typical market town having received a charter in 1290. It occupies a terraced, sandstone hill, skirted to the north by the northern 'Watling Street' and the Bridgewater canal, and to the south by the river Bollin. It had the first commuter railway

line, from Manchester, in the country. It also has the distinction of having the first industrial estate in the country, pre-dating Trafford Park by ten years, and it eventually became an important centre of heavy industry; one factory had a milling machine big enough to make the propellers for the Queen Elizabeth. Despite this the Town is a pleasant place to live in and the surrounding countryside is salubrious, which has attracted many merchants and other wealthy people who had businesses in Manchester, to take advantage of these conditions. This has come about due to the control by the earls of Stamford, who were very particular about keeping the development of the surrounds of their estate in a pleasant and up-market condition.

The Town was a 'hot-bed' of nonconformitism with national repercussions and it was the birth place of the Salvation Army. Among the notable people who have resided in the area are: the dramatist Ronald Gow ('Love on the Dole'); the artists Helen Allingham and her sister Caroline Sharpe, Susan Isobel Dachre and Lucy Fildes; Alan Turing (computers), the inventor J.E. Thornton (of world famous Thornton-Picard cameras) inventor of the focal plane shutter, the daylight loading film pack and a forerunner of Technicolor; the authors Horatia Ewing and Alison Uttley; the renowned conductor Hans Richter and virtuoso violinist Adolf Brodski; the composer John Ireland; the Crossley brothers (gas engines and motor vehicles); the 'Red Dean', Hewlett Johnson; Roy Chadwick, the designer of the Manchester and Lancaster bombers, even designing parts of the Vulcan, and lastly, Christopher Landon, a photographer and film-script writer e.g. 'The Secret Life of Suzie Wong', 'Ice Cold in Alex').

The first recorded Court Leet Mayor was in 1420, since then Altrincham's Court Leet has survived beyond Parliament's 1835 'Municipal Corporations Act', which ended many such administrative bodies. Gradually, since 1835, the administrative duties of governing the Town were taken over by elected members of a Council, empowered by various Parliamentary Acts to improve the life of the Town and cope with all the complications of modern urbanisation. Up until 1935, the Court Leet still provided the Mayor, with the elected head of the Council holding the purse strings. The Court was then disbanded by the Earl of Stamford. However, as national administration gradually changed, Altrincham was in danger of losing its proud individuality by being incorporated into a new Authority, which was an amalgamation of Lancashire and Cheshire boroughs, either side of the Mersey, forming the Metropolitan Borough of Trafford. The new Authority wished to establish its own identity and tended to play down the individuality of its constituent boroughs, so the Earl decided to resurrect the Court Leet, to act as a lobbying agent for other groups within the Town and, where necessary, negotiate with the local authority which came into power in 1975. The new Court also continues to preserve the ancient ceremonial part of the Town's activities. Shortly after this the Earl died and the Barony ceased, but there is still a Lord of the Manor from within the Stamford family.

The Court's year starts with the Michaelmas Assize when a new Provost is appointed. This happens when the Barony Steward places his hand on the shoulder of one of three candidates put forward by the Court Leet. The Provost then swears in his officers after defining their duties. The officers from the previous year read out their presentments, being a record of events since the last Assize. Finally, any public complaints are heard. The new Provost is then presented to the people of Altrincham, first from steps of the Town Hall building, opposite the Market Hall, then by procession round the Town centre. There are two other Assizes in the 'year', at Hilary and Trinity, the latter in the courtyard of

Dunham Hall, a National Trust property, bequeathed by Roger, tenth Earl of Stamford (the last in line), together with a very handsome financial endowment to help with its upkeep. There are several church services through the year; a Barony Service, a Provost's service, and an ecumenical Carol service. The Court takes part in the Town's Festival Parade, and it 'Beats the Bounds' of the ancient Saxon town boundary, a distance of about eight miles. (incidentally, on its way round the boundary, the Court is allowed to use a way between two roads, but only in one direction, this being written into the deeds of neighbouring houses; surely a very unusual footpath.) Remembrance Sunday is quite busy; first, the Barony Steward lays a wreath at the war memorial at St. Mark's, Dunham Massey village, then, with the same vicar, he joins the rest of the Court Leet to attend another service, at the usual time, at the Altrincham cenotaph, where the Provost flanked by his constables, lays a wreath. This is followed by a third ceremony at a Blue Plaque site, which commemorates the men of Chapel Street, who from 60 houses provided 161 soldiers in WW1, of which 29 were killed. Recognition of their heroic effort came when King George VI visited the Town and praised this contribution to the war coming from: "The bravest little street in the country." This is followed by yet another acknowledgement at a remembrance site where a land-mine dropped in WW2 killed some fourteen people. Sometimes, because the Mayor wishes to be involved in several ceremonies, other services may be held later in the afternoon. Such was the case this year, so that the Provost and his Deputy were invited to share the saluting base at Hale, for a processional march-past.

Other activities include the awarding of Trading Awards for businesses which have served the community for twenty five, fifty, or a hundred, years. Achievements of special note can be recognised with 'Silver Lion' Certificates, so called because early members of the 'modern' Court Leet had silver lion badges made, but these has proved too expensive to continue.

The Court meets every month for an ordinary meeting. Should a candidate be proposed as a prospective Freeman, this will be submitted in writing, with a seconder, and a procedure is followed out to confirm, or otherwise decide, if that person should be notified with an offer of freedomship. Only after this decision by the Court is the candidate notified of the offer. Some do not accept the offer, others do, but then take no further interest in the Court Leet. Should a Freeman join the Court Leet, they may be an ordinary member, or an officer of the Court. They will be distinguished by a different collarette. When a Burgess has served a year as Provost, they then become aldermen. There are three ways of becoming a Freeman. The first is to be proposed and elected as described. The second is to own a Burgage plot within the Town. The third is to be appointed by the Baron's Steward.

The Court also looks after various things important to the Town. Examples of such items are a Tapestry celebrating the 700th anniversary of the Town's 1290 Charter, and the Town's Bell rescued from the old Butter Market building where the Court Leet used to meet in the upper room. The Barony appoints a Town Crier on behalf of the Court Leet and has its own chaplain.

The Court contains some thirty odd active members with about the same number of non- or only partially active members, the result of disinterest, having moved away from the Town or have commitments which prevent them attending meetings, but many of these show up at events such as the Carol and Remembrance service. The Court has had some

illustrious members, including a Q.C. But presently it has, a Lord and Lady, a V.C. (The first to be given by the present Queen in her reign), four M.B.E's, a B.E.M, several JP's. and this year the Court Leet chaplain was awarded the Volunteer Reserves Medal by the Queen. In the past the Barony Steward has produced handbooks Giving details of the Guilds and other bodies which make up F.E.W. Altrincham has hosted F.E.W's A.G.M. And provided officers for it's administration. Altrincham may be in somewhat of a backwater, but nevertheless the Court hopes it is doing it's bit to keep "The Freedom" alive.

From the Vice President.

One of the items that we considered at the recent Executive Officer's Meeting was the venue for Court Meetings. It has been noted that attendances in recent years has fallen off which may have been due to there being Courts held in both March and June, or the locations chosen. Now that we have decided to revert back to just a March Court perhaps all will make an effort to attend?

We have also decided, for this year, to hold the Court at York which is where, if you look back over the records, it always used to be held. We do appreciate though that this is not a central location, and may not be convenient to all, so will be proposing that we alternate between York and Leicester, (Freemen's Holt), in future. At the end of the day though it is your views that are important so do please let us know where you would like to meet if you are not happy with these proposals and we will do our best to accommodate the majority.

A Warden's Meeting has been scheduled to take place at Bedern Hall, before the Court Meeting, at 12.00noon.

Whilst reading through old copies of the Newsletters, for items suitable for inclusion on the website, I often come across something half-forgotten which brings back a memory of a particular time and place or person. It seems only yesterday that we were celebrating the 100th Newsletter, (the one with the silver cover), to coincide with our 25th Anniversary and yet we are now only three years away from our Golden Jubilee. In all of the time that I have been involved I have become accustomed to the familiar faces which have supported the common aims and objectives; we come from disparate parts of the kingdom and yet are united by the common bond of the freedom.

Whilst one has to accept that advancing years are often a limiting factor in ones activities I would shudder at the thought that any of our "elder statesmen" felt that they had nothing further to offer the Association. And I would go further. I had always envisaged that, having established the position of Past President, any such person receiving this status would be welcomed as an ex-officio member of the Executive in perpetuity for the Association simply cannot afford to dispense with the knowledge that has been gained in the years leading up to, and then the time in office as President. It is true that the Association needs to attract new blood if it is to survive, but I am reminded of a song that we used to sing round the camp fire when I was in the Scouts, "Make new friends, keep the old, one is silver and the other gold."

REGALIA ORDER No1

Please forward the following items bearing the "FREEMEN OF ENGLAND AND WALES" logo:-

| | Please state | | Quantity |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
|Tie. | Navy Blue or Maroon | @ £ 13.80 each | £..... |
|Medallion | Silver Gilt (hallmarked) | @ £ 100.50 each | £..... |
| | Metal Gilt | @ £ 68.00 each | £..... |
|Wall Plaque | | @ £ 28.50 each | £..... |
|Blazer Badge (90mm round) ** | | @ £ 15.80 each | £..... |
|Robe Badge (150mm round) *** | | @ £ 21.90 each | £..... |
| | ** To be worn on blazer breast pocket | *** To be worn on left sleeve. | |
|Lapel Badge | | @ £ 3.30 each | £..... |
|Car Sticker | | @ £ 1.10 each | £..... |
|Book Sticker | | @ £ 1.10 each | £..... |
|Membership Certificate | | @ £ 2.80 each | £..... |
|Ceremonial Gown (in polyester) | | @ £195.00 each # | £..... |
|Ceremonial Gown (in wool worsted) | | @ £280.00 each # | £..... |
|For the gowns please state | Chest size; _____ | Height; _____ | |
| #(EXCLUDES BADGE) | | | |
|Eprit Pen (a real must have) | | @ £ 3.50 each | £..... |
|Real Leather Wallet for documents and card | | @ £ 16.50 each | £..... |
|Enamel Logo Cuff Links | | @ £ 13.50 pair | £..... |

I wish to make a contribution to the **Legal Fund** to provide for legal advice on Freemen's problems.....£.....

I wish to make a donation to the **Insignia & Robe Fund** £.....

Total amount £ _____

Name _____

Address _____

_____ **Post code** _____

Date _____

Occupation _____

Tel No: _____

Signature _____

This form should be returned to the Honorary Membership Secretary.

Ms Eileen Forth, 88 Whitethorn Close, Huntington, York. YO31 9EU. Tel No:- 01904 638361

All prices include postage and packing. Please make all cheques payable to;

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REGALIA ORDER No2

Please forward The following items bearing the (old) "FREEMEN OF ENGLAND" logo whilst stocks last

| | | | |
|---|----------------|-------|--------|
| Please state | | | |
|Ladies scarf..Green only | @ £ 6 .60 each | | £..... |
|Lapel Badge | @ £ 1 .70 each | | £..... |
|Sticker | @ £ 0 .60 each | | £..... |
|The Book "FREEMEN IN ENGLAND" by Harry Ward | @ £ 6 .50 each | | £..... |

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Aspects of the Freedom's by Charles Sparrow QC, FEW Past Honorary Counsellor | 1982 to 2003 |
|Freemen's land and property.....(Great Grimsby 1982)----Freedom by servitude.....(York 1983) | |
|Local Acts of Parliament.....(Shrewsbury 1984)-----Women and the Freedom.....(Oxford 1985) | |
|Life with the York Bill.....(Ipswich 1987)-----Freemen's Lands.....(Newcastle-under -Lyme1989) | |
|Managing the Freedom and it's public image.....(Chester 1990)-----Women and their part in the Freedom.....(York1991) | |
|Customs Acts and Charters.....(Great Grimsby 1992)-----The end of a holiday.....(Leicester 1993) | |
| Women and the Freedom Today.....(Berwick 1994)-----The Singularity of the Freedom.....(Coventry 1995) | |
|Admission by Apprenticeship today.....(Haverfordwest 1996)----- At the Crossroads.....(Shrewsbury 1997) | |
|The 1835 Act and it's penalty today.....(Oxford 1998)-----The Unity of the Freedom.....(Altrincham 1999) | |
|The Freedom and it's Future.....(Newcastle 2000)-----Learning from Apprenticeship.....(Great Grimsby 2001) | |
|The Freedom's Debt to York.....(York 2002)-----A Grave Menace.....((Durham 2003) | |

| | | | |
|---|-----------------|-------|--------|
| <u>All of the above</u> | @ £ 1 .75 each | | £..... |
| All Articles "Aspects of the Freedom" (Bound in A4 size only) | @ £ 22 .00 each | | £..... |
| Maurice Pickering "The Guild History" (Bound in A4 size only) | @ £ 22 .00 each | | £..... |

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Hon Secretary's Notices.

- 1) FEW apologizes for having stated in the 2012 AGM Minutes, that Leslie Morgan had resigned as FEW Warden for the North West, when he had of course **retired** from office.
- 2) Currently it is not possible to progress the production of any updated version of Harry Ward's book "Freemen in England" due to the lack of current information from many FEW Gild Members. Would all Gild Members please give serious consideration to updating their entries where necessary, and additionally, to provide the following information about their Gilds as soon as possible? :-
 - a) Any changes to the Gild's admission criteria, as a result of changes imposed through the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act.
 - b) Any changes to land-holding or customary rights as a result of the current Land Registration Act.
 - c) Any arrangements for changes to, or for Admission by Apprenticeship; or notification that this is under consideration.

Notice is hereby given to all Guild Representatives, Wardens, and Executive Officers that the next FEW Court Meeting will be held on Saturday 16th March 2013 at 2.00pm in Bedern Hall, York

AGENDA

- 1) Attendees to sign register and be seated.
 - a) Call to order, Opening of Court, and Welcome.
- 2) Apologies for absence.
- 3) Minutes of the Court Meeting held on Saturday 17th March 2012 in the Community Room, Freemen's Holt, Leicester.

These minutes were published in Journal No 170, April 2012.

 - a) Approval of minutes.
- 4) Matters Arising, not forming any other part of this agenda.
- 5) President's Report.
- 6) Deputy President's Report.
- 7) Vice President's Report.
- 8) Wardens' Reports.
- 9) Hon Treasurer's Report.
- 10) Hon Membership Secretary's Report.
- 11) Hon Archivist's Report.
- 12) Hon Editor's Report.
- 13) Officer Without Portfolio's Report.
- 14) FEW Cost Reductions.
- 15) Future FEW AGM Venues.
- 16) Any Other Business.
- 19) Closure of Court.

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Website: <http://www.freemen-few.org.uk>

New Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/FreemenOfEnglandWales>

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Front Cover: Leicester Guildhall. Courtesy of Brian Mudford, Freeman of Leicester.

Back Cover: Top; Mr Roy Folland. Master of The Gild of Freeman of Pembroke presenting a donation to Mr Ken Brombley Chairman of H.O.P.E.

Bottom; Mr. Paul Morgan with Nick Park CBE. (of Wallace and Grommit fame) at the Preston Guild 2012.

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Please note the closing date for the editor to receive items for the next issue (No. 174) is the 22/3/13.

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