



Freemen of England and Wales.



**Journal 179, Autumn 2014,
Annual Record and Gazette.
With compliments.
ISSN 1749-4095**

Presidents Letter.

Dear Members.

I have now completed my first full year as your President and the time has really gone quickly. I am please to say that everything is going well.

The membership is once again increasing not only with the full Individual Members but also the Associate Membership, we have also gained one new Associate Guild Member with the possibility of another one in the pipeline.

Members residing in other Guild areas are asking if they can be involved with those Guilds where they reside.

More members are attending social functions in support of their Guilds and even supporting other Guilds.

I see that more members in the Guilds are coming forward to join their own courts, especially the ladies. I would ask from this that Members of FEW give serious thought to taking on a role on the Executive Committee of FEW. We are all getting older and a bit long in the tooth and we are looking for members to put themselves forward to take our places.

We have people on the Executive doing two jobs to keep things going and this is not a good position to be in

We need ensure the future of the Freedom for the generations to come. We really need to think seriously now about it not when it becomes desperate.

I spoke last time of tapping into other organizational skills and knowledge especially in the advertising field. I have actually been putting out some ideas to a museum and they are interested in putting on a display for us and they will do this for free for about six weeks, in fact they said that if we make it interesting enough they would probably put some money into it by supplying larger display posters etc and possibly keep it longer.

I don't need to say it but think of what could be achieved if we could make up a display and where it could lead.

I have brought it to the attention of the Executive so any Guilds that could help in this one with History, Regalia, literature or information please help.

A slot for anything we decide has been pencilled in at the museum concerned for sometime in 2015. If we are going to do this we need to act quickly.

In 2015 one of our Gilds/Guilds are thinking to organize a large Freemen, family and friends affair. I have been given a rough outline of the ideas and it promises to be well

worth attending. I promised to keep you informed. The update on this is that it is still \

ongoing.

Gordon.

Notes taken during the OPEN FORUM held on Saturday 20th September 2014 at Yarnfield Conference Centre, Staffordshire.

- 1) The President, Gordon Varndell opened the proceedings by requesting discussion on the subject of apprenticeships as a means of obtaining the Freedom. John Edwards stated that Stafford have defined a limited range of criteria for qualification, and that the Guild arbitrates when the qualification is not necessarily recognised by the local authority. He noted that apprenticeships in Stafford used to be 7 years, but this had now been reduced to just 3 years. He stated that determining an adequate qualification was uppermost in the reasoning as to what was an acceptable training.

Alan Fallows responded by emphasising that the Indenture is the important factor, and that generally a 5 year term is now the acceptable norm.

Derek Austin pointed out that apprenticeship was the only means of obtaining the Freedom of the City of Coventry, and that the 5 year qualifying term was bound by an Act. Alan Fallows continued by stating that by whatever means, a Qualification Examination was necessary at the end of the apprenticeship term. He then suggested that a 3 year term should be the absolute minimum requirement, with full qualification being at least up to NVQ3 standard. He queried whether an NVQ qualification could be classed as an Indenture.

Capt. Jim Evans stated that all Gilds are individual, and thereby create their own rules. He emphasised that the candidate must be known to, and approved by the Gild. This, he said might then be considered as a Nominal Apprenticeship.

Alan Fallows then stated that there must be a formal document at the start and finish of the term. He then posed the question as to how the responsibility of a Freeman is to be tied into the apprenticeship.

Capt. Jim Evans stated that all Gilds must determine and follow their own rules.

Alan Shelley noted that he has published appropriate papers on the FEW website.

Alan Fallows noting that FEW can only advise on any Gild matter, and not determine any ruling, and as this subject is a customary situation for each Gild, suggested that any queries should be addressed to FEW.

Capt. Stephen Healy stated that FEW must not dictate to any Gild which has its own system, but should perhaps advise any Gild that does not have a scheme.

Alan Fallows assured him that FEW does indeed only ever act in an advisory capacity.

2) Capt. Stephen Healy queried the acceptance for membership of Associate Members who are not Freemen.

Alan Fallows replied that FEW is always pleased to obtain the interest of its Associates.

3) Tom Gibson was pleased to announce that the long term strained relationships with York City Council over the York Strays, had considerably eased of late, and should lead to an acceptable conclusion. Due to space constraints, a copy of the statement he delivered will be included in the next issue. Tom thanked FEW for its support, advice and help.

4) Alan Fallows noted that he had been in communication with a firm of Barristers in Southampton, who deal with Land Registration issues, and who are prepared to advise FEW on its members' problems. The costs to FEW for such help will be put to the March 2015 Court for approval.

Minutes of AGM

Minutes of the 48th Annual General Meeting of the Association of Freemen of England and Wales held on Saturday 20th September 2014 at Yarnfield Conference Centre, Staffordshire

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

List of those delegates attending: Geoff Anderson, Alnwick; David Appleby, Alnwick; Derek Austin, Coventry; Michael Ayres, Leicester; John Barden, London; Alex Christison, Berwick-upon-Tweed; Howard Crapper, Oxford; John Edwards, Stafford; Maureen Eland, York; Capt. Jim Evans, Berwick-upon-Tweed; David Fairnell, Berwick-upon-Tweed; Alan Fallows, Shrewsbury; Michael Farmer, Stafford; Robin Folland, Pembroke; Roy Folland, Pembroke; Eileen Forth, York & London; Tom Gibson, York; Pete Glover, Stafford; Terry Griffin, Stafford; Hazel Hague, York; Mervyn Hall, Alnwick; D.Hanlon, Stafford; Colin Hardcastle, York & London; Capt. Stephen Healy, Newcastle upon Tyne; John Heslop,

Durham; Nick R.S.Johnson, Hale; John Keggin, Northampton; Phillip Kinnersley, Stafford; Graeme Knox, Alnwick; Ron Leek, Alcester & London; Ray Mason, Newcastle-under-Lyme; Carl Mattison, Alnwick; Jimmy Mattison, Alnwick; Tommy Mattison, Alnwick; J.D.McElwee, Durham; Leslie Morgan, London & Hale; Paul Morgan, London ; Anthony Piddock, Stafford; Brian Piddock, Stafford; Eileen Reynolds, Coventry; Alan Shelley, Sudbury; Robert Shepherd, Alnwick; Terry Sibley, Northampton; Brian Simpson, Newcastle-under-Lyme; Ray Spurway, Stafford; Alec Stephenson, York; Beryl Stephenson, York; William Straughan, Alnwick; Paul Targett, Stafford; J.P.Tolley, Altrincham; Gordon Vardell, London; Wayne Warlow, London; Lynda Weatherley, Berwick-upon-Tweed; Richard Williams, Stafford; Stephen White, Grimsby

With the FEW Mace in position in front of the gathering, the meeting was called to order by the President, Gordon Vardell. Welcoming everyone present, he then formally declared the AGM open.

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Bill Allen, Stafford; Charles Davies, Haverfordwest; Alf Ely, Stafford; Donna Gibson, York; Martin Hanks, Warden for the SW; Michael Herriott, Berwick-upon-Tweed; Denis Nixon, Alnwick; Howard and Elsie Pate, Chester; James Shepherd, Alnwick; Ray Stone, Oxford.

The Hon Membership Secretary, Eileen Forth read out the names of eight members who had passed away during the preceding twelve months:- David J.Agar, Northampton; William Burrows, Oxford; G.M.Green, Haverfordwest; John Heller, London; Ken Lancaster, Altrincham; John Stephenson, London; Howard Thomas, Llantrisant; Thomas Winup, London. A minute's silence was observed in their memory.

The minutes of the 47thAGM held on Saturday 14th September 2013 in Oxford were approved by the meeting and signed by the President, following a proposal from Capt. Jim Evans, Berwick-upon-Tweed, seconded by Nick Johnson, Hale. There were no matters arising.

Gordon Vardell then presented his President's Report. A copy is appended.

Ron Leek next presented his Deputy President's Report. Copy appended.

Vice President, Stephen White presented his report. Copy appended. He then introduced each Warden in turn, to present their reports as follows:-

Warden for the North, Capt. Stephen Healy. Copy appended.

Warden for the North East, Colin Hardcastle. Copy appended.

Warden for the East, Norman Offield. No report was available, as Norman was not present, nor had tendered an apology.

Warden for Wales, Roy Folland. Copy appended.

Warden for the South West, Martin Hanks. Stephen White noted that in the absence of Martin, he understood that currently things were very quiet down in the South West, and therefore no report would have been presented had Martin been present.

Warden for the West, Howard Crapper. Copy appended.

Warden for the South Midlands, Derek Austin. Copy appended.

Warden for the South East, Nick Johnson. Copy appended.

Warden for the North Midlands, John Edwards. Copy appended

Thanking John for his report, the Vice President also thanked him and the Stafford Guild for arranging this AGM. The meeting endorsed these thanks with a resounding round of applause.

Stephen, noting that the position of Warden for the North West was still vacant, was pleased to request the former Warden for this region, Leslie Morgan, to address the meeting. Leslie extended greetings to everyone from member Stuart McArthur. He then reported on his and his son Paul's time representing FEW at the Preston Guild, which is only convened every 20 years, and noted that he had been fortunate in obtaining a copy of a large volume entitled "The Official Record of the Preston Guild 2012" in which FEW features importantly in the order of procession. Leslie was then very pleased to formally present the volume to FEW, and handed it over to Immediate Past President Alan Fallows, who will place it in the FEW archives.

Stephen White then presented his Hon Treasurer's Report. A copy is appended. Stephen thanked John Edwards for having printed the report and accounts, and having included them in the delegate's packs.

Eileen Forth presented her Hon Membership Secretary's Report. Copy appended.

Alan Fallows presented his Hon Archivist's Report. Copy appended.

Tom Gibson presented his Hon Editor's Report. Copy appended. Tom offered to assist any Gild wishing to set up its own Facebook Page or group.

Alan Shelley presented his Officer Without Portfolio's Report. Copy appended.

As only one nomination had been received for each of the Executive Officer positions, no election was necessary, and Ron Leek read out the names for 2014-2015 as follows:-

Deputy President:	Ron Leek
Vice President:	Stephen White
Hon Secretary:	Ron Leek
Hon Treasurer:	Stephen White
Hon Membership Secretary:	Eileen Forth
Hon Archivist:	Alan Fallows
Hon Editor:	Tom Gibson
Officer Without Portfolio:	Alan Shelley

The Executive, of course, also includes:-

President:	Gordon Varndell
Immediate Past President:	Alan Fallows

Vice President, Stephen White confirmed that all current Wardens would continue in office for the next twelve months. In thanking them for their sterling work, he announced them as:-

Warden for the North:	Capt. Stephen Healy
Warden for the North East:	Colin Hardcastle
Warden for the North West:	TBA
Warden for the North Midlands:	John Edwards
Warden for the South Midlands:	Derek Austin
Warden for the East:	Norman Offield
Warden for the West:	Howard Crapper
Warden for Wales:	Roy Folland
Warden for the South East:	Nick Johnson
Warden for the South West:	Martin Hanks

Any Other Business:-

- a) Capt. Jim Evans of Berwick-upon-Tweed noted that he had been appointed Lord President of the Court of Deans in Scotland, the organisation having a similar function to that of FEW. He was very pleased therefore, to extend greetings to FEW from the Court of Deans. He noted that the Lord President has to be head of his Gild. Jim then went on to give details of the 2015 FEW AGM which will be held in Berwick-upon-Tweed from 11th to 13th September, during the celebrations of the 900th Anniversary of its Charter.
- b) Capt. Stephen Healy requested an update on the involvement of the FEW Patron, and the FEW Hon Counsellor. He was informed that there had been no involvement from either individual.
- c) The President thanked Hazel Hague for looking after the FEW Regalia stall during the AGM weekend.
- d) Northampton Gild offered to host a FEW Court Meeting.

There being no further business, the President declared the meeting closed.

President's Report.

It has now been a year since I took on the role as your President. The years go faster as I get older. Eileen and I have been very busy since the September AGM 2013, we have attended a lot of functions large and small. I have also been giving -talks to some Gilds and other parties. I reported on the events attended prior to the March Court meeting so I see no point in going over them. Since March new things have happened of interest to the Association. One is to do with The Land Registration, but Tom the Honorary Editor will cover this.

We have admitted as Associates another Guild from Newcastle but Eileen the Membership Secretary will mention this in her report. We have also had enquiries from Southend-on-Sea who report they have fourteen Freemen, they have got together and voted eleven to three in forming themselves into a group and possibly joining FEW as Associate Members, this information has been passed onto the Wardens of the East, the South East and Alan Fallows our Archivist. I have no doubt that they will all add this into their reports. In the mean time two of them have joined as Associate Members.

Eileen and I have been in London on a few occasions. We have been to the Houses of Parliament along with some others, we went to the top of Elizabeth tower and watched Big Ben strike twelve, we also went up tower bridge to the museum and then onto see the workings of the machinery down below, the next highlight was to see the sea of poppies around the tower, this is very awe inspiring for those who have not seen it.

We have had a few social events with the York Gild of Freemen over the year, not surprising because it is our local Gild but they do run a very good social events.

However not all events we attend are to do with the. Freedom but I feel that all events create the opportunity of meeting people and passing on the information of the Association and the Freedom.

April the 4th saw the pre banquet supper at York held in the Royal Station Hotel, very successful, among the entertainment was pig racing, I personally have never seen it before but fun was had by all. Saturday night was the Banquet at York again held at the same hotel, this was a new venue for the York Gild but a really good move. To round off the weekend the church service was at All Saints with everyone saying their goodbyes at Bedern Hall

On the 11th & 12th of April we were in Northampton at their annual dinner, again an increase from the previous years switching from one night to the whole weekend. I was asked to give a speech in response to the Mayor. I stood up but before I could get a word out one of the ladies collapsed, she was overpowered by the heat, thankfully she was alright nothing serious, forty minutes later I was called again to give my speech and there was me thinking that I had got away with it, no such luck The weekend worked very well for the Northampton Freeman they pulled out the stops and we were all made very welcome and we all had a good time.

Saturday the 26th of April saw us visiting the Lincoln Freeman at their Gild Hall. Thank you for the invitation Eileen and I had a really good day with you. They were swearing in more lady Freeman and one Honorary Freeman. It was a robed occasion. After the Mayor gave his speech and the Freeman's Court welcomed the new Freeman I was asked to give a talk, this took me by surprise because I wasn't expecting it, I hope it went well but if it didn't, Lincoln please accept my apologies, I will try better next time should you invite us again.

May the 21st saw the start of the Coventry weekend, again a fantastic weekend, good food on the Friday night, with quiz games where everyone has a good time, Saturday was a good day out on the town where the ladies spend all our money and we pretended to complain. The glamour of the banquet and the swearing in of the new Court of Officers. The church procession on Sunday followed by tea and biscuits, what more can anybody ask for in a full weekend with friends.

May 12th, we were asked to go to Durham Guild Hall attend the May Day celebrations and the swearing in of a new lady Freeman at the grand age of ninety six and then I was to give a talk on the Freeman of England and Wales. I was asked to make the talk last about twenty minutes. I think it went down well. I hope it went down well. Thank you to Durham for the invitation.

June 13th, this saw the Leicester Banquet weekend, this was held in the Holmes Suite Devonshire Place, the new Master of the Gild is Mrs Lynn Roffee, she has not long been on the Court but is doing a marvellous job and thoroughly enjoying it. This weekend again incorporated a tour of the City, we always find these tours interesting wherever we go, we not only learn more about the City or Town but the important role that the Freeman play in keeping the traditions alive.

June 27th York AGM saw the change of master and the introduction of new Court Assistants. Mrs Maureen Eland is once again the Master with her husband John as the Consort, Mrs Hazel Hague is the Senior Warden. Hazel is to be Master in June 2015 Both ladies are well known to Gilds throughout the land having already been the Masters of York.

July 13th, this saw the start of the Wagon Plays in York an event that all the Guilds in York take part, Eileen was part of the robed Freeman parading with the cart around the streets of York and I. was there as a programme seller, all worthwhile jobs.

We work hard to keep in contact with other organizations and individuals where it can be made known who the Freeman are and the important work we do for the community. We let it be known that we are very much part of the community.

We have also had a lot of interest from Freeman in response to the flyer sent out about Freeman who are not residing in their own Guild areas wanting to be put in touch with Guilds in the areas where they do reside, some have now taken this on and joined the appropriate Guild, a good example of how this can work is that I am a London Guild Freeman and I am also a York Associate Gild member.

We have interest from a museum wanting to put a display on about the Freeman and this will be done free of charge for about six weeks and they say that they can put some money too it

to create a good display providing that we make it worthwhile, by that I mean provide plenty of history and possible regalia. I am sure that we could do that.

Eileen and I do have other invitations to attend several things this year but these will be reported on at a later date.

Deputy President's Report.

As with many previous Deputy Presidents, my role in deputising for the President on any occasion when he has been unavailable to attend a function during his term in office, has not been entirely necessary due to his enthusiasm and his ability to attend the majority of functions to which he has been invited. However, on just one occasion, I was very pleased to represent FEW at last year's annual banquet of the Gild of Freemen of the City of Oxford, where Janet and I were made most welcome at a thoroughly enjoyable event.

I would now like to take this opportunity to air a subject which has concerned me for some time whilst sitting twiddling my thumbs away there in the background; namely:- it is very disappointing that once again, there have been no new nominations at this AGM to fill any of the FEW Executive Officer positions, which means that the present hard working team will now continue for a further twelve months. It is fortuitously most pleasing to note that they are each happy to do so, but some like myself, already need to hold two positions in order to ensure that the administration of FEW continues to run smoothly. The point I wish to make, is that in the not too distant future, I foresee that new members to the Executive will become vitally necessary in order to maintain our flourishing administration. So delegates, how about coming up with some new names, perhaps initially to hold positions in a co-opted capacity, and then becoming formally elected at the next AGM?

Vice President's Report.

I was concerned that I would have little to report at this AGM. My enforced absence last year, owing to my car breaking down en-route, and then with a similar occurrence at this year's Court Meeting meant that I missed the two major opportunities to engage with our Wardens. However, we held a very constructive meeting earlier this morning and a number of action points were agreed to be taken forward. I am grateful for the work undertaken by the Wardens over the last year and the reports that they bring to this meeting.

My own activities were also hindered by two computer malfunctions, each time necessitating the download of several thousand emails from the Virgin 'cloud' and sorting them out into their respective folders and determining whether there was any outstanding replies or actions that had to be made. Alongside all of this, I have also been heavily involved in the regeneration plans around our Freeman Street Market in Grimsby and a £1.7m European-funded project (reported in Journal 177) within the market. Anyone who has dealt with the bureaucracy of the EU will know just how time consuming this can be.

The website too has not been without problems. Our web-host had to take time out of his business after his son underwent major surgery to correct a congenital heart defect and this coincided with difficulties up-dating the information which, unbeknown to me, was as a result of my changing to a newer version of Internet Explorer. Whilst this has now been resolved I have had little in the way of 'diary dates' and 'events' sent to me which has led to some sections becoming out of date and neglected.

Our good news story is our Facebook page and I am assisted by Tom Gibson and Alex Christison in administering this. To date we have had around 75 "likes" which means that fresh FEW news is notified immediately to those members which removes the onus of

having to check the website on a regular basis. One has to be a Facebook user in order to do this but for anyone with internet access it is a very straight forward process. Tom has been very busy in posting up Guild news which is either of a very urgent nature or simply won't fit into the next Journal owing to space limitations. Facebook provides a very good forum for members to leave questions or comments and I would encourage you all to have a look at it.

The Wardens Reports.

Warden for the North.

Alnwick: We first of all record our thoughts and best wishes for Denis Nixon, Clerk to the Chamberlain's Common Council and Freeman of the Borough of Alnwick, who has recently undergone unexpected heart surgery and is, at present in Intensive Care in the Freeman Hospital, Newcastle upon Tyne. We wish him a speedy recovery.

At the Freeman of Alnwick's AGM on St Mark's Eve (April 24th), three young men were sworn in together. While three is not a large number by comparison with ceremonies elsewhere, it is significant in terms of Alnwick and their small but committed band of Freeman.

Plans are afoot to build some 2-bedroom bungalows, the cost being wholly borne by the Freeman. Previous similar plans a few years ago were ultimately scrapped in the face of what might be considered 'unreasonable demands' from the local authorities stipulations which would have handed control of some tenancies and ownership of land to the council and which, quite naturally, the Freeman did not pursue, instead opting for buying up some vacant properties in the town. A more acceptable outcome is hoped for this time around.

Berwick upon Tweed: Attention and resources are naturally mainly centred upon next year's celebrations and the 2015 FEW AGM at present (on which Capt Jim Evans is separately delivering information) but there is other news to report as well.

At a recent swearing-in ceremony, no less than eight members of the same family became free of the town, encompassing three generations of the Tatton-Brown family.

The Freeman have recently contributed £5,000 to a genealogical research project, aimed at locating and documenting information on established and historic families in Berwick.

They have also assisted with a war memorial project, which has a delivery date of 2015, to coincide with the celebrations and form part of the ongoing First World War commemorations. Hopefully too, it works its way into the AGM program, by way of a visit, or talk on the project, the commissioning of the memorial and the individuals whose sacrifice it records.

Durham: You may recall previous reports on the struggle in which the Freeman of Durham were engaged with respect to ownership of the 'Sands' — the strip of open land besides the river Wear which is owned by the Freeman. The issue arose because of a changed position and attitude when Durham City Council was replaced by Durham County Council. The dispute eventually went to independent arbitration, a step which required both parties to be bound by the outcome. The Arbitrator found 100% in favour of the Freeman's case and unbelievably resulted in the council trying to appeal the decision. Fortunately, not only did the Arbitrator refuse to hear the appeal, but also re-assessed the rental value and enforced an increase! This went at least some way to off-setting the £30,000 legal and land-agent's fees spent by the Freeman in pursuit of their case. Fortunately, an improved dialogue with the council is reported of late, with some new personnel bringing a more cooperative attitude to proceedings.

The Chairman of the Freeman of Durham attended the recent enthronement of the latest Bishop of Durham and noted during the ceremony that some of the Mayor's Bodyguard are

in fact Freemen. This has resulted in an exchange as to how the Freemen might possibly be further involved in civic matters and a contribution towards the cleaning and conservation of their uniforms. The Chairman advised that there is historical interest in this, as the Bodyguard originally protected Freemen, as they went about their business, rather than the Mayor.

A statue commemorating the famous DLI, the Durham Light Infantry, has recently been erected at the National Memorial Arboretum, not so very far from this very venue. A second statue, from the same mould, has just been placed in the Market Square in the City and the Freemen contributed to the costs. Those who are lucky enough to have been to the wonderful Freemen's events in Durham will be familiar with the Town Hall -- a clever and effective mix of old and new architecture within the one building. A stand-out feature is the small balcony which overlooks the Market Square. This is in a precarious state of repair and is now too dangerous to use. Even underpinning would result in only very limited access being restored. The Freemen are keen however to do what they can and are talking with the Council to ensure the best possible outcome is achieved while there is still an opportunity.

Newcastle upon Tyne: There is still no formal dialogue between the Stewards Committee of the Freemen of Newcastle and the Association. The Freemen continue to go about their business in the City and the big item of Interest this year was the re-instated 'Hoppings' fair on the Town Moor, suspended last year amid quite some controversy. The event was a great success, aided by a week of fine weather.

Warden for the North East:

Kingston-Upon-Hull; I am still in contact with two groups who have shown 'luke-warm' interest in joining FEW. I shall continue my contact and hope my efforts will come to fruition. As I have reported previously, Kingston-upon- Hull has not admitted any Freemen for some years. I have recently been in touch with the City Council with a view to resurrecting the admitting of Freemen to celebrate the granting of City of Culture 2017 status. My enquiry met with some hope that it may happen.

Beverley; Still remains aloof and nothing has been heard from them.

Leeds; This small settlement south west of York recently granted, posthumously, the honorary Freedom of the City to Mrs Beryl Burton O.B.E., who died in 1996. Mrs Burton was a prodigious amateur cyclist who held many Local and National titles. It is a shame it has taken so long to recognise her fame and achievements.

Courts Leet In The North Riding; I have made further visits to the archives in Northallerton seeking information on any Courts Leet in my bailiwick. The archivist was most helpful and I propose to make further visits when it is mutually convenient. I am aware that there were Courts Leet in many parts of the Ridings both North and East especially around Scarborough and the Wolds.

Great Grimsby; Following my report in Journal 177 regarding the Business and Digital Hub (which you all read of course?), the Enrolled Freemen have sponsored a series of bijou television advertisements for businesses in the Hub and market complex on Estuary TV,, channel 8 on Freeview TV. They are worth watching, more so because they do not feature our Vice President. Recent reports talk of increasing the number of solar panels on the market roof. Indeed, at the Lincolnshire Energy Awards Ceremony of 26 June 2014, the Enrolled Freemen were highly commended for their contribution to energy and environmental sustainability in the N E Lincolnshire area. The Award Citation is appended hereto.

City Of York Guild; Remains the jewel in the Crown. During the year, the Guild has held many functions, events and visits to many interesting places including Bishopthorpe Palace,

RAF Linton-on-Ouse and a walk around the walls re-enacting the Sheriffs Army, raised to protect the City from marauding tribesmen from foreign parts. Many of the social events and visits were organised by the Gild social secretary, Alan Banks, who had one of his rasher ideas for the annual banquet 'Friday night' social of pig racing. The battery powered pigs trottered up and down a raceway and after much scratching of heads, bets were laid as to winners and which pig would home the bacon. The event made for a crackling good night. No pigs were hurt during the racing so the hambulance was not needed. Well done Alan. _I am told next year it may be greyhound racing.

The January court meeting in the Mansion House saw the granting of honorary Gild membership to Ms Joanne Lowe who for many years has organised the annual Freedom Courts on behalf of the council. The new President is Cllr. Ian Gillies, Lord Mayor of the City. The incoming Master is Maureen Eland who will be supported by her husband John. Two Freedom Courts are to be held in October when it is hoped more Freemen will join the Gild. I am told by the membership secretary that there are 497 Gild members, dangerously close to necessitating an increase in their FEW subscription!!

The Grimsby Award Citation

"The judges wanted to highly commend the Enrolled Freemen of Grimsby for their outstanding contribution to energy and environmental sustainability as part of the organisations overall strategy which has breathed new life into the Freeman Street Market which was core to regenerating one of the most deprived areas of the country as a location for enterprise. This is a huge success story which has incorporated a new build Skills Centre which is heated by air to water heat pumps incorporating low energy lighting and a pilot rainwater harvesting system and roof fixed PV solar panels. Within the market area all market stalls have been rebuilt with low energy lighting and a recycling system for market waste and packaging is in place. Around 50% of daytime electricity requirements are being produced by the current 96kwp solar installation with a further 91 kwp due to be installed to complete the installation along with smart metering, energy storage and controls. The project was an ambitious plant which has come to fruition due to the foresight, vision and determination of the Enrolled Freemen of Grimsby who quite rightly in the opinion of the judges deserve to be highly commended for this Award."

Warden for Wales:

The Gild of Freemen of Pembroke: The Gild received an invitation to attend the Remembrance Service which was held at Fresh Water West on the 25th April and was represented by Gild members. Graham Phillips Clerk to the Gild laid the wreath on their behalf.

On Saturday the 10th of May the Master represented the Gild at the Mayor Making Ceremony of Councillor Aaron Carey which was held in the Chamber of Pembroke Town Council and was followed by the Mayoral Luncheon. Members of the Gild were also in attendance at the Civic Service which was held at St. Mary's Church the following day. Following the donation made to H.O.P.E. The Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre, the Gild has received an invitation to their Open Day on Friday the 19th September, members of the Gild will be attending.

The Gild's AGM will take place on the 23rd of October at Pembroke Town Hall. The Annual Service will be held at St. Mary's Church Pembroke on the 16th of November; the guest preacher will be the Venerable Ken Sharpe, former Archdeacon of Newport. This will be followed by the Annual Luncheon at the Cleddau Bridge Hotel, Pembroke Dock.

The Gild of Freemen of Llantrisant: It was with great sadness that I learned of the sudden

death of the Clerk of the Llantrisant Town Trust Mr. Howard Thomas. Howard passed away in February aged 63 years old during a family celebration at his home. He leaves to mourn his wife Catherine, his two children John and Gail and his four grandchildren. In the absence of a Clerk information is available from Mr. Dean Powell.

The Annual Court Leet held on 16th May was another huge success. There were 24 new Freemen enrolled unto the Freeman's Roll. This was followed by the Annual Court Leet Dinner with 130 in attendance. The guest speakers were entertainer Wyn Calvin and Sir Rhys Gareth Williams. The dinner was held at the Llantrisant rugby club.

Plans to transform the Grade 11* listed Llantrisant Guildhall into a state of the art visitor centre have received the final go-ahead as a result of a significant grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The £768,500 grant will ensure that the Llantrisant Town Trust will now be able to pursue innovated plans to restore the hall to its former glory and transform.

The Haverfordwest Gild of Freemen: When Haverfordwest Gild of Freemen meet in the first week of October, an important item on the AGM agenda will be the future of Haroldston House, a ruin near Haverfordwest, which was the birthplace of a colourful Tudor character called Sir John Perrot. The flamboyant, irascible knight who was believed at one time to be the illegitimate son of Henry V111, but has since been proved to be no such thing, consorted with pirates, insulted Queen Elizabeth 1, who locked him in the Tower of London, and who left a legacy which still provides charity under the name of the Perrot Trust. The ruin of his former home half a mile from Haverfordwest town centre, with its sheep-grazed parkland and remains of a cockpit and terraced garden, belonged to the Kysant branch of the Philipps family of Picton Castle, three miles south down the river Cleddau. They presented it to the Gild some years ago, but every effort to find the funds to turn it into a public park with interpretive displays has failed, and now that CADW, the Ministry of Works Ancient Monuments department, has shown no interest in taking it on, the Gild is considering how to dispose of it to someone who will look after it and possibly develop it into a tourist attraction. The famed 18th writer Joseph Addison is said to have based his imagined character, Sir Roger de Coverley, on one of the Perrot family, a descendant of the larger than life Sir John Perrot. Sir Roger was an eccentric and somewhat ridiculous character featured in The Spectator in the late 1700s, who gave his name to a well-known English country dance.

Warden for the West:

Oxford City Council have agreed to renaming one of the best meeting rooms in Oxford Town Hall and will now be known as The Freeman's Room . This excellent idea stemmed from our visit to Northampton Guild Hall earlier this year where a room is also so directed . I am grateful to the Leader of the Oxford City Council for his assistance.

The traditional and largely ceremonial roundup on Oxford Port Meadow took place last week where several hundred head of cattle were herded up the ancient Meadow. It was without hesitation the driest roundup for many a year and really quite dusty in part . Remarkable when you consider that the Meadow was under flood water for nearly two months in the very wet Spring .

I am now delighted to read in full the following recent annual report from the Warden and Freemen in Malmesbury in Wiltshire sent especially for this meeting.

Buildings and Properties, Due to the flooding of the lower end of the High Street and St John Street , there has been extensive work to minimise the flooding. Residents have been recompensed where damage was done . This included the replacement of furniture and electrical equipment where required .

All. Warden and Freeman properties are constantly being brought up to standard . This is a constant project.

Events. The Warden and Freeman are represented at all commemorative and civic services This includes: The Mayoral Service : Remembrance Day Parade : This year, a service commemorating 100 years of the commencement of World War 1.

Charities During 2013 and so for this year, the Warden and Freeman have contributed to over twelve charities . Among the main ones have been: The British Heart Foundation : Diabetes UK : Wiltshire Air Ambulance: Atheistan House (a number of apartments for the elderly) : Macmillan Foundation : Dorothy House Hospice : Mayor's Appeal : Malmesbury Twinning : Malmesbury Living History: Help for Heroes.

There are two awards each year for University Awards . This entails inviting those students who are continuing in further education , to compose an essay stating which university they are to attend , what they are reading and what they hope to gain from their studies and achieve after university . This is done in conjunction with Malmesbury School.

The Warden and Freeman also receive correspondence asking if it would be possible to contribute to other charities and functions. Since January 2013, nearly £10000 has been donated to various causes. David Ashford . Warden.

I was in the beautiful Wiltshire town of Marlborough this summer for their fantastic annual Jars festival . The opening ceremony was attended by the suitably attired Mayor and two very smart Alderman in traditional long coats with piping and tricorne hats. I mention this as Marlborough used to have Freeman , but having lost them , they now try to imitate them . There is a lesson here for every guild which clearly shows that you have to look after and hold tightly to what you have. Once apathy is allowed to flow , the Guild is soon dead and buried. There is no going back.

Some aspiring new freemen have pointed out to me that the FEW website is less than welcoming and almost conveys that there is little vitality and to quote one new possible member he states that the organisation's website gave an immediate sense of 'I'm not entirely sure this organisation is very active'. Now that's just their perception, but it is their view on our only public face of the organisation.

I finish my report here by issuing an invitation to join the Chartered Freeman of Gloucester at their annual dinner on Saturday 25th October and also in Oxford on Friday 5th December. Please contact me for further details

Warden for the South Midlands:

Coventry Freeman's Guild: events continue in a stable pattern, the annual 'Apprentice of the Year Competition' in its current format will be 10 years old next year, and this event has had record numbers of applicants in its latest small & medium and large businesses categories. The calibre of shortlisted applicants is as high as ever, especially now that apprenticeships are more sought after. Next month we hope to welcome the crew of the Type 45 Destroyer HMS Diamond for a Freedom of the City ceremony, marching with 'drums beating, colours flying, and bayonets fixed'

Leicester Freeman's Guild: has welcomed its first Lady Master Lynn Roffee this year, which is appropriate considering that admittance of Lady Freeman has exceeded men for several years now. Hopefully these ladies will be supporting Guild events and visits soon, as visit numbers could be better. Lynn had organised an exhibition and talks on Leicester Freeman during World War 1 at the Freeman's Holt in August, which was well received.

Northampton Freeman's Guild's: inaugural two day charity weekend in April was well attended by Freeman from a good selection of our FEW Guilds membership at the Moulton College venue. This venue has been booked for next year, so 17th & 18th April deserve a

listing in your 2015 diaries when available. In November this year the Guild will be supporting the celebration of the 825th anniversary of the granting of the Northampton Charter by Richard I in 1189. With regalia now on sale, and Freemen's robes in use, the Guild is making good progress led by their President Phil Ager.

Alcester Court Leet: continues a very active programme of events led by High Bailiff Steven Brown, with an assize of Fish, Flesh, Bread & Ale at the towns Mop Fair next month, followed two days later by the annual Court with elections and installations. Funds raised for local organisations and charities are over £8000 this year – a significant source of revenue in these difficult times.

Henley-in-Arden Court Leet: follows its traditional calendar of events, ending with the Annual Court Meeting in the ancient Guild Hall on 12th November, where a complete break of tradition should see the first female High Bailiff installed in 800 years!

Warwick Court Leet: has supported the Mayor and Town Council in celebrating the 1100th anniversary of the settlements fortification against the Viking hordes by Aethelflaed, the Lady of the Mercians. The Leets usual venue of the 18th century Courthouse has now finally finished an extensive refurbishment programme, and hosted the second of the annual Bailiff's dinners earlier this month, and will also be the venue on 30th October for the annual Court. Two new jurors joined this year, and what with hosting the second skittles & games event for the local Leets, and a new website www.warwickcourtleet.co.uk shows that a good momentum is being sustained.

Warden for the South East:

Southwark, London. On Wednesday 13th November 2013, the Court Leet & View of Frankpledge of the Town and Borough of Southwark was held at Amigo Hall in St George's Cathedral, Southwark. The Guildable Manor is a Court Leet in Southwark under the authority of the City of London, along with the King's Manor, Southwark, and the Great Liberty Manor, Southwark. The name of 'Guildable' first recorded in 1377 refers to the collection of taxes there and was adopted to distinguish this from the other manors of the Southwark area. Its legal title dates from a Royal charter granted to the City by King Edward III in 1327, and it has a preserved limited jurisdiction under the Administration of Justice Act 1977. Although neither a guild nor a livery company, the Guildable Manor does have a permanent organization, consisting of Officers and Jurors. The area of the Manor includes the south-side footing of London Bridge, Southwark Cathedral, Borough Market, Hays Galleria and The Shard.

The Court of Aldermen of the City of London appoint a High Steward. Since 1900 this has been the Recorder of London, sitting at the Old Bailey. Currently this is His Honour Judge Brian John Barker, QC who was appointed in February 2013 and is the senior judge at the Old Bailey. The Aldermen also appoint a High Bailiff, and since 1750 this has been the current Under Sheriff and Secondary of London, the administrator of the Old Bailey. Currently this is a former Coldstream Guards officer, Major Charles Henty, who has held the post for the last eight years.

On the second Wednesday in November, these two officials swear into office the Jurors, and they name their Foreman, and he names a Constable, an Affeeror, a Flesh Taster and Ale Conners, who then take their oaths. The Affeeror prices the fines; the Ale Conners and the Flesh Taster are appointed to test the quality and measure of beers and meats, ie check weights and measures. Some note on terminology of the Manor may help at this point by analogy with the practice of Livery Companies. - Foreman = Master; Sworn Officers = Wardens; Tithing = Court of Assistants; Tithingmen = Assistants.

The Foreman of the Manor for the ensuing year (2014 to 2015) is Leslie Grout, a retired teacher, and he is also an individual member of our Association. I should like you all to know that our Deputy President of FEW, Ron Leek served as Foreman of the Manor for the year 2009/2010.

On Thursday 13th March 2014, the Guildable Manor of Southwark held their Charter Day and Quit Rents Ceremony at the church of St George the Martyr, Southwark.

The Charter granted to the City of London by Edward III to take control of the ancient borough and manor was specific in that an annual render of cash had to be made to the Crown's treasury, the Exchequer. In Domesday Book the value of Southwark to the king was noted as £16.00, there is some evidence that the render was for £10.00 in the early period but it eventually settled at £11.00, the differences may have been related to fee or tax farming. Each year, this Quit Rent is made at a ceremonial Court of Exchequer of the Queen's Remembrancer. The Remembrancer instructs the Chief Clerk (who is the administrator of the Royal Courts of Justice) to summon the free burgess tenants of the Guildable Manor to the Court as jurors to make the payment. They then travel to Southwark to institute the Court. The jurors attend and stand witness to their Foreman and Officers presenting the rental, doing so by placing 44 Crowns, onto the Exchequer Cloth, representing the £11.00. The Clerk to the Chamberlain's Court of the City of London also attends to inform his superior that the rent for Southwark has indeed been paid and the City's obligations to the Crown fulfilled. Although largely now decorous the ceremony underlies the fact that the City Bridge House Estate & Lands committee is in fact the largest land-owner in the area. The Estate pays the annual Jurors Fee; the Chamberlain's office pays the actual rent along with many others to the Crown.

Rochester: On Saturday 12th July 2014, the Admiralty Court of the Rochester Oyster and Floating Fishery was held at the Rochester Guildhall, Kent. This is a working guild of 22 Freemen together with their apprentices, and is held every year, presided over by the Mayor of Medway as Admiral of the River Medway, together with a number of officials and councillors. The Chief Executive of Medway (as successor to the Town Clerk of Rochester) sits as Registrar of the Fishery. The Jury is sworn and appointed, the list of Free Dredgers is called, the Water Bailiffs are sworn in and appointed and the Jury, through the Chamberlain, presents its report on the previous year's fishing in the River Medway, which is then approved by the Court.

The title of "Admiral of the Waters of the Medway from Sherenesse to Hawkewode" was first conferred by a Charter granted to the City of Rochester by Henry VI in 1446. In 1728, in the reign of King George II, an Act of Parliament was passed for "regulating, well ordering, governing and improving the Oyster Fishery in the River Medway and waters thereof, under the authority of the Mayor and Citizens of the City of Rochester, in the County of Kent." This act was followed by another, passed in the 28th year of the reign of Queen Victoria, titled An Act for Better Regulating the Rochester Oyster Fishery and for other Purposes. By these and subsequent Acts of Parliament, the Mayor of the City of Rochester as Admiral of the waters of the Medway and his or her Aldermen were given jurisdiction over the waters of the Medway and its creeks and tributaries between Garrison Point, Sheerness and Hawkwood Stone.

The Oyster Fishery was free and common to all oyster fishermen and dredgers who had served seven years' apprenticeship with any free fisherman or free dredger of the fishery. Upon application by the Fishery, the Mayor summoned an Admiralty Court for regulating and ordering the Fishery. The fishermen and dredgers were summoned by the Mayor's Water Bailiff to attend the Court when a Jury was elected. Three members of a FEW sister guild,

the Guildable Manor of Southwark, including the Foreman of the Manor, and the Clerk, all fully robed, attend the Admiralty Court as guests every year, and this year were permitted to convey the greetings of the Lord Mayor of London, Alderman Fiona Woolf to the Mayor of Medway and the Admiralty Court, by the presentation of a certificate.

Admiral's Cruise; Following the Admiralty Court, the Admiral's Cruise enables the Mayor to beat the bounds of the River Medway. Throughout its history, Rochester Cruising Club has maintained close links with the local community and council and in the past many members of the club were also members of the council. It was in 1960 that the then Mayor of Rochester and Admiral of the River, Councillor Jack Phillips, sought the assistance of Alderman Maurice Cole, a club member, in reinstating the old custom of the beating of the Admiral's bounds on the river, from the Hawkwood Stone to Sheerness. This event was to forge a close relationship between the council and the club, which has stood the test of time to the present day. On the Saturday, members of Rochester Oyster and Floating Fisheries (ROFF) hosted the Mayor and members of the court and sail up-river as far as Hawkwood Stone. The officers from the Guildable Manor of Southwark, having been provided with the Lady Aileen 50ft launch by the City of London Port Health Authority for both days of the event, were able to join some thirty craft on the river. This was followed by a buffet at Rochester Cruising Club, all of which was supplied was ROFF. Finally the day ended with a party at the Cruising Club. Then on the Sunday, Rochester Cruising Club hosted the down-river cruise, with the Mayor, as Admiral of the River, and selected civic guests. The whole weekend is then wrapped up with a farewell buffet and Sunset Ceremony. As part of the Admiral's Cruise, there is also a memorial service held in honour of HMS Bulwark. In 1914, the Bulwark was destroyed by an explosion while moored at Kethole Reach, with the loss of 727 souls.

I was only able to attend the Admiralty Court this year and not the two cruise journeys nor the dining events, owing to other domestic commitments. However, I was able, with the relevant permissions of the Chamberlain Shane Hales, to video the whole of the Admiralty Court proceedings, and the three video clips may be viewed publicly on YouTube.

Southend On Sea; Following a request from Borough Councillor Barry Godwin of Southend-on-Sea on the Essex coast of the Thames Estuary, I ascertained that a group of twelve honorary freemen of that town wanted to have a separate identity. Their reasoning was that at public events where they had a collective presence, the general public often did not know who they were. Honorary freemen are created by local authorities and awarded to individuals who have contributed in some way to their community and are only for the lifetime of the recipient and cannot be inherited by offspring. They are currently known as the Freemen of Southend-on-Sea, and are in the throes of joining our us as Associate Members and purchasing FEW ties for themselves.

Warden for the North Midlands;

Things have been fairly quiet in this area recently, apart from the minor job of organising this AGM. Stafford has had a good social programme with 'Skittles and Chips' evenings, some Sunday lunches and various informal gatherings like barbecues on the allotments. The Guild has participated in some major Civic occasions, including Mayor Making and the Battle of Britain Commemoration. They were also invited to attend the return parade of the Mercian Regiment from Afghanistan and were even asked to flank the saluting base. Recognition at last! As a significant body in the town, representatives attended a presentation by the Army dealing with future policies and the impact on Stafford. Guild members are also supporting the 'Save Stafford Hospital' campaigners.

The Trustees continue to improve the freemen's lands of some 150 allotments, despite the

machinations of a few troublemakers. One of those saw fit to take the Trustees to court over his exclusion as a candidate for the trust. Fortunately, the Judge saw our point of view, but for volunteers, it was rather traumatic. We are currently involved with Severn Trent Water, who need some of our land to improve the local sewage system.

Bridgnorth continues to thrive with the swearing in of more ladies and a good relationship with their local council. Stafford is jealous of their role in carrying the town's silver maces on civic occasions. As Warden, I usually catch up with their activities at their excellent annual dinner.

Newcastle-under-Lyme seems to rely on the same faithful people to administer their assets with a lot of freemen more interested in receiving the annual hand-out than promoting their heritage.

Shrewsbury also has a good social programme, but regrettably I have been unable to accept their invitations recently. A letter from a Shrewsbury Gild member drawing my attention to a book about freemen, excluding most of the established gilds, provoked some conversation with the Archivist. It may need further action by FEW if it is not to misrepresent the true state of the guilds. For those involved with Twitter, it may be worth trying to correct some of the errors promoted in that medium.

I still have hopes of getting Lichfield involved with FEW, but it seems to have become an "exclusive club", but the city is very much involved with its history and ceremonial and they do have a magnificent Guildhall.

I have given a couple of talks about the freemen to interested groups, which I hope will give a better understanding of our aims and objectives. I hear nothing at all from Derby, but it is pleasing that the other guilds in my area will all be represented this weekend.

Hon. Treasurer's Report

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 – 2013/2014 (TRUSTEES)

President	- Mr G A Varndell
Deputy President	- Mr R E Leek
Vice President	- Mr S P White
Immediate Past President	- Mr A G Fallows
Honorary Archivist	- Mr A G Fallows
Honorary Journal Editor	- Mr T Gibson
Honorary Membership Secretary	- Mrs E Forth
Honorary Secretary	- Mr R E Leek
Honorary Treasurer	- Mr S P White
Officer without Portfolio	- Mr A Shelley
Custodian Trustees	- Capt J Evans (Chairman)
	- Mr A Robson
	- Mr C Hardcastle
	- Mr S P White (as Hon Treasurer)

BANKERS: NatWest Bank Plc 39 Grimsby Road, Cleethorpes, North East Lincolnshire

AUDITORS: 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 R E Leek, Richmond House,
3 Beech Close, Oversley Green Alcester, Warwickshire B49 6PP

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.

TRUSTEES' REPORT:

The Trustees present their report and the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2014.

OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION:

The 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 AND ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR

The year has been eventful with more ladies being admitted to the Freedom with some taking on the responsibilities within their own Guilds.

We have had a Guild join our Association as Associate Members. We have also had another area making headway to form a group of Freemen with a view to joining the Association as Associate Members, the Wardens and the Archivist are monitoring this one at the moment.

With the 2002 Land Registration Act, a little headway is being made with the Guilds but it still needs a lot of work. The Archivist, Alan Fallows, along with the Officer Without Portfolio, Alan Shelley, are monitoring things very carefully.

We are still waiting for all Guilds to reply on the apprenticeship scheme guidance paper that was published by the President at the 2013 AGM.

With the website small changes are still being made to improve the system for members and the public, the email (addresses - Ed) are still being tapped into and this needs to be addressed. Stephen White is continually monitoring the site to improve and expand. The Officers of the Association continue to attend whatever events they can, local or otherwise, to give support or advice wherever they can.

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 19th September 2014 and signed on their behalf by:

Gordon A. Vardell

Stephen P. White

Capt James Evans

FEW President

FEW Honorary Treasurer

Chairman of Trustees

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 has caught many members out. The Membership Secretary will report further on this subject.

2. Donations to Funds

Any payment received over £10 is applied to the Legal or Regalia Fund as directed.

3. Sales

The total income has increased, compared to 2012/13, but we lost money on the sale of a robe owing to production costs. Income from other items have varied, as indicated by the figures.

4. Interest Received

Interest on our COIF Account has reduced from 0.671% to 0.400% which is low, reflecting the Bank of England base rate, but may be regarded as a secure investment.

5. Income Tax Recovered

Gift Aid is claimed on all payments received under the Scheme, including the basic subscription and on bank interest which is taxed at source.

6. Administrative Expenses

This includes postage, stationery, printing and on-going website hosting costs.

7. Purchases

This is in regard to purchases for stock items for sale as noted.

8. Journal

Four Journals were produced each period (total 92 pages in 2013/4, 84 pages in 2012/3). Economies have been made in terms of number distributed but we have had significant increases in printing and postage.

9. Annual General Meetings

Costs include those directly incurred by FEW and those reimbursed to Hosts. Those shown for previous AGM's are the final costs, total costs for 2014 not yet known.

10. Legal & Regalia Expenses

There were no legal expenses in the year and only the cost of engraving the Past President's Medallion to the Regalia Fund.

11. Court & Officers Meetings Costs would have been broadly in line with those incurred in 2012/13 except for the late receipt and non-inclusion of the invoices for the March 2013 Court Meeting at Bedern Hall.

INCOME

April to March

EXPENDITURE

<u>2012/13</u>		<u>2013/14</u>		<u>2012/13</u>		<u>2013/14</u>
£		£		£		£
Note 1				Note 6		
	<u>SUBSCRIPTIONS</u>				<u>ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES</u>	
3,427.00	Individual	3,315.00		30.41	Postage	69.64
1,495.00	Guilds	1,350.00		-	Telephone	-
4,922.00		4,665.00		-	Insurance (provision only made)	-
				-	Archives	-
	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			52.73	Stationery	67.29
				88.31	Printing/photocopying	74.76
				240.00	Website	240.00
				214.00	Other	35.00
				625.45		486.69
Note 2				Note 7		
	<u>DONATIONS TO:-</u>				<u>PURCHASES</u>	
261.20	General Fund	149.20		-	Robes	300.00
172.00	Legal Fund	650.50		-	Ties	-
157.80	Regalia Fund	160.50		-	Members Medallions	-
591.00		960.20		208.00	Robe Badges	259.00
				-	Blazer badges	-
Note 3				-	Lapel badges	-
	<u>SALES</u>			-	Wall Plaques	-
-	Robes	195.00		-	Pens	-
179.40	Ties	124.20		578.84	Cufflinks	-
68.00	Members Medallions	-		-	Membership Wallets	-
109.50	Robe badges	328.50		786.84		559.00
-	Blazer badges	-				
39.80	Lapel badges	23.30		Note 8		
-	Wall plaques	-			<u>JOURNAL (4 editions in period)</u>	
2.20	Stickers	5.50		2,015.00	Production	2,150.00
19.80	Headsquares	-		1,195.92	Postage/distribution	1,230.13
32.50	Books	13.00		3,210.92		3,380.13
-	Christmas Cards	-				
14.00	Pens	24.50		Note 9		
80.00	Cuff Links	10.00			<u>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS</u>	
-	Membership Wallets	-		-	2010 ~ Berwick	-
42.00	"The Guilds" - M E Pickering	-		-	2011 ~ Pembroke	-
22.00	Aspects of the Freedom	-		132.05	2012 ~ York	-
8.40	Membership Certificates	2.80		-	2013 ~ Oxford	1,282.02
617.60		726.80		132.05		1,282.02
Note 4				Note 10		
	<u>INTEREST RECEIVED</u>				<u>LEGAL & REGALIA EXPENSES</u>	
416.79	COIF Deposit A/c	210.78		-	Freemen's Rights	-
1.06	NatWest Reserve A/c	1.12		942.48	Past-President Medallions	5.00
0.26	Gift Aid Tax Refund	0.28		942.48		5.00
-	Compensation from NatWest	-				
418.11		212.18		Note 11		
Note 5					<u>COURT & OFFICERS' MEETINGS</u>	
	<u>INCOME TAX RECOVERED</u>			36.40	Court Meeting Room Hire	75.00
513.43	Re: Gift Aid Declarations 2012/2013	1.51		117.15	Catering - Nett	515.30
0.00	Re: Gift Aid Declarations 2013/2014	513.50		318.14	Officers' Meeting Expenses	194.80
513.43		515.01		-	President's Expenses	-
				471.69		785.10
7,062.14	TOTAL RECEIPTS	7,079.19		6,169.43	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	6,497.94
				892.71	SURPLUS FOR YEAR	581.25
				129.32	Less transfer to Designated Funds	1,702.00
				763.39	AVAILABLE SURPLUS	-1,120.75

MOVEMENT OF DESIGNATED FUNDS - 2012/13 to 2013/14

	2012/13	2013/14
Legal Fund		
Balance brought forward, 1st April	2,185.94	2,376.69
Donations received	172.00	650.50
Tax recovered	18.75	20.00
Addnl Tax recovered	-	-
LESS: Costs Incurred	-	-
Balance at 31st March	2,376.69	3,047.19
 Regalia Fund		
Balance brought forward, 1st April	1,102.28	330.85
Donations received	157.80	160.50
Tax recovered	13.25	17.00
Addnl Tax recovered	-	-
LESS: Purchases made	-942.48	-5.00
Balance at 31st March	330.85	503.35
 Regalia Self-Insurance Fund		
Balance brought forward, 1st April	3,393.00	4,103.00
Amount Provided	710.00	859.00
Balance at 31st March	4,103.00	4,962.00
TOTAL DESIGNATED FUNDS	6,810.54	8,512.54

STATEMENT OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES AS AT THE FINANCIAL YEAR END

	31.3.2013	31.3.2014
Monetary Assets		
GENERAL PURPOSE FUND		
National Westminster Bank - Current A/C	1,006.58	825.09
National Westminster Bank - Reserve A/C	59.92	61.04
COIF Charity Deposit Fund	46,000.00	46,000.00
	<u>47,066.50</u>	<u>45,886.13</u>
DESIGNATED FUNDS		
National Westminster Bank - Current A/C	110.54	812.54
National Westminster Bank - Reserve A/C	2,700.00	2,700.00
COIF Charity Deposit Fund	4,000.00	5,000.00
	<u>6,810.54</u>	<u>8,512.54</u>
DEBTORS / CREDITORS		
Amounts owed to FEW at 31st March	643.47	899.20
LESS: Amounts owed by FEW at 31st March	-140.89	-337.00
TOTAL	<u>54,379.62</u>	<u>54,960.87</u>
Other Assets		
Stocks of resale items (cost, not realisable value)	2,129.87	2,042.65
Officers' regalia (insured value)	14,201.00	17,174.00
Other Assets	1,098.00	1,143.00
TOTAL	<u>17,428.87</u>	<u>20,359.65</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>71,808.49</u>	<u>75,320.52</u>

Liabilities

Short Term

At 31st March 2014, the only short term commitments were in connection with usual ongoing transactions such as unrepresented cheques and purchase of Regalia.

Long Term

At 31st March 2014, the Officers of the Association have not made any long term commitments.

Hon Membership Secretary's Report.

Guilds: We have 39 Guilds on the books with currently eight Guilds in Arrears_ The 39th Guild is a new Guild that joined as Associate members in July of this year. Named The Master, Pilots and Seamen of the Corporation of Trinity House, Newcastle upon Tyne
Individual Membership: The current membership stands at 361. This has risen slightly since the last report (March 2014 @ Leicester)

Since September 2013: 5 New full individual Member, 3 New Associate Members
4 Members have resigned due to ill health
7 Members notified as deceased
3 Notified Change of address, 1 Member has been reinstated
2 Members have been deleted under rule 9 of the Constitution

Current payments: Late payments, again I have to say reminders are being sent out constantly. Currently 25 members are in arrears. 5 of these paid by Standing order All have been reminded and as yet there has been no response from them.

The Breakdown of members payments:

11 are in arrears for April 2013 to April 2014 and April 2014 to April 2015 (2 years), 6 are in arrears for April 2014 to April 2015, 3 are in arrears for Sept 2012 to Sept 2013 and Sept 2013 to Sept 2014. (2 years) 5 are in arrears for September 2013 and September 2014
No reminder letters have yet been answered from these individuals

Hon. Archivist's Report.

Additions to the archives have been received from Hale and Grimsby plus the usual newsletters from Leicester, Coventry, and York. Advice has been provided to clarify membership eligibility for bodies wishing to support FEW from outside the scope of hereditary freedom and we should be able to welcome several Associate Gilds soon. I have received an enquiry within the last few days from Bridgnorth Council regarding admission criteria for lady freemen. They have noticed that a Gild has published different criteria for admission of sons and daughters. Please be aware that you can amend your customary rules of admission but they must be applied equally to sons and daughters. Finally I have recently received confirmation from specialist barristers in Southampton that following a cursory examination of a raft of papers I sent them, they consider the case for registration of our rights over "commons" to be worth further action. There is a high cost for such specialization capped at £5000 plus vat, but if approved I will continue to fight for a positive result for York, Oxford, Shrewsbury, Durham and possibly others in danger of council attack. This is, I am sure, our very last chance of any degree of success In this matter so I feel that we have to take the chance to follow it through.

Editors Report.

Last year the decision was made to reduce the number of Journals from four per year to three, this has taken a little getting used to as the due dates for items needed about various essential events, such as booking forms etc, has changed. I think it fair to say there have been teething problems as we get used to this change, however I feel it is too early to draw any informed conclusions regarding the success or otherwise of this change. Could I remind all to please take note of the copy dates for items for publication, the one for each issue is published on the copyright page of the preceding edition, this will save the necessity to contact people to pester and arm twist them for items. From the feedback I have received the journal is still being well received and I am happy to continue as editor, although as I say each year I apologise that I am not able to attend every meeting.

Officer Without Portfolio's Report.

Since our last AGM at Oxford my post has been rather quiet in terms of any pressing actions. The past twelve months have been relatively uneventful as there have been no specific threats from government interventions. In terms of published materials — I am not sure as to what degree the FEW Website now plays a positive role. The 'Facebook' pages have understandably dominated the 'news-slot'. Since the last AGM I have posted only two salient Viewpoint Papers' that I hope can be useful in conjunction with the prior series of discussions.

No.34 "The Correction of Freeman's Rights" issued 14 October 2013

A brief reflection on the incorrect application of the 1965 Commons Registration Act when freemen's 'exclusive' grazing rights were wrongly recorded as "common rights". This paper was the culmination of much debate and previous discussion over freemen's land registration and grazing rights.

No.35 "A Modem Approach to Freedom" issued October 2013

This was a fresh look at the borough freemen today. Does the image require a makeover? Should we introduce any changes to enlarge the membership? My personal view is that we 'must not lose sight of our traditions. The movement cannot ever be allowed to become simply a purchased 'club membership'. In conclusion I would again express my wish that we do as much as possible to encourage new freemen through apprenticeship. And that we continue to do everything we can to enhance the proper recognition of freemen in their links and by association with their historical borough towns.

Report on the 46th Annual General Meeting Weekend.

hosted by the Stafford Guild from 19th to 21st September 2014. By John Edwards.

Stafford Guild tried not to duplicate their 2009 event aiming to provide an enjoyable, educational, entertaining and business-like programme. The venue was, as last time, the Yarnfield Park Conference Centre, 7 miles north of the Safford. Fortunately, this time the intended venue did not go into liquidation just before the event. Yarnfield was sold by BT a few years ago and, while many things have improved, it has become more commercial.

Oddly, this weekend people were constantly early, except of course for the banquet, when we really wanted them to be early. [Probably because we assumed they would be late.] Some people arrived even before registration opened, while others had nightmare journeys with highways blocked from Sussex to Northumberland. It's hard to get it right!

The Friday evening talk was about "The Staffordshire Hoard" found in 2009, about 15 miles from Stafford, by a metal detectorist who could not believe his luck. The speaker Dr. Kevin Leahy, is a leading expert who was involved in the initial discovery. The valuable artefacts show amazing levels of skill and a variety of functions. Dr Leahy said that the hoard had taught us a great deal, but nobody really knew why it was there. The lecture was well received and provoked many questions. Delegates then retired to the bar to hear the "Love-heart Billionaires", take some liquid refreshment and enjoy lots of conversation.

Early Saturday a contingent of partners travelled the short distance to Trentham Gardens for shopping and sightseeing. They returned by midday, laden with goods, including plants from the excellent garden centre.

Meanwhile, the business of the weekend was under way with a wardens meeting, an open forum and the AGM. (*Reported elsewhere*). The photo of AGM delegates was taken from above showing the robed contingent looking up, as if seeking inspiration. After lunch, a bus, (regrettably also delayed on a motorway), took most delegates and partners to Shugborough, the estate of the Anson Family. After the contingent had filled the "Land train" to the

mansion, their time was well spent on tours of the house and the county museum, leaving a short while to appreciate the gardens. Returning via Stafford, the group glimpsed some of the features this part of the world has to offer.

The banquet was held in the presence of the Mayor and Mayoress of Stafford, the Leader of Stafford Borough Council, visitors from local guilds and others who joined us for the excellent meal. Toasts, speeches and presentations, closed that part of the evening, so the company retired to the bar, where "The Deacons" were ready to entertain.

Sunday Morning saw everyone in Stafford for the procession to St Mary's Church. Led by the Stafford Guild Drum and the Great Mace, we were joined by the Mayor and Mayoress, Her Majesty's Deputy Lieutenant and Borough Councillors bearing the ancient silver maces. Following the Stafford Guild Flag, the colourful group made its way to the Freemen's Service. A special treat was Yarlet Junior School Choir, who sang beautifully.

The Reverend John Davis, (with Stafford Guild badges on his stole), gave us a thought provoking sermon, with a mixture of history, morality, religion and humour, enough to keep the interest of most of those present. After the service, the whole group ventured outside the church by St Bertelin's Chapel, where Stafford was founded around 700 AD. Using a remarkably wide angle lens, Paul Milgate, of Stafford Radio, took a photograph of the whole impressive group. With lots of modern technology that picture was on Facebook, and a video of the return procession was on You-Tube, by mid-afternoon.

The weekend culminated with a Mayor's reception at Stafford Civic Centre, including a fascinating talk by the Mayor's Sergeant, Mr Steve McTigue. The Master of Stafford Guild took the opportunity to award Steve a Guild 'Gold badge' to recognise his excellent service to the burgesses. More presentations and votes of thanks followed concluding with the passing of the FEW Baton to Berwick-upon-Tweed Guild, who will host the 2015 AGM Weekend. It is hard work arranging these weekends, but well worth it if the majority of delegates have a good time and we think they did this year.

Editorial Information And Acknowledgements.

© The Freemen of England and Wales Journal, Annual Record, Gazette and Guilds Directory (ISSN1749-4095) incorporating the Newsletter (ISSN1465-8755) in continuous series, is distributed three times a year in October, February, June and is published by the Freemen of England and Wales (regd Charity 293536) and hereby asserts its copyright. FEWJ 177.

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

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

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Front Cover: The AGM delegates and partners after Church. Photograph by Paul Millgate.

Back Cover: Top; The official photograph of the AGM Delegates. Photograph by Terry Stevenson.

Bottom: John Edwards hands over the AGM Baton to Capt. Jim Evans. Photograph by Tom Gibson.

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Please note the closing date for the editor to receive items for the next issue (No. 180) is the 23/1/15.

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Registered address of the Freemen of England and Wales Association: **F.E.W. Richmond House, Beech Close, Oversley Green, Alcester. Warwickshire B49 6PP**

Printed by: Focus 4 Print, 1 James Street, York. YO10 3WW Tel:01904 673030 Email:office@focus4print.co.uk

