



# *Freemen of England and Wales.*

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*With Compliments  
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## *Presidents Message.*



This year's AGM at Pembroke in September is not too far away now, and my two year tenure as President of our Association of Freemen of England and Wales will soon be coming to an end. Time passes by extremely quickly when a period in office becomes a pleasure, and I must say that my time as President has been most enjoyable and fulfilling. I hope that in some small way I have managed to contribute something to the Association's ongoing success. All too soon it now seems, I am writing this, my final Journal letter before I step down and hand over the reins to my successor. The various presidential duties which I have undertaken, including the formalities of chairing AGM, Court, and Executive Meetings, have not seemed particularly onerous, and have been greatly enhanced by having many opportunities to attend, together with my wife Janet, the delightful events of Member Gilds. I thank them all for their wonderful welcomes, and invariably generous hospitality.

It goes without saying, that FEW could not function in the competent way that it does without the excellent team of Executive Officers and Wardens which it has at the helm, and I thank them all for making my term in office as President so much easier to fulfil.

I now look forward to meeting up with you all once again in Pembroke.

**Minutes of the Court Meeting held on Saturday 18th March 2017**  
**in the Guild Hall, High Street, Henley-in-Arden.**

1) The list of attendees: Derek Austin - Coventry, John Edwards – Stafford, Pat Evans – Berwick, Capt. Jim Evans - Berwick, Eileen Forth - York, Capt. Stephen Healy - Newcastle upon Tyne, Mike Honnoraty – Warwick, Janet Honnoraty - Warwick, Norman Kench - Henley-in-Arden, Pat Kench - Henley-in-Arden, Phillip Kinnersley - Stafford, Nick Johnson - Hale, Ron Leek -Alcester, Anthony Piddock - Stafford, Alan Shelley - Sudbury, Ray Spurway - Stafford, Denise Laver - Altrincham, Gordon Varndell- London, Alan Fallows - Shrewsbury, Brian Piddock – Stafford, Alex Christison - Berwick, Fiona Hogg – Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Michael Ayres – Leicester, Peter Staines – Leicester, Valerie Pettifer – York, Angela Priestly-Gibbins – Lincoln, Anthony Gibbins – Lincoln, Lee Hensley – Gloucester, Jacky Heath – Gloucester, Jayne Topham – Warwick, Tony Hemming – Warwick, Chris Butterfield – Oxford.

a) The meeting was called to order, and the President welcomed everyone present.

2) Apologies for absence were received from Stephen White (Vice President and Hon Treasurer), Tom Gibson (Hon Editor), Roy Folland (Warden for Wales), Martin Hanks (Warden for the South West), Howard Crapper (Warden for the West), Colin Hardcastle (Warden for the North), Jane Head (Guild of Freemen of Bridgnorth), Eric Fairbrother (Town Freemen of Montgomery), Ann Dasilva (Freemen of the City of Derby), Marc Allum (Burgesses Guild of Chippenham), Jonathan Wright (Royal Forest of Dean Freeminers), Shane Hales (Rochester Oyster and Floating Fishery).

3) The minutes of the Court Meeting held on Saturday 12th March 2016 at the Alcester War Memorial Hall, Alcester, were approved as a correct record, and were signed by the President.

4) Matters Arising

a) The President's Fund.

The idea for a fund that would be used to assist Guilds that had suffered through the calamitous effects of an Act of God, such as flooding (and for which insurance is not available), was first advanced by Captain Jim Evans. Following a number of discussions at previous Executive Meeting, it was decided to drop this item altogether as it was considered to be constitutionally unworkable, however the Secretary had, on the instruction of the President, sent an email to all Member Guilds, asking that should they ever become aware that a sister Guild was in dire straits as a result of an Act of God, that they might, out of good conscience, perhaps consider giving what assistance that they felt they were able.

b) Ninetieth birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. On behalf of the Association, the President said that he had had sent an especially designed and printed FEW card to the Queen from himself, the Officers and the Wardens, expressing our loyal and heartfelt good wishes.

5) Ron Leek presented his President's Report. A copy is appended.

6) Capt. Jim Evans presented his Deputy President's Report A copy is appended.

7) In the absence of the Vice President, Stephen White, the Secretary read his Report.

8) Gordon Varndell presented his Immediate Past President's Report. A copy is appended.

9) Wardens' Reports were presented as follows:-

Howard Crapper, Warden for the West. Copy appended.

John Edwards, Warden for the North Midlands. Copy appended.

Denise Laver, Warden for the North West.

Val Pettifer, Warden for the East. Copy appended.

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

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

Colin Hardcastle, Warden for the North. Copy appended.

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

Roy Folland, Warden for Wales. Copy appended.

10) In Stephen White's absence, the Hon Treasurer's Report was distributed, comprising of the statement of Income and Expenditure from April 2016 to February 2017, and the statement of Movement of Designated Funds.

11) Eileen Forth presented her Membership Secretary's Report. A copy is appended.

12) In the absence of the Hon. Editor, Tom Gibson, his Report was read out by the Secretary. A copy is appended.

13) The Report from the Hon. Archivist Alan Fallows was read out by the Secretary from his iPad, as no printed copy was to hand. Copy appended.

14) Alan Shelley presented his Officer without Portfolio's Report. A copy is appended.

15) Any Other Business.

a) Burgess Ant Piddock (Stafford) said that during the past couple of years, the Stafford Burgesses Guild had had to part with some of their Freeman's allotments, when a local water utility wanted to expand its pumping station facility located in a corner of the Freeman's acreage. Whilst the transaction was not without its problems, the Guild's negotiating team were able to conclude the matter satisfactorily. However, the experience left many feeling that they would not like to deal with a similar situation again without knowing that they would have the help and support of FEW.

Archivist Alan Fallows (Shrewsbury) replied that he has had occasion to offer advice to several Member Guilds regarding approaches from local developers, Councils, and Utility companies wishing to utilise Freeman's lands for infrastructure projects. He stated that it had always been his advice that it is better to retain title to Freeman's property wherever possible (only compulsory purchase should force sale of Freeman's assets). Companies wishing to utilise lands for, say, pipework or cable installation, should be asked to agree to pay a compensatory fee for loss of use of property during construction, and should thereafter be asked to agree to pay an annual fee in perpetuity for the loss of any land left unusable, and to cover the cost of any future redevelopment, makeover, repair or modernisation. Furthermore, any Freeman's lands to be used for development should be sold leasehold, thus retaining the freehold title for future Burgesses. If this is deemed impossible, and freehold sale is inevitable, then the proceeds should be considered as compensation and re-used to replenish capital assets.

16) Future Court and AGM venues.

The 2017 Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 16th September 2017 at the

Cleddau Bridge Hotel, Essex Road, Pembroke Dock, Pembrokeshire, Wales, SA72 6EG.

17) Closure of Court. There being no further business, the President closed the meeting at 4pm.

### *President's Report.*

On behalf of FEW, may I say what a pleasure it is to be holding this annual Court Meeting in this ancient Guildhall of Henley-in-Arden, hosted by Member Guild, the Henley-in-Arden Court Leet. Wherever possible, the FEW policy these days is for a different Member Guild to host our Court Meetings each year, located in either what we term, the more northerly region based on York, or as today, the more southerly region based on Leicester, and so far this seems to be working well, but for the future we still need other Guilds to volunteer as hosts. If you are able, please contact Nick Johnson our Hon Secretary, who will liaise and explain details.

Together with my wife Janet, I have enjoyed attending Member Guild events over recent months, and am looking forward to those to come which are already fixed in my diary. One disappointment however, is that due to a long standing prior engagement, I was unable to accept the invitation to attend the forthcoming AGM of our sister organisation, the Court of Deans of the Guilds of Scotland, but I am delighted that Deputy President Capt. Jim Evans will be attending on my, and FEW's, behalf.

It is extremely encouraging, when reading the News from the Guilds in the Journals, to note that an increasing number of Guilds are now admitting more new Freemen, which bodes well for the future, and for the Freedom itself. As a matter, of course, I would urge Guilds to recommend the benefits of FEW Individual Membership to all new Freemen admitted.

I would like to remind everyone that nominations are now open for FEW Executive Officers for the year 2017-2018, and that these must have been received by the Hon Secretary by the closing date of 18th May, so that they can be published in the Summer Journal. A nomination form was included in the last Journal, No 186, and it would be good to think that for once, there will be at least one nomination for each office, thereby eliminating the current situation where there is a necessity in some cases, for an officer to fulfil two separate functions.

### *Deputy President's Report.*

It has been a quiet winter with regard to FEW affairs, but there has been a significant engagement with matters in my local Guild. I do continue to give talks about the Freedom in which I refer to FEW.

Arrangement have been made for exchange visits between Durham and Berwick Guilds starting with Durham Guild coming to Berwick this summer.

The ashes of David Moor, the first Archivist of FEW, will be buried in his grandfather's grave at Berwick Parish Church next Friday. The largest bell in the Berwick Peel, the King James or death bell, will be tolled during the commitment. There will be a small reception afterwards in the Guild Hall.

The Berwick family's project is now completed. We produced this book and I have a copy for the Archivist. While the project was based on Berwick and Berwickshire much of the information is relevant to other towns and cities. We also have a website which includes all those who have received the freedom of Berwick between 1800 and 1940. As these

records include the father's name and date of receiving the freedom families can trace back their own history. We shall update the entries on a regular basis. 1780 to 1800 will be added in the next few weeks. The restriction to not including records after 1940 is due to data protection. A year will be added each year. New Freeman must be at least 21 years of age to receive the freedom.

Last month I was approached by Tim Walker who is a well known photographer in Berwick and the Borders. He has a massive collection of photographs and also artefacts from early photography. He is 92 years of age and is concerned that this collection will be lost when he is no longer able to look after the collection. He wished to gift the collection to the Berwick Freeman in the knowledge that they would not let it be removed from Berwick. The Guild is very willing to receive the collection and place in the Town Hall which is part of the Freeman's Trust. The Guild already has a collection of photographs mainly produced by David Moor, who in addition to his own photographs took copies of many of the photographs of Berwick held in the Northumberland County Council collection. The Guild is now considering how this collection can be shown to the public.

### *Vice President's Report.*

Life in the Whitehouse was getting back to normal before Christmas, I managed to redecorate my son's bedroom so that he could move back upstairs and out of my office now that he has good mobility again following his accident. However, as luck would have it, we have now been presented with other trials and tribulations, one of which has prevented me from attending today.

I am pleased to reflect on the fact that we now have Wardens in all areas and each has a robe and Badge of Office. Other than that I have had intermittent contact since the AGM but do get copied into emails from time to time so that I have an idea of what is going on. I managed to locate a book on eBay the subject The History of the Preston Guild so bought a copy and sent it to Denise Laver for a bit of light reading. I would commend all of our Officers and members to be on the lookout for any such relevant books which might otherwise be "lost".

As always, I am grateful for the work that the Wardens do, and their ability — like a well-rehearsed orchestra — to carry on even when the conductor isn't waving his baton.

Work continues updating The Website with recent Journals and, unfortunately, obituaries of well-known friends who have contributed to the life of FEW or the Freedom in general. A new page has been created recently containing downloadable Application and Regalia Order Forms. The diary dates' page remains hidden from view though due to insufficient material being forwarded for inclusion. I am always pleased to receive ideas for new material to include.

Our Facebook page, which receives regular posts from Tom Gibson, (also the prime mover behind the Freeman's Railway Society page), and Nick Johnson, is also now picking up an increasing number of items from our member Guilds and so provides a steady stream of fresh information. The number of likes" now stands at 239, up from 224 last September, and any addition to the website is also notified through Facebook. Tom keeps busy posting up York Guild news or other items which is either of a very urgent nature or simply won't fit into the next Journal owing to space limitations, whilst Nick regularly posts photographs and video clips from Guild events that he has attended. A few of our members also post here and on the Railway page.

I continue to be very busy with my own local Freeman, in regeneration plans on part of our estate and collecting awards for our renewable energy initiatives, along with my other working commitments. In between times, and as I reported at last year's AGM, I have produced an up-to-date first electronic draft of The Association Directory which first saw the light of day 20 years ago. As the core document of The Handbook this contains everything you ever needed to know about FEW, but were too afraid to ask. Some comments have been received back from the Officers and Wardens, and amendments made, but it is not yet ready for general release.

### **Immediate Past Presidents Report.**

This is a short report. All is going well with Immediate Past Presidents role at the moment. Eileen and I still attend a lot of functions throughout the land with different Guilds and societies to promote the Association as much as we can.

That just leaves me to thank on behalf of Eileen and myself and the Freeman of England and Wales for all the invitations we receive from not only our own Guilds/Gilds but from all the different organisations in order to promote The Association.

### **Wardens Reports:**

#### **Warden for the West.**

Not too much to report at present but the period concerns the Christmas and New Year period. I am grateful to all the seasons greetings received from fellow freemen in the West.

The Chartered Freeman of Gloucester kindly invited myself and my wife Shirley to their Annual Dinner at a great venue on Gloucester Docks. It was Halloween night and I greeted one gentleman and later found out he was dressed as Herman Munster and from an adjoining party. Make no mistake that we were warmly welcomed and enjoyed a memorable evening in the company of the President and his wife. The Mayor of Gloucester arrived after the meal, citing that he was doing his best to appear at three events on the same evening. His beautiful daughter stood in for his wife. He made a very complementary speech and was sure the Freeman contributed to their city and its heritage. The Freeman of the City of Oxford held their Annual Dinner in December at Kirtlington Golf Club, where the venue was suitably decorated for Christmas. The Lord Mayor came despite a heavy cold after standing at many Christmas light switch on events in freezing weather. His charming wife carried the evening. The Sheriff had the most to say in her speech and was thrilled to be involved in the historic Port Meadow, as she had grown up nearby and often walked this amazing meadow in her childhood.

The sizeable dinner was followed by the baffling Oxford Quiz and then a large raffle where even I won a prize. It was a pleasure to greet so many freemen and their friends to our gathering and especially welcome to see Freeman from Guilds far and wide. I hope to see many Freeman during the warmer months ahead.

#### **Warden for the North Midlands.**

Things in my area seem to be ticking along much as usual. Stafford, Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury have a their usual range of civic and social functions, Derby is now getting off the ground, but Newcastle under Lyme has gone rather quiet.

After several years in the doldrums, thanks to Mr and Mrs DaSilva and a small group of

other enthusiasts, the Derby Guild is making good progress. Since my last report they have held an AGM and sworn in three new freemen. I had an invitation to the ceremony, but unfortunately was unable to attend, though I understand that it was a successful event. All being well, I shall attend some of their activities during 2017. As with other Guilds, it would be beneficial to expand their rules of admission and I have had some discussions on that matter.

I have had invitations to Bridgnorth events and hope to attend their AGM in April, which includes an illustrated talk, and maybe their banquet in October. Bridgnorth are good at giving plenty of notice, but events have an uncanny knack of all arriving on the same day.

I was delighted to see that the Shrewsbury Gild now has an interesting and very informative web site. It includes information about the history of the freemen, details of scheduled events, their organisation and a good selection of photographs. It even has a copy of the Gild Newsletter with yet more interesting facts. This Gild has now appointed its first lady chairman. With all 'these details readily available, I may even be able to attend some of their events soon.

Stafford sadly lost their President and founder member, Alf Eley, on Christmas Day 2016. He had been the inspiration of the Guild for many years. Increased numbers admitted since the change of rules in 2012 have been beneficial with better attendance at civic functions and larger social gatherings. It makes a change to say "Sold out" now and again, rather than struggling for numbers. The Guild and the Trustees are now working well together, unlike a while back when they were at 'daggers drawn'. The Trust has had mixed fortunes recently with the completion of the protracted project by Severn Trent Water who needed to build on our land. It has left us financially better off, but raised a number of questions in its wake.

On the negative side, the trustees have had to deal with many problems associated with running one of the biggest (and oldest), allotment sites in the country. Vandalism, theft, arson, antisocial behaviour and criminal damage are hardly what you want as volunteers. There have even been problems with badgers on site, but trustees were delighted to be complimented by a local badger group on their management of this protected species. The decision to change from 'Freemen' to 'Burgesses' has been good, but knock on effects, like bank account names, changes to regalia and Charity Commission changes are added complications. It was an honour to have the FEW President at the Stafford annual dinner this year, as well as the Mayor and other dignitaries. That event has been so successful that we have had to find a bigger venue, but that is no bad thing.

I had hoped to report some progress with re-establishing a Lichfield Guild, but that is an ongoing project and just one more thing I must get round to in 2017.

## **Warden for the East.**

### **Norwich.**

Shortly after the FEW AGM in September 2016, I made contact by phone with Michael Quinton, the Honorary Secretary to the Norwich Freemans Committee. Although Norwich are not presently members of the FEW, Michael led me to believe that they had been so up until 2009, but had not renewed their membership as they felt that undue demands were being put on them by the presiding court. We concluded our chat with him saying there was a meeting coming up that very evening, so he would talk to the membership, and hopefully secure an invitation for me to visit Norwich in the new year.



However, it was January 2017 before Michael emailed me, and he then stated that only he had been a member of the FEW and for reasons of his own, had no plans to renew. He also explained that there was a 'Court of Majority' scheduled for the 17th February 2017, but he could 'not invite me as it is not our party' so I would have to contact the Civic Department. I declined the opportunity, as I felt uncomfortable at the prospect of turning up to a ceremony that I was neither part of, or felt particularly welcome. Suffice to say I have made no further efforts to persuade Norwich to join the FEW.

### **Sudbury.**

In January 2017 I contacted Michael Wheeler, Chairman on behalf of the Committee to introduce myself formally and find out a little more about them. In a complete contrast to Norwich, Michael was more than happy to welcome me to attend their forthcoming 'Guided Walk over the Meadows' and AGM in my capacity of Warden to the East on the 4th July 2017.

That same day Michael emailed the 2015 Annual Report, and paperwork from the 2016 AGM to give me an overview of the proceedings, so I now look forward to developing close links with Sudbury.

### **Lincoln.**

Although Lincoln is on the very northern edge of my area, they are particularly keen to foster their links with the FEW.

In January our hosts Angela Priestley-Gibbins and her consort Tony made my husband and I very welcome at the City of Lincoln Freemans Guild Annual Dinner. Although we regularly drive past signs for Lincoln as we head north for York, this was our first stay in the city, and we were very impressed with it. On the Saturday morning a group of us were treated to a fantastically detailed tour of the historic Lincoln Guild Hall where we learnt lots about its history, much of which was rather grisly!

In the evening we attended the annual dinner, complete with entertainment of a very high calibre, and a massive raffle. There were many familiar faces there from York, Coventry and Leicester, plus we were introduced to numerous Freeman from Northampton and Lincoln, which has subsequently led to an invitation to the Northampton annual banquet (another new dress)! The Lincoln Freeman Investitures and AGM are on Saturday 8th April and I will endeavour to attend in my capacity of Warden for the East, although I arrive home from New York the day before, so I'm not 100% certain I'll make it.

### **Colchester.**

Soon after becoming the Warden for the East, Nick Johnson sent me an administration link for the Colchester Facebook page. I sat on it for some time as I was wary about my role in administering this page, but as I could see there was no activity on it I eventually decided to use it as a way of introducing myself to the Freeburgesses of the Borough of Colchester. Within a couple of days there was significant interest on the page, including a number of new 'Likes' and as a result I soon received a request for a FEW membership application form (I've since spoken to the lady in question on the phone and she is sending in her paperwork). To date 196 people have viewed the page, so I'm now awaiting feedback from the Freeburgesses to see who if anyone is prepared to take on the responsibility of keeping the page updated with current events etc. As is usual with such things, there seems to be a reluctance amongst the members to take this on, some out of lack of Facebook experience, others who fear they might be giving away their privacy or worse! I'm happy to administer it if necessary as I already host a page for my business, and a personal page, but I'll await their feedback on this.

Sandy French, Colchester Freeburgesses Secretary, in conjunction with Peter Nason, Colchester Chief Conservator has been in regular contact with me, and I now have an invitation to attend their next meeting on the 21st April, in the Nottage Institute, Wivenhoe, Essex. I'm pleased to have this opportunity to meet them all face-to-face, and learn about their organisation and traditions.

On a more serious note I was informed by Eileen Forth that Colchester was in arrears with its annual subscription. However, I can now report that their subscription was paid by the Colchester Council on the 10th February 2017.

### **Warden for the South East.**

#### **Rochester Oyster Ft Floating Fishery.**

On Monday 24th October 2016 at the Mayor's Parlour ft Civic Rooms, Gun Wharf, Chatham, Kent, the Mayor of Medway Councillor Stuart Trantor assumed his other role as Admiral of the River Medway and presided over the Medway Admiralty Court in order to hear the Registrar announce a number of formalities as court business.

The first, the appointment of a Principal Water Bailiff, is an important one as without it the Admiralty Couty could not be held. It is the Principal Water Bailiff who summons the free fishermen and dredgers to attend. Mr Dean Caston volunteered to undertake this office, in which he will be supported by a team of four Water Bailiffs.

Secondly, two individuals, Andrew Norwood and Connor Starting, entered into Deeds of Apprenticeship with Mark Pink and Andrew Starling, following an examination by the Registrar of the Masters Freedom Certificates. Both Apprentices then signed their Indentures followed by their Masters, the Registrar, and the Admiral of the River Medway. Lastly, Freedom was granted for the trade or calling of a Free Fisherman or Dredgerman of the River Medway, to Sophie Hates and John Spencer, both having completed their seven year term of Apprenticeship. Following their swearing of the Oath, the two Freemen were handed their Deeds by the Mayor.

Recently, ROFF signed a joint Memorandum of Understanding with Medway Council and the Kent Police Marine Unit, designed to reinforce the co-operative powers of the Fishery, the Police, and the Council. ROFF Water Bailiffs carry a Warrant signed by the Admiral of the River Medway that identifies them as free fishers of Rochester, and stating their legal powers. All Freemen also carry a Warning Letter that can be handed to any potential miscreant advising them not to fish in the exclusive area of the river.

The court is still made up of Aldermen of the City of Rochester, and the Freemen are the only ones allowed to fish and dredge in the river. Unlike most of the courts that have survived from medieval times, the Admiralty Court still has a genuine function and real teeth. Medway Council and the Rochester Oyster and Floating Fishery continue to take action against poachers and unlawful fishing, and in 2003 they successfully prosecuted an Isle of Sheppey fisherman for encroaching on their stretch of the river. ROFF operate ten vessels on the river, the largest being named 'Fidelity.

In 2004, there were twenty-two Freemen of the River, and that year also saw the first ever female apprentice in fourteen-year-old Robyn Wadhams. Today, Robyn has completed her apprenticeship, and is employed as a 2nd Engineering Officer with PaO.

At the start of 2017, there are thirty five Freemen and fifteen apprentices of the Rochester Oyster and Floating Fishery. Twelve Freemen work on the river, and a further six in related professions.

## **Warden for the South Midlands.**

As detailed reports of South Midlands Guilds and Court Leet activities since the York AGM to the year end are contained in the last FEW Journal, I shall just highlight a few items:

### **Coventry Freemen's Guild**

Master Steve Morson held a special 70th anniversary Guild event in September in St Mary's Guildhall. This was a members ticket only event, to draw out those members we rarely see. The guided tours and free buffet were popular, but whether we shall see some of those members again is debateable. A Freedom Court in September was unusual in that the Lord Mayor as a time served apprentice was also able to admit himself! This was followed in October with a Guild Admission Court with 19 Freemen and one Associate joining our ranks.

Coventry's banquet weekend events this year are on May 5th -7th, with a welcoming supper, a formal banquet, and Church service. Contact for more details is George Wilkinson on 024-7646-3203.

### **Leicester Gild of Freemen**

A Making Free Ceremony on 8th October at the Town Hall saw 12 ladies and 5 men gain their Freedom. Gild Master Lynn Roffee in her welcome did hope that some of the vacant Guild Court and Board Deputy positions would be filled in time with the new Freemen. The FEW Executive meeting was held at the Freemens Holt on 14th January, our thanks to Deputy Master Jeff Lewitt and Past Master Mick Ayres for their help.

The 2017 Leicester banquet weekend events are on 2nd - 4th June, with the usual welcoming supper, a formal banquet, and a Leicester Cathedral service. For details see the Leicester Gild posting on the FEW Facebook site. For those without internet access, Jeff Lewitt on 07963-002182 can help.

### **Northampton Guild of Freemen**

A Freedom Court in October saw four new hereditary Freemen take their Oath in the Mayor's Parlour. Hopefully these relatively young Freemen will help assure the long term future of the Freemen Trustees and the Guild. The Guild President Phil Ager would welcome fellow Freemen to the 2017 Northampton Charity weekend events, which start with a welcome supper on 28th April at Moulton College. Saturday 29th April will see visits and an evening dinner. Contact John Keggin on 01604-696251 or e-mail keegin@waitrose.com for booking details.

### **Alcester Court Leet & Court Baron.**

The Court Leet continues to play a significant role in the Town's calendar of events, with over £4000 being raised last year for local charities from Court activities. At the AGM and Elections last October, several residents took the Oath of Frankpledge and joined the Jury. As usual, our President Ron Leek was elected as Jury Foremen to oversee the elections of the new Bailiffs and Officers. A pageant of colourful robes and sounds will greet the Town on 15th April for the Heart of England Town Crier Parade and Competition

### **Henley-in-Arden Court Leet & Court Baron.**

Our hosts today hold their meetings in this magnificent Guildhall – but have the significant task of maintaining this listed building in a conservation area. On the walls are boards displaying the Lords of the Manor from 1066, Bailiffs from 1477, and Honorary Burgesses from 1919. Some of the roof beams were originally requisitioned from the Forest of Arden for shipbuilding programmes prior to the Spanish Armada – and later returned for local use. You will see various heraldic shields within and without the

Guildhall. These were refurbished last year by the current High Bailiff Norman Kench, and represent 1000 years of Guildhall owners. They are pictured on the back of your FEW Journal of Spring 2016. Court Leet Day this year on 3rd June will see robed Officers checking local Henley produce with due pomp and ceremony, with an Artisans market in the Guildhall garden.

### **Warwick Court Leet**

Next Thursday sees the first public meeting of the Court in 2017, where Warwick residents can hear progress made on previous presentments for the good of the town, and dates confirmed for forthcoming events such as the Beer, Cider, and Music Festival.

### **Warden for the North.**

My report is limited to York and Kingston-upon-Hull.

#### **City of York**

An admissions Court was held on 3 October 2016 when 59 candidates for the Freedom came forward. All were admitted as Freemen be they male or female. One candidate was the Deputy Mayor of the City of Falmouth in Cornwall [Ms Patricia Minston] who made a presentation to the Lord Mayor of York on behalf of the town of Falmouth to York, she was subsequently admitted into the Freedom.

The Gild Christmas lunch was held on 4 December when 38 guests assembled. A raffle for the Masters' charity raised £90. The following week, the Gild dinner saw 33 guests assembled and a further sum of £110 swelled the Masters' charity coffers.

The Annual Carol service was held at All Saints Parish Church on 14 December when the Church was, as usual, full and following the Service, mulled wine, coffee and mince pies were served to the congregation.

#### **Kingston-Upon -Hull**

I have recently been contacted by a Mrs Pat Reynolds who is related to a past Freeman of K-u-H to seek our help in claiming for herself and her family the hereditary Freedom. In addition to giving her such advice as I could, I gave her details of our Archivist for his help and guidance. After my lack of persuasive speech to the K-u-H council, they may, now, be forced to act to re-introduce the granting of the Freedom — watch this space.

### **Warden for the North East.**

#### **Alnwick:**

Speaking on behalf of the Chamberlain's Common Council and Freemen of the Borough of Alnwick, Jimmy Mattison advises 'business as usual' with nothing of particular note since the AGM. Their Freemen are looking forward once again to the long hike to Pembroke later this year.

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

Similarly, the Chairman of the Guild of Freemen of Berwick-upon-Tweed, Michael Herriott, states that the winter months have been quiet, with nothing of particular import or note going on at present, apart from Capt. Jim Evans' most valuable ongoing contribution to the Committee steering the intended redevelopment of Berwick Barracks, on which I am advised he is best placed to report further to this meeting.

We do note the passing of David Moor, one time FEW Archivist, in October 2016.

#### **Durham:**

The hugely impressive website of the Durham City Freemen indicates that they are very much in control of matters there too, with both routine matters and initiatives of note in

recent months. The Candlemas Guild Day saw three sisters from Durham and two brothers from West being sworn in. The sisters, Fiona, Rebakah and Holly Wilmshurst, were welcomed into the Curriers' Company by their father Iain, who is their Warden. Brothers Jack and Davey McElwee were formally entered into the Cordwainer's Company by their paternal grandfather Joe, who is the Warden for that Company. Grandmother Doris is also a member.

The arrival of that latest batch took membership of the Durham Freemen past the 250 milestone, establishing yet another new modern-day record. The number of women members sworn-in over the past six years following the introduction of new equality laws, now stands at 66.

The City's Freemen are sponsoring an apprentice joiner at Durham's iconic Norman Castle, a four-year indenture in which Steven Hay will help with the upkeep of the 11th century fortress. The newly created job, with the university's estates and buildings department, has been made possible by sponsorship of up to £30,000 from the Freemen, whose eight surviving trade guilds includes the Joiners' Company, established in 1661. On successful completion of his apprenticeship, it is hoped and intended for Steven to join the ranks of the City's Freemen.

The Freemen have also made a generous donation to the Durham Pointers, a group of volunteer guides in the City, with an element of the funding targeted at the younger visitors to Durham through the production of an activity leaflet called the 'Children's Market Place Quiz'.

#### **Newcastle upon Tyne:**

Nothing to report, save noting the death of Alan Alderson, past FEW Treasurer, in October 2016.

#### **Footnote:**

A few years ago, what is known as the 'Cato Collection' was passed into the care of the Newcastle Upon Tyne Trinity House. This is a collection of articles, papers, booklets, speeches, reports and the like, assembled over many years by the late Brian Cato, once a stalwart of the Freemen of England (as it then was). Brian was a member of the Scrivener's Company of Newcastle Upon Tyne.

FEW Past-President and current Custodian Trustee Alan Robson has recently spent quite some weeks listing the collection in detail and it is no understatement to describe it as a goldmine. Although the majority of information relates to the Freemen of Newcastle Upon Tyne, there is also a wealth of material on Freemen of other boroughs, some of which are still active and others now long-absorbed into unitary councils and devoid of hereditary freemen today. Unfortunately, many of the papers predate the computer age and are either hand-written or, at best, typed.

I intend to raise the matter of both local and national archives with the Executive. It is likely that in many cases up and down the land, documentation and archiving of Freemen's activities and history has simply been done by enthusiastic and dedicated individuals, just like Brian Cato and indeed our current FEW Honorary Archivist, Alan Fallows. I suggest it is a worthwhile exercise to explore ways of getting such records into electronic format before they are lost, with a consolidated, centralised database providing local, national and international access for future generations. At very least this should apply to FEW-related records, but there may also be value in linking to all those local records which have already been deposited with City, County and other archives.

## **Warden for Wales.**

### **The Gild of Freeman of Pembroke**

As Warden for Wales I was invited to attend the Haverfordwest Gild of Freeman's AGM weekend which was held on Saturday 1st October 2016 at the County Hall, Haverfordwest. The Annual Banquet was held in the evening at the Wolfscastle Hotel. On Sunday the Benefactors Service took place at St. Martin's Church and was followed by a wine reception in the church hall.

On the 13th of October the Master represented the Gild at the opening of the St. Michaelmas Fair, this involved a parade from the town hall led by the Mayor, Pembroke Town Councillors, Mayors and Sheriffs from other towns in the county. Following the opening of the fair there was a reception and dinner held at the town hall which was hosted by the Showman's Gild.

The AGM of the Gild was held on October 20th in the Chamber of Pembroke Town Council. During the election of officers the Master vacated the Chair which was taken by Mr. Phil Lloyd. It was at this point that our treasurer Mr John Rowlands stated that having served 27 years in that office he now wished to relinquish that position. This was also stated by Miss Melanie Phillips who had served 9 years as our Press Officer. It was moved, seconded and accepted that the Master Roy Folland, Deputy Master Robin Folland and the Secretary Graham Phillips who were existing Officers be re-elected to those positions. On taking the Chair the Master on behalf of the Gild thanked both Treasurer and Press Officer for the work they had carried out over the years on behalf of the Gild. Proposals were asked for from the floor for the names of members who were willing to accept the positions of Treasurer and Press Officer. It was proposed and seconded that Mr. Keith Nicholas take up the position of Treasurer and Mr. George Lewis that of Press Officer. The Master thanked both members for accepting their nominations. The dates for the Court Meetings for 2017 were agreed and will take place on the 16th March-20th July and the AGM on the 19th October.

The hosting of the AGM of the FEW in 2017 was discussed and it was proposed, seconded and accepted by all present that the Gild of Freeman of Pembroke would host the FEW AGM on the 15th-16th-17th of September 2017. The Cleddau Bridge Hotel had been booked for those dates and a deposit of £300.00 paid to the hotel. The arrangements for that weekend will be finalised at the Court Meeting on the 16th of March and all information will be forwarded with this report to Tom our Journal Editor to be reported on in our June Journal.

On Sunday November the 13th representatives of the Gild took part in the Service of Remembrance at the Pembroke Town Cenotaph, The Master laid the wreath on their behalf.

The Annual Service was held on Sunday the 20th of November 11.00am at the Ancient Parish Church of Saint Mary The Blessed Virgin Pembroke. The service was taken by Canon Roger Jones, Chaplain to the Gild, the guest preacher was the Revd. Canon Paul Mackness, Chaplain to the Bishop of St. David's. Following the service the Annual Luncheon was held at the Cleddau Bridge Hotel.

The Honoured Guests attending were the Chairman of Pembrokeshire County Council Cllr. Tony Brinsden and his Lady Mrs. Margaret Brinsden. The Mayor and Mayoress of Pembroke Cllr. Dennis Evans and Mrs. Rita Evans. The Mayor and Consort of Pembroke Dock Cllr. Mrs. Maureen Colgan and Consort. The Master of the Haverfordwest Gild of Freeman Mr. Charles Davies and his Lady Mrs. Marion Davies and the guest preacher the

Revd. Canon. Paul Mackness.

Following the luncheon the Master presented both the Treasurer and the Press Secretary paintings of Pembroke by the artist Mr. George Lewis. Thanking them for the work they had carried out on behalf of the Gild. over the years.

The whole of Pembroke was saddened to learn of the passing of Cllr. Mrs. Pauline Waters former Mayor of Pembroke and Burgess of the Gild of Freemen of Pembroke. The numbers attending her funeral was proof of the high esteem she was held in.

### **Haverfordwest Gild of Freemen.**

There is a Tudor back in possession of a Tudor mansion in Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, the county where Henry VII was born in Pembroke Castle in 1457. But the modern Tudor is no descendant of the man who became King when he defeated Richard III at Bosworth in August 1485; he is a local County Councillor who has bought a Tudor ruin, the home of Tudor Knight and benefactor, Sir John Perrot. Councillor Tom Tudor bought Perrot's ruined mansion home, Haroldston House, from Haverfordwest Gild of Freemen, who acquired it about 30 years ago with plans to preserve it and turn it into a public amenity where townfolk and visitors could learn about the irascible Sir John, who fell out with Queen Elizabeth I and died in the Bloody Tower.

A myth that Perrot was the illegitimate son of Henry VIII has been proved to be untrue, but he was certainly a member of the King's Court and owned several ancient piles in West Wales. These included two magnificent castles, at Laugharne, near Carmarthen, and Carew, a few miles from Pembroke.

Haroldston House is on an extensive site which once had magnificent terraced gardens, a beech-lined drive and a cockpit, but the Haverfordwest Gild's plans, for various reasons, including restrictions imposed by its Listed status, failed to materialise and they decided to sell it last year.

It had been maintained by the Gild and grazed by sheep and horses over the years, and was open to the public, although large sections of the ruin were not entirely safe, some of it held up by ivy. Councillor Tudor has not revealed his intentions as yet, but it is believed he is keen to maintain public access because of the site's historic interest. Sir John Perrot was a great character and a major benefactor to Haverfordwest, his Perrot Trust, with a large portfolio of houses, still operating as a charity run by a long-established local estate agent. One of his descendants was a friend of the famous essayist, poet, playwright and politician Joseph Addison, (1672-1720), a newspaper pioneer who founded the magazine, The Spectator in 1711, and Perrot's descendant is said to have been the writer's model for his eccentric creation, Sir Roger de Coverley.

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

**Guilds.** We have 38 Guilds on the books with currently four Guilds in Arrears.

#### **Individual Membership**

The current membership stands at 337. A drop on the last report

Since September 2016

7 Members Deceased

2 New full individual Members

2 Member has resigned due to ill health

9 Members deleted under rule 9 of the Constitution

**Current payments:** Late payments, some are coming in. Reminders are being sent out

but responses are very slow.

**Arrears:** An accurate figure for this will be given at the next AGM

### ***Editors Report.***

The last issue, 186, was not full, but benefited from contributions from several Guilds we do not normally hear from in the publication's pages as well as a good number of photographs. As well as two completely new items, one profiling one of our Wardens, the other a diary of Guilds events. A week after the copy date I received a message querying if it was too late for something to be added, unfortunately it was. Could everyone please note that the copy date for the following issue is on the copyright page of current one in bold type.

The next edition (187) I am assured will contain the booking form for the AGM, any notices necessary for that meeting and, I expect, any reports from this meeting.

We now are back up to three individual members, who have requested the journal by, email, I have forwarded these members names and what details I have to the membership secretary so the appropriate mailing labels can be removed. In addition we now send email copies to all Guild representatives with an email address (as noted in the current gazette) as well as to all wardens and exec members, I would suggest that now this system has settled we now remove the postage labels for those we now email editions too, saving the association the expense of printing and postage.

### ***Archivists Report .***

As before any items received have been added to the archives and an up-dated list of all contents is (hopefully) to be completed by the AGM this year.

Most enquiries to date are from contacts at functions or meetings or resulting from access to the journal who wish to research swearing in for themselves or relatives. Whilst I have endeavoured to give background advice regarding eligibility and the extant nature of relevant boroughs or towns, I cannot make detailed research for individuals, and it must be stressed to enquirers that it is their responsibility to do this locally.

Indeed I feel that there must be a clear desire on their part to complete the task otherwise they will not be demonstrating the right attitude towards the continuation and survival of the Freedom.

### ***Officer Without Portfolio.***

#### **Matters that may affect Freemen's landed property:**

- a) There is a briefing paper in the Commons considering proposals to move Land Registry operations to the private sector;
- b) There have also been briefings over ownership by companies regarding land and real property, requiring more transparency.
- c) This may affect outline planning permission and such new rulings that may concern say mining rights for 'fracking' purposes.
- d) It is worthy of reminding freemen about 'manorial rights' over land in England and Wales. Changes that have affected the ability of individuals to exercise rights. These being in particular Overriding Rights. In reference to the 2002 LRA that required manorial rights to be registered before 13 October 2013 if they were to be retained. NB.



The Land Registry received 73, 000 applications to enter notice claiming rights. The only recommendation I have been able to find (in the results) is that the Justice Committee (inq. into manorial rights) wishing to abolish any unregistered rights, will only concern themselves to implement the claims registered within the Oct 2013 expiry date. There has been an emphasis on the ten years allowed to prevent any arguments over unfair claims or limitations in time.

### **The ongoing Deregulation Act, 2015**

This Act provides for the removal of a number of 'burdens', particularly on land, properties, individuals and public sector with planning and development issues. As I previously have said when reviewing the Bill, it is intended to reduce the cost of hold-ups and speed up planning decisions by removing 'red-tape'. A developer's charter, somewhat analogous in a small way with the enclosure acts!

Deregulation has been further bolstered by the introduction of the Neighbourhood Bill introduced last September to put increased pressure on more house building. It is the intentions of government to provide more local say over planning and further speed up development. Some heritage and environmental safeguards remain in place, by the insertion of a new section into the Town & Planning Country Act 1990.

The Secretary of State will be provided with power to make regulations regarding planning permissions. These considerations are to be in line with the conditions that apply in the 'National Planning Policy Framework'. They will follow public consultations and will not restrict the ability of local authorities to impose conditions necessary to achieve sustainable development. This policy includes measures to simplify compulsory purchase orders.

It is very interesting to note that a statement has also been made that the consideration to privatise the Land Registry has been put on hold for the time being. Matters are still not entirely clear, as argument and debate have continued to stall much of the intended actions\_ Watch this Space' as Freeman's and common lands in general remain vulnerable to acquisitions for aspirant council development plans. I would urge all guilds with rights attaching to landed property to be ever vigilant.

Finally, with regard to ongoing 'Brexit' measures, we must await further information regarding farming and an agricultural policy that may replace the European regulations. This will, in time, affect stewardship and the existing payment schemes (monies received from grazing).

### ***News from the Guilds.***

#### **Warwick Court Leet:**

Following the closed Court meeting on 26th January, next day the Court Leet members attended a church service and 'Oken's Feast' – to celebrate Warwick's notable benefactor Thomas Oken who, besides establishing a charity fund, also successfully negotiated the purchase of the Guildhall of the Holy Trinity and St George for town use from Henry VIII's list of seized religious assets during the Reformation – only to have Lord Leycester effectively sequester the Guildhall in 1571 as the Lord Leycester Hospital for old soldiers. That the timber framed building survives today is principally due to being upwind of the Great Fire of Warwick in 1694. Court Leet funds have now enabled modern floodlighting of the building – which made front page news in the local Warwick Courier newspaper, to usefully raise the public profile of the Court Leet.

At the Spring Court meeting on the 23rd March in the Jury Street Courthouse, the Lord of the Leet, her Worship the Mayor of Warwick, presided over the usual Bailiffs, Officers, and Constables reports, and progress on past Presentments was reviewed by the Steward. New Presentments, ranging from the badly deteriorated Leper Hospice to electric car charging points, were then discussed.

A Forthcoming date for your diaries is 21-22 July, when the Court Leet Beer Festival will be held at Warwick Racecourse, with at least 85 beers and 40 ciders to be sampled, and entertainment to be enjoyed. This event is the principal source of Court Leet charity funds, for the benefit of worthy causes in the CV34 postcode area, such as the Myton Hospice. Next public meeting will be the 463rd Annual Court Meeting on 26th October in the Jury Street Courthouse.

### **Alcester Court Leet:**

28th February saw closure of the Alcester High Street for the annual Court Leet Shrove Tuesday pancake races, covering all ages from toddler to pub teams – and with over 200 children from local schools and nurseries! 15th April saw the Easter Fayre & coffee morning at the Town Hall, with games, tombola, raffles and refreshments. 6th May saw the Court Leet Assizes, where robed Officers assessed the quality of local produce in the High Street – a true forerunner of today's Trading Standards Inspectors.

If this Journal reaches you in time, a date for your diaries is the Court Leet Street Market on 11th June. This year the theme is 'Super heroes v. Super villains', with a fancy dress competition and entertainment through the afternoon.

See website [www.alcestercourtleet.co.uk](http://www.alcestercourtleet.co.uk) for details of other forthcoming events.

### **Chester:**

On Friday 21st April (the nearest Friday to St. George's Day), the Lord Mayor of Chester, Councillor Angela Claydon, held a Pentice Court in the splendid Council Chamber of Chester Town Hall. This ancient ceremony, usually held once a year, is the occasion when new freemen are admitted. Thirteen new freemen were admitted, and there was a large and happy turnout of relatives, and several Honorary Freemen of the City were present. After the ceremony, where new freemen are formally identified, and swear an oath of allegiance to the Lord Mayor and the citizens, a lovely buffet supper was enjoyed by all in the Assembly Room.

The Company of Joiners, Carvers and Turners of the City of Chester held their annual dinner in the Chez Jules restaurant in Northgate Street – a very happy event, drawing freemen members of the Company from across the country. The Bakers Company held a very successful Social evening (Hoe Down) on Saturday 6th. May. The President of Chester Freemen and Guilds, David Starbuck Edwards, had great pleasure in attending the Coventry Banquet Weekend, 6th and 7th May.

The President was invited to attend the Lord Mayor Making on May 18th., again in Chester Town Hall, and two freemen acted as stave bearers.

The Chester Banquet is to be held at Chester Town Hall on Sat. 14th. October (£50), with Pre-Banquet supper (£20) at the City Club on the preceding Friday, (Combined supper and Banquet £66, all prices per person) and the Guilds Sunday Service at St. Peter's. Tickets: [chesterfreemenandguilds@gmail.com](mailto:chesterfreemenandguilds@gmail.com)

Chester freemen look forward very much to welcoming fellow freemen to Chester again.

### **Henley-in-Arden Court Leet:**

On the 18th March High Bailiff Norman Kench welcomed the FEW Spring Court assembly to Henley's medieval Guildhall, an interesting contrast to the large Guildhalls in Coventry, York, and London, but very well suited to the members attending. A lot more Freemen from Berwick in the north to London in the south now appreciate that 'Henley' is not just Henley on Thames!

On 20th April the Court Leet Dinner in the Guildhall saw the High Bailiff presiding over the usual 'full house' of diners and guests, with Sue Dalby busy in her Guildhall gardens field kitchen. Guest speaker Steve Morris, Managing Director of Morgan Cars, reviewed the history of the oldest family owned car company in the UK, and the challenges facing small firms in the automotive sector.

On 22nd April the High Bailiff led his robed members in the annual Shakespeare's Birthday Parade and celebrations in Stratford.

### **Bridgenorth:**



On Friday 3rd March The Gild of Bridgnorth Freemen enrolled 10 new freemen at a ceremony held in the Town Hall attended by the Mayor, Town Clerk, Councillors, Freemen and Guests. In photo holding their certificates from L-R Neil Peters, Barrie Duckett, Susan Oliver, Ross Head, Richard Davies, Jeremiah Carter, Wendy Hopkins, Rosie Hopkins, Luke Hopkins Mark Davies.

### **Altrincham:**

The week-end of 21st-23rd July in Altrincham will be an important and historic occasion to which you are invited and we sincerely hope that you will be able to attend. Civic Dignitaries, Local Councillors, Freemen of England and Wales, Representatives from

many organisations and Residents of the Altrincham area are all invited.

On Saturday 22nd July in the afternoon there will be a Service of Inauguration of the Guild of the Freemen of the Ancient Borough of Altrincham, and in the evening the Altrincham Charter Dinner celebrating 727 years since the granting of a Charter to the citizens of Altrincham. The weekend will start with ale conning (ale tasting) on the evening of Friday 21st July starting at The Con Club on Greenwood Street, Altrincham and a visit around the Historic Market area and to the Grade II listed old Market House built in 1879, which is next to the town's covered market area.

For further information contact: Clerk to the Court: 51 Appleton Road, Hale, Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 9LP. 0771145021 / 07966449497 altrinchamcourtleet@gmail.com

The ale and wine tasters of Altrincham Court Leet visited the George & Dragon which has a history dating back at least until the eighteenth century when it had been a notable coaching stage post. Until the early twentieth century, travel by horse and coach from Manchester to Chester was along this route and was an important stop along the way. The licensee was instructed to draw a taster glass of their finest ale. After tasting the ale taster and helpers assured the Provost that the beer was fit and wholesome for Altrincham men and women's bodies.

The Provost of Altrincham & the Deputy Barons Steward & Altrincham court leet representatives met at Altrincham Town Hall to Give Greetings to the Citizens & visitors of Altrincham & its environs on Sunday 23rd April- the flag was raised and the Bellman gave explanations in toasting St George as the English patron saint and the Bard of Avon- William Shakespeare who is considered to be the greatest poet that ever lived and supposedly was born (1564) and died (1626) on 23rd April. HM the Queen was also included as her 91st birthday preceded the day on 21st April.

### **Coventry:**

The programme of Guild events started with the Apprentice of the Year Awards Dinner in St Mary's Greathall on 24th January. Over 100 diners saw Ella Jackson of Robert Welch Designs take the £1000 prize for Small & Medium Employer category firms, with Shannon Lynch of Jaguar Land Rover taking the Large Employer category. The other four finalists had £100 and a plaque each to mark their achievements. Key sponsors who have supported this event since the current series started in 2004, as an initiative by Past Master Mike Rawson, also received special recognition awards.

Ladies Night in St Mary's Greathall on 14th February was a higher profile event this year, with speeches from the former 2nd Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns KCB CBE KStJ DL and his wife Lady Suzie Johns - who launched Coventry's current affiliated ship HMS Diamond. Sir Adrian later served as Governor of Gibraltar, and his comments regarding Spanish politics were later echoed in national media reports. Master's Lady Ann Bessey highlighted some of the female figures in the medieval tapestry uniquely woven for the Guildhall, and each lady attending received a silver trinket box from her and Master Steven Morson to mark the occasion. Member Ron Robinson gallantly provided a red rose to each lady, to mark Valentine's Day.

24th February saw a team of Coventry Freemen and partners compete at long alley skittles against the host Leicester Gild at Thurcaston. Clerk's lady Kate Wilkinson won the highest visitor score trophy, before all enjoyed a faggots and peas supper. Return match

will be on 11th August in Barnacle Village Hall.

On 19th March the Past Masters & Ladies Lunch event enjoyed a superb carvery meal at the usual Coventry & North Warwicks Cricket Club venue.

On 21st March the annual Charity Awards Dinner in St Mary's Greathall saw the Master's designated charity of St John's Ambulance receive the principal cheque, with six other local charities receiving awards, all recipients advising on how the funds were to be used.

On 19th April the Guild AGM was held in the Council House Chamber, with Master Steven Morson presiding. Clerk John Wilkinson presented his report on the years' activities, and Renter Warden David Hearn advised on the accounts. New Officers for 2017/8 were then elected, with Tony Archer as Master, and Brian Jackson as his Deputy. Installations took place at the annual Banquet on 6th May in St Mary's Greathall, where we were pleased to also welcome Freemen from London, Leicester, Lincoln, York, Chester, and Northampton.

The 'Freemens Sunday' church procession and service on 7th May saw the new Vicar of the Guild Church Holy Trinity, the Rev. Graeme Anderson, installed as Guild Chaplain. The Church procession this year also included Council guests of the High Sheriff and Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands, and Chairman of the Coventry Bench. All enjoyed a meal afterwards in St Mary's Hall, courtesy of our outgoing President and Lord Mayor, Cllr Lindsley Harvard.

### **Leicester:**

Gild Master Lynn Roffee reports that a Long-Alley Skittles night was held in February, and Freemen from Coventry also joined us for what has become an annual competition between the two Gild's. Coventry's Master, Steven Morson wrote an Ode about the evening, which you will see in the next edition of 'Gildhall News'. Coventry won again so we need to win it back in 2018!

The Gild had been informed that Bedern Hall, which is the York home of Freemen, was broken into and some items stolen and/ or broken. One such broken item was a Plate, which had been presented by the Leicester Gild some years ago. Mick Ayres and I jointly purchased another plate, and I gave it to their Master when in York for their Annual Banquet weekend.

The Lord Mayors' Office have informed me that a Civic Reception is being held on 4th May, and a number of Gild members and their spouses, have been invited in recognition of the support given to The Right Worshipful, The Lord Mayor of Leicester, Stephen Corral during his year of office.

The seats for the Pantomime Dick Whittington have already been reserved so if you would like to attend please ensure you book your tickets with Brian Mudford as soon as possible.

Arrangements for the Banquet weekend are well under way and it would be nice to see more of you attending and the Annual Freemen's Service. We usually get a good number of people from other Gild's attending so it would be especially nice to see more Leicester Freemen at one or both events.

The Court is planning to hold another Christmas Carol event in December as it continues to be well received and we have had a good turnout in the last two years. Details will be in a future 'Gildhall News'.

It has been previously mentioned that the Gild Court has not been able to run as many

activities as it would like due to the large number of vacancies for Wardens. According to the Rules, my three year term of office, as Master, ends at Common Hall. It's been an honour and a privilege, as well as an enjoyable experience, to be part of such a unique group in Leicestershire. I have been fortunate of being the Master during the Re-Internment of King Richard III and the Gild's 40th Anniversary since being reformed. My last duty as Master, is the day after I relinquish the role, when I shall be representing the Gild at the Royal Maundy Service at Leicester Cathedral. It was a named invitation to me which wasn't transferable. It was decided and agreed that the Gild should be represented and I am fortunate to have the honour of being part of that historic and unique occasion.

Common Hall was held on 13th April 2017 and Brian Mudford was elected as Master, with Jeff Lewitt as Deputy Master. Other Officers are: Chamberlain Maurice Hill; Gildhall News Editor Valerie Moore; Archivist John Tolton; Wardens Nick Cave & Lynn Roffee. The roles of Clerk and FEW Representative remain vacant.

### **Northampton:**

Northampton Trustees and guests from as far as field as the Guilds of York, Lincoln, Oxford and London sat down for the Northampton Guild's 4th Annual Charity Dinner which was held at Moulton College, Northampton on Saturday 29th May 2017.



The guest of honour was the Mayor Cllr. Chris Malpas and the Mayoress Mrs Lynne Malpas. Moneys raised over the weekend will be shared by Northampton Freemen and the Mayor's Charity, Guide Dogs for the Blind and partially sighted. A good evening was had by all.

This followed a busy day where many of the guests had enjoyed a conducted tour of Earls Barton church. One of the earliest and most notable Saxon Churches in the country.

Everyone including people local to Northampton was fascinated to learn about its position and construction. The screen was also painted by a famous local artist Henry Bird. Following the tour we visited the Earls Barton Museum, The Dolls Museum, and The Toy Museum all of which were situated in Jeyes local shop. The same family as responsible for Jeyes fluid. After lunch those still with money to spend visited Barkers shoes which has a factory in the village. Unfortunately the well known factory which made "Kinky Boots" is no longer in existence so one can only enjoy the musical. Thank you to all who supported our events and we hope to see you all again next year. Northampton now has its own Facebook page which can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/Northampton-Freemans-Trustees-770543973099554/>

### ***Secretary's Notices.***

This is the list of Nominations that were received by the Secretary prior to the Journal publication closing date of May 18th. Further Nominations may continue to be submitted after May 18th up to the date of the AGM, but they will not be published nor circulated.

In the event that some offices remain vacant at the start of the AGM, a call for further Nominations from the floor will be made by the President during the business of the Annual General Meeting on Saturday 17th September. A Proposer must call the name of the Nominee, who may be supported by a Seconder. The Nominee must indicate his or her willingness to accept the nomination for the particular Office if elected, and he or she must have senior officer experience within their own Guild, or, if no such guild exists must be able to satisfactorily demonstrate evidence of administrative experience.

Nominations for Deputy President can only be made for a Full Individual Member who must have previously served as an Executive Officer of the Association for a minimum of one year within the preceding four years immediately prior to the nomination.

**President** - James Evans, a Freeman of Berwick. Proposer - Ronald Leek. Seconder - Alan Fallows.

**Deputy President - No Nominations Received.**

**Vice President** - Alan Shelley, a Freeman of Sudbury. Proposer - Nick Johnson. Seconder - Alan Fallows

**Secretary - No Nominations Received**

**Treasurer - No Nominations Received.**

**Membership Secretary** - Eileen Forth, a Freeman of York. Proposer - Gordon Varndell. Seconder - James Evans

**Archivist - No Nominations Received.**

**Editor** - Tom Gibson, a Freeman of York. Proposer - Maureen Eland. Seconder - Sylvia Errington

**Officer without Portfolio - No Nominations Received.**

### Directory.

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**Vice President:** Steve White. 11 Manor Avenue, Great Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire  
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**Immediate Past President:** Gordon Varndell. 3 Bridge Road, Bishopthorpe. York. YO23 2RR  
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**Hon. Secretary: Nick Johnson.** 37 Stanhope Gardens Ilford Essex IG1 3LQ  
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**Hon. Treasurer:** Steve White. (See Vice President above).

**Membership Secretary:** Eileen Forth . 88 Whitethorn Close, Huntington, York YO31 9EU  
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**Hon. Archivist:** Alan Fallows. 3 Holborn Drive, London Road Shrewsbury, Shropshire  
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**Officer Without Portfolio:** Alan Shelley. Wycken End, 16 Bournside Road, Cheltenham,  
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### Wardens.

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**Warden for the The North West:** Denise Laver. 51 Appleton Road, Hale, Altrincham, Cheshire,  
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**Warden for the North Midlands:** John Edwards. 5 Oak Close, Church Eaton, Stafford  
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**Warden for the South Midlands:** Derek Austin 1 Yarrow Close, Rugby, Warwickshire  
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Cover Picture: Pembroke Castle. Photograph Courtesy Roy Folland.

Back Cover: The 250 Daffodills planted for the 50th AGM last September are among this display on embankment of York's Bar Walls which greeted visitors to the City this year. Photograph by Donna Gibson.

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