



*Freemen of
England and Wales.*

*Journal 193.
Summer 2019.*



Presidents Letter.



It is good to have warm Spring weather with us once again. Last week I was in Stirling for the AGM of our sister organization, the Court of Deans of Scotland. I conveyed our Greetings along with an invitation to join our AGM in September. The dedication service on the Sunday was in the Church of the Holy Rule which has a stained glass window commemorating the first four Royal Burghs in Scotland. It was Stirling's 900th anniversary of becoming a Royal Burgh.

Our Spring Court Meeting was held in Durham. At this we agreed a formal way of appointing Wardens. Wardens are a vital part of our organisation being the main link to individual Guilds as well as contacting non member Guilds. We welcomed Nic Christison as the new Warden for the South West, the first Warden appointed under the new scheme.

Our Membership Secretary, Gordon Vardell, has tendered his resignation from the Executive due to ill health. Gordon has not been well for some time. He has been a member of your Executive for many years and we wish him good fortune and better health in the future. We are now urgently in need of a volunteer for this position.

We are looking forward to September and our AGM in Gloucester. We are sure of a warm reception from Lee and his Guild. Gloucester's Docks have been transformed and are now full of interest. I am sure it will be a memorable weekend.

J.Evans,
President.

Minutes of the Court Meeting held on Saturday 16th March 2019 **Durham City Town Hall, Market Place, Durham.**

Before Court started Durham Chairman of Wardens, Mr. Eric Bulmer, welcomed everybody to the City of Durham.

1) Attendees :_Stewart Bristow – Lincoln, Eric Bulmer – Durham, John Edwards – Stafford, Jim Evans – Berwick, Alan Fallows – Shrewsbury, Val Fallows – Shrewsbury, Tom Gibson – York, Donna Gibson – York, Victor Alan Harrison – Lincoln, Capt. Stephen Healy – Newcastle upon Tyne, Lee Hensley – Gloucester, Fiona Hogg – Newcastle upon Tyne, Denise Laver – Altrincham, Ron Leek – Alcester / London, Alan Shelley – Sudbury, Fred Snowden – Durham, Roger Sutton – York, Kathleen Vasey – Durham, Stephen White – Grimsby, Mac Williams – Associate.

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

3) Apologies for absence were received from Derek Austin (Warden of the South Midlands), Howard Crapper (Warden of the West), Andrew Croose (Gloucester), Eileen Forth (York), Roy Folland (Warden for Wales), Nick Johnson (Warden for the South East), Philip Kinnersley (Stafford), Ray Mason (Newcastle under Lyme), Ant Piddock (Stafford), Gordon Varndell (Membership Secretary), Charlotte Yeates (Officer without Portfolio).

4) The minutes of the Court Meeting held on Saturday 24th March 2018 in the Civic Suite, North Warehouse, Gloucester, were approved as a correct record, and were signed by the President. Proposed by John Edwards, Seconded by Stephen Healy

5) Matters arising not on the agenda.

John Edwards asked what response FEW had received since the new rules and regs had come in with GDPR, due to the absence of the Membership Secretary, Alan Fallows replied that the response had been mixed, we have had no replies from some members we are unsure whether this was due to confusion or apathy. But generally speaking, the Honorary Secretary has dealt with people with regard to issue of information regarding the journal. As a result, more copies of the journal are being emailed out. Unfortunately, some people had sent forms back wanting to be only contacted by email, but neglected to supply their email address, which makes life difficult. We will endeavour to contact them for an email address for further correspondence.

John Edwards then asked if people had excluded themselves even though they want to be informed of things going on, Alan Fallows replied that it was a distinct possibility and we will try to contact them to rectify that.

We are looking at the GDPR forms that (Alan Fallows) drew up to see if we can simplify them.

6) Appointment of Warden for the South West: Alan Shelley was pleased to inform the Court that a Warden has been appointed, and he commended Mr Nic Christison, a Freeman of Berwick, as Warden of the South West.

7) Capt. Jim Evans President's Report was tabled. A copy is appended. The President pointed out that the Executive had used skype for an Executive meeting to save the travelling during the winter months.

8) Stephen White, Presented his Deputy President's Report. A copy is appended. Capt. Stephen Healy raised a point that he is concerned about the information that is on the website in terms of membership, as currently, the Freemen of Newcastle upon Tyne are listed as members, Fiona Hogg continued that they are only single person members. Stephen White ensured Capt. Stephen Healy he would rectify the item raised.

The President asked everyone to stand and observe a moment of silence for Mr. Eddie Errington, who had passed away recently.

9) Alan Shelley presented his Vice President's Report. A copy is appended.

10) Ron Leek had nothing to report as Immediate Past President.

11) Stephen White Presented the Hon Treasurer's Report.

12) In the absence of the Membership Secretary, Gordon Varndell, his Report was read out by the Secretary. A copy is appended.

The Secretary also informed the court that Gordon had resigned from the position of Membership Secretary.

Ron Leek raised the point that Alcester were only in arrears because they had not received the request to pay.

Denise Laver was concerned regarding payment of subscriptions for membership, she believes the subscriptions are either due April or September. She would like clarification of when subscriptions are due because you can not be in arrears if you have two dates. Denise continued that she would like to see one date as standard. Stephen White replied subscriptions are always due on the anniversary that people joined, so they only make one payment in a year, the Membership Secretary would always send out a reminder as that anniversary came up. This was then changed to try and standardize to two payment dates, 1st April & 1st September, it has been discussed more recently with the date being the 1st April, but again it was felt that members with a standing order in place would be reluctant to move it to a different date.

Denise felt that the start date for subscriptions should be that of the AGM, and not the 1st of April, she then asked why it was the 1st of April. Alans Fallows replied that the 1st of April was chosen as its the start of the new tax year, we have tried in the past to put all as

the 1st April and given partial holidays to those who join at different parts of the year, to get people on to that date but that caused its own problems with forms going out giving membership from one date yet asking for money on a different date.

Capt. Stephen Healy thought that part of the wide spread fear that was around GDPR had given people the wrong idea, you are perfectly allowed to contact people for the purposes of progressing the business of the organization, Capt. Jim Evans replied that the Executive were aware of this and were looking at altering the forms.

John Edwards asked why, when paying by standing order, do we not just take the form to our own bank, why do we have to send it to the Membership Secretary. Stephen White replied that the forms need checking to ensure it has the correct information on it to ensure it is known who has paid their subs.

Eric Bulmer asked how many Guilds/Leets were part of the FEW, how many there were in the country and what percentage did FEW represent? Alan Fallows replied that currently 38 Guilds/ Leets are members of the FEW out of a possible 69 Freeman Guilds.

13) Tom Gibson Hon. Editor's Report was Tabled. A copy is appended.
Tom emphasized that Guilds need to send more information in.

14) Alan Fallows Hon. Archivist's Report was tabled. A copy is appended.
The only addition was that Alan had accepted an invitation from Derby to speak at their AGM about the archives.

15) No report from the Officer without Portfolio.

16) Wardens' Reports were presented as follows: -

Roger Sutton, Warden for the North. Copy appended.

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

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

Denise Laver, Warden for the North West. Delivered Verbally.

Howard Crapper, Warden for the West. Report Tabled, Copy appended.

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

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

17) Any Other Business.

Alan Shelley apologized to all wardens who received the wrong postcode for the Courts venue.

18) Future Court and AGM venues. The 2019 Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 21st September 2019 at The Chase Hotel Shurdington Road, Brockworth, Gloucester GL3 4PB.

Closure of Court. There being no further business, the President closed the meeting.

President's Report.

Since the last Court Meeting in Gloucester your Executive has experimented with holding the mid-winter meeting of the Executive by Skype. This proved relatively successful and availed having to travel in mid-winter and reduced costs.

The Vice President and Wardens have worked to produce a scheme for the appointment of new Wardens and this will be put before the Court for approval.

The website has been updated and hopefully is more user friendly.

There are still some complaints regarding the non-delivery of newsletters. Members are reminded the GDPR form has to be returned before addresses may be stored and be available for newsletters to be dispatched.

Deputy President's Report.

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

Other matters;

In relation to the Website, there are probably some outstanding formatting issues here and there, such as the background colour. This is important when considering the needs of anyone who may have a visual impairment. These sort of changes can be made by our hosts if we can agree what changes need to be made.

I have got to grips with the editing techniques, which are quite different to our previous platform.

I have loaded recent Journal covers up to date and content to the last but one issue which is our usual protocol.

The Membership Application Forms, Standing Order, Gift Aid and Regalia Order Forms (and descriptions) have been re-loaded and new hyperlinks set up. The only one which is missing is the Guild Application form, but I wouldn't expect a Guild to be applying for membership by this route.

Amendments have been made to the pages which contain the Officer and Warden details; new email addresses for the Executive Officers are being introduced.

If anybody sees anything which they feel is incorrect please let me know so that it can be put right at the earliest opportunity.

In addition to myself, Tom and Charlotte have full access and editing rights to the website.

The Facebook page is managed by myself, Tom, Charlotte, Lee and Alex Christison set up as Administrators with Derek Austin, John Edwards, Roy Folland and Steve Healy having editorial access. Our Facebook page continues to receive regular posts from both FEW Officers and our member Guilds and so provides a steady stream of fresh information.

The Facebook page has a live stream onto our website.

The number of page “likes” stands at 290, up 1 from 289 in January.

Report of the Vice President.

Since my last report, which was to the FEW AGM in Warwick last September, we have held a Skype Meeting and there have been a variety of emailed messages around the Executive.

I am pleased to report that the Warden’s new recruitment procedure is bearing fruit. I am most grateful for the kind assistance of Wardens Stephen Healy and John Edwards. At the point of writing this report, we are close to appointing one of the two excellent candidates to cover the South West.

Unfortunately, on the other hand, at 87 years of age our Warden for Wales, Roy Folland, has asked to be released from duty. I would, on behalf of FEW wish to take this opportunity to thank him very much for his many years of undivided dedication to our Association. Fortunately, Roy has contacted a suitable candidate for our consideration, and I am hopeful he will meet the demands of our new recruitment procedure.

In an ideal world, our Wardens would be understudied by future replacements but unfortunately this has not been possible with lack of uptake. We have a vacancy for an Area Warden to cover the East and again I am hopeful, having been approached by an eager applicant.

I am sorry to advise that our very good friend, Howard Crapper, Warden for the West has been unable to attend this meeting. He suffered a dreadful accident last year but appears to be recovering well and we look forward to his presence in the near future.

Finally, I would like to add my special thanks to Nick Johnson, our Warden for the South East who has been caretaking the East and even extended his duties to cover Montgomery within his activities.

Hon. Membership Secretary's Report.

Guilds: We have 38 Guilds on the books with currently 3 Guilds are still to pay subscriptions.

Individual Membership: The current Membership stands at 320 (Providing all arrears are paid).

Since September 2018.

Member notified Deceased.

5 new full individual Membership. 5 New Associate members

4 Members have resigned

14 Members deleted under rule 9 of constitution

3 Notified of change of Address.

Current Payments: Late payments. Reminders have been sent out in the past but responses have been very slow, some being ignored several members in arrears have not expressed a

wish to be contacted and some are to be contacted by email only.

Arrears: At present to 10th March 2019 there are 14 members in Arrears April 2018 to April 2019 and 4 members in arrears September 2017 to September 2018. Also 8 members owing 2 years April 2017 to April 2018 and April 2018 to April 2019 some of all these payments were standing orders.

Hon. Editors Report.

The latest issue was thin, the first of a new calendar year usually is, but this time I had to appeal for articles and we had enough to make it a reasonable issue. The next two issues will contain meeting reports so generally would not have the same problem. The next issue should also contain notice and booking forms for the AGM.

I could do with some officer and Warden profiles, even those of us who have served FEW for a while to keep in stock to help fill any pages, of course those who have already featured needn't worry, but if the rest of us could put one together and include a photo of yourself that you are happy to be published, I would be grateful.

Archivists Report.

FEW Archives are now in situ at their new home and in the very slow process of being re-listed in a format suitable for future cataloguing.

There have been no calls for information from the archives except questions relating to the differing entitlements to Freedom through honorary or hereditary means. These questions are being dealt with by the Vice President through the wardens and publications will probably follow.

Reports of the Area Wardens.

Warden for the North.

The Guild of Freemen of the City of York.

The Master, Mrs Andrea Smith, has attended a number of events on behalf of the Guild between September '18 and March '19.

In September she attended the RAF 100 Service of Remembrance, a service she found 'most poignant' as she had had a life-time of RAF service as a service child, wife and mother.

This event was followed in October by a number of the Guild taking part in the York Community Groups public readings from 'The King's Book of Heroes/Remembrance' - a record of all those killed from the City during WW1. A copy of the book is available at Guild meetings for all members to read. (More details of this special event can be found in the FEW Journal number 192.)

The month of November saw the Guild attend Armistice Day celebrations at York Minster, a parade to the Cenotaph and a Civic lunch in the Assembly Rooms. In November the Master attended the York Builder's Guild Annual Dinner at the Opera House, where she

witnessed the presentation of Apprenticeship Awards. Also in November Gild members visited 'The Streets of York Art Exhibition', a collection of art and photographs of old York, held at St William's College. A 'tasty' event, "There's More to Pies Than You Realise", had to be cancelled.

December saw the Master and two Gild officials attend the Annual Banquet of the Freeman of the City of London held at London's Medieval Guildhall. The speaker for the evening was Mr Lennox Cato from the BBC's Antiques Roadshow. During December the Gild held a Carol Service at All Saints Church and a Christmas Lunch in Bedern Hall. In January the Master and a group twenty Gild members, accompanied by the Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor of York and his Lady Mayoress, visited two of York's Freemason Temples. The visit included a talk, by Mr Dennis Slights of the Freemasons, on the history of Freemasonry.

On the evening of the 27th February the Gild held the annual Harry Ward lecture in the Bedern Hall. The topic of the lecture was 'The Management of York City Walls'. The Gild's forthcoming events will include a talk on the 'Bluestocking Moment' founded in the 18th century by a York born woman, Elizabeth Montague, who challenged the idea that women should be seen not heard; an invitation to join York's Sheriffs Army to 'Walk the Walls of York', and the Gild's 64th Annual Banquet to be held on Saturday the 13th April at 'The Principal York Hotel.

At this event the officers of the Gild will be showcasing their new robes, thereby, completing a full refurbishment of all the Gild robes.

The Freeman/Pasture Masters of Beverley.

On Monday the March 2nd '19 at a Civic Meeting held in the Guild Hall Beverley, twelve freemen/women were elected as pasture masters for the year '19/20. It is the responsibility of the pasture masters to administer the common pasture around Beverley Westwood, Swinemoor and Figham.

It is interesting to note that the Pasture Masters have appointed a woman, the first woman in 800years, to be 'Neaherd' or Pasture Warden. The new warden is Zowie Bell, BA, a graduate from the nearby Bishop Burton Agricultural College.

The Enrolled Freeman of Grimsby.

The activities of the Enrolled Freeman of Grimsby are better explained by reading the extensive article published in FEW's Spring Journal 192.

Warden for the North-East.

Alnwick:

The Chamberlain's Common Council and Freeman of the Borough of Alnwick have been continuing with routine business over recent months.

Attention has been focused on property, with another new house on the edge of the Moor being funded by the Freeman and ready later this year, plus a programme of renovation and upgrading being carried out on other properties.

Hopes are high that arrangements can be put in place for two brothers to come and be sworn in next month, one from the United States and the other from Australia. I look

forward to reporting again on that in Gloucester.

On February 5th, representatives of the Alnwick Freemen attended the Annual Shrove Tuesday Football match between the parishes of St Michael and St. Paul. The match, also known as ‘Scoring the Hales’, is an ancient custom dating back hundreds of years. Crowds gather at the gates of Alnwick Castle, the home of the Duke of Northumberland, who throws the ball from the castle to start proceedings (tradition states that the original ball was a Scotsman’s head but things have moved on since then). A procession follows the Duke’s piper over the Lion Bridge to the venue of the game, a field called the Pastures. The pitch is about 200 yards wide, with foliage covered goals, or ‘hales’ at each end; molehills and large puddles add to the challenge for the players. Teams, potentially up to 150 a side, are drawn from the two parishes and play takes up to 2 hours, depending on the score.

Berwick-upon-Tweed:

I will start by commending the Berwick Freemen on their new website – bright, informative and easy to use.

I had the pleasure once again of attending the Freemen’s annual Christmas Buffet and Dance in the Guildhall in December – a fun event, as always and clearly a family occasion for many. In fact, this year was the highest number I had seen in the years I have been fortunate enough to go.

The Berwick Barracks Heritage Hub, in which the Freemen are involved, has received funding for its next stage and is progressing. The archiving project, again previously reported, is now fully underway.

The Freemen are involved in a ‘High Street initiative’, something that will no doubt be happening in many towns across the land.

Six Freemen were sworn in at the October ceremony, with another four prospects for the ceremony coming up in April. There have now been 130 ladies admitted to the freedom in Berwick upon Tweed.

Durham:

You may well have seen that Durham County Council have recently voted to relocate from their current out-of-town site to the Sands, beside the river Wear in the City Centre. The Freemen of the City of Durham have formally objected to this. The freemen have a long-standing historic interest in the site ear-marked by the authority and, while they no longer own it, they retain a legal interest in its use.

In the November ceremony, seven were admitted to the Freedom, including three craftsmen who have played a key role in the multi-million pound restoration of the top of Durham Cathedral’s 200-foot high central tower. Two are stonemasons and the third a joiner.

At the beginning of February, three ‘Gentlemen Freemen’ were admitted. This practice of Customary Freedom is provided for under the 1985 Durham City Council Act and is distinct and separate from the Honorary Freedom conferred by the former Durham City Council or by Durham County Council.

A recent gift from Durham's Freemen has answered the "dreams and wishes" of scores of disabled children and young people who are members of a county-wide organisation based in the city. Durham Area Disability Leisure Group (DADLG) received a substantial financial donation that will kick-start the launch of new youth club and an associated extension of other activities, delivering a programme of sports, social and leisure activities at various locations. The Freemen also contributed to the Mayor's annual charity appeal.

Newcastle upon Tyne: Nothing to report.

Warden for the North Midlands:

The North Midlands area has five guilds with various degrees of activity. I am fortunate that four of them have plenty going on and need little input from me, but the other has rather limited activity.

I am very pleased to report that the **Derby Guild**, which for years I was reporting as inactive, has had a new lease of life thanks to a lot of effort by a small team. There were some positive reactions to the talk I gave after their last AGM and I think they gained a better understanding of their relationship with FEW and other guilds. They have a number of interesting projects in hand, notably negotiating the use of an MRI scanner at a London hospital to try to discover the contents of an old and damaged scroll bearing the names of Freemen of Derby. Hopefully, that will enable not only the historical aspects of the city to be researched, but could permit current families to become freemen under their revised heritage rules.

These changes have already increased the uptake of the freedom and allowed younger members to be sworn in. Eight were admitted last year and a new group is due to be sworn in in May. I hope to attend that ceremony to represent FEW. Unfortunately, Derby, along with many other local authorities, is undergoing reorganisation so the Guild is trying to ensure that their ancient heritage is not lost in bureaucracy and new appointments. They now seem to be on the invitation list for the Mayor's Carol Service and other civic events, which represents progress.

They are also looking at using a defunct city arms as their logo and getting some robes and regalia, which I mentioned had been a turning point in Stafford's recognition in that town. As usual, there are lots of people with good ideas on what somebody else should do and, amazingly, it's always the same somebody else! Nothing new there then.

Shrewsbury and **Bridgnorth** continue to have civic involvement and social programmes, which seem to be well supported, although I have not attended any recently. Bridgnorth, in particular has a good relationship with the town council and guild members can be seen in their robes on civic occasions. They also submit regular reports to the Journal.

Newcastle-under-Lyme expects to return to the Guildhall for their AGM and pay-out next year and for once they have an excess of trustees, which is good news. Sadly, they still have difficulty motivating members on the social and civic side.

There are two aspects to the **Stafford Burgesses**, the Guild and the Trustees. The former runs the civic, social and communications aspects and it is well supported and increasing in numbers. Fortunately, of the people sworn in over the past few years, quite a lot of them are taking an active part in guild events. In the past there have been too many who just wanted the certificate to put on their wall. Last October, we had an invitation to visit Blackpool Town Hall and the Mayor's Parlour. That was an enjoyable and enlightening experience comparing aspects of our two towns. Throw in "high tea" at the Tower Ballroom and the famous illuminations, amongst other things and it was an excellent Guild visit. Regular skittles nights, canal boat trips, Summer and Christmas lunches and other visits make for a full social programme, with over 70 attending the Annual Dinner. The guild has been able to provide some sponsorship for our world champion masters sprinter to defend her title in Poland this year, we wish her well.

The Trustees, who administer the freemen's lands, (which currently amount to 22 acres of allotments), have had more than their fair share of problems recently. Incidents of theft, vandalism, rough sleepers, drug takers and arson continue to plague the site. There have been letters to the Chief Constable regretting lack of police support, but little happens despite us knowing who is responsible. Add to that, the ongoing problems with badgers destroying more and more plots and you wonder why you ever volunteered for these tasks. However, seeing our heritage land used for the benefit of the community and helping hundreds of happy gardeners gives one a very good feeling.

Warden for the West :

My main goal has been to make sure every guild in the West has the Gloucester September AGM weekend in their diary.

In Oxford , a successful Annual Dinner was held again in Kirtlington Golf Club . It was marvellous see neighbouring Guilds attend . The Lord Mayor and Sheriff were both in attendance and gave encouraging speeches.

In March there was once again the Freemen Apprentice Awards for those young people who are earning and learning . The Freemen award finalists are seen to have quite a feather in their cap . It is truly remarkable to see the energy of the applicants as they reveal the trials and tribulations in pursuit of their chosen career .

Earlier there was an Admission Ceremony which included the gift of the Lord Mayors Childe . We were delighted that the Lord Mayor chose the leading historian on the Port Meadow Memorial Appeal for the seventeen airman who died during First World War . Freemen who attended the unveiling last May will remember Peter Smith . Quiet spoken but fantastic historic leader on this project and now a fully fledged sworn in Freeman of the City.

On Port Meadow , we are desperate to see the river dredged to prevent cattle swimming across to neighbouring farm land . The situation is so serious that Graziers refuse to put cattle on the Meadow until the situation is resolved. Our local MP is at odds with the Environment Agency who own the Dredger . This mechanical ship based Dredger is tied up just a few hundred yards from the site . It's a case of budgets , political will and keeping on the pressure .Would sponsorship be an option ?

It has been my pleasure to speak with Malmesbury Freeman and Malmesbury resident Ray Sanderson . A Freeman of York and also of Malmesbury .He has been involved with the Flood prevention committee which is so important in this Wiltshire town .

Chippenham does not have much to report at present but relations with the Town Council continue to improve and this is positive in the regeneration of civic pride and partnership . I was pleased to attend the Chartered Freeman of Gloucester Annual Dinner last Autumn and stayed over night at the excellent venue . It was fabulous to be surrounded by so many friends and I wish them well in the hosting of the forthcoming AGM in September . May I add that I am willing to help in any way that is appropriate .

Warden for the South East:

The Rochester Oyster and Floating Fishery

The Admiralty Court was convened in the Civic Room of Medway Council's Chatham offices in Gun Wharf on Monday 22nd October 2018, where five apprentices of the Rochester Oyster and Floating Fishery who, having completed their seven year term of apprenticeship, were given the Freedom and were duly appointed as Freeman of the River. They are - Simon Hughes, Eleanor Adams, Paul Sadler, Shane Pink and Richard Pink. The new Freeman were presented with their Deeds of (completed) Apprenticeship by the Admiral of the River Medway, the Worshipful the Mayor of Medway, Councillor Steve ILES. In addition, two Apprentices entered into Deeds of Apprenticeship with Freeman Allan Wadhams and signed Indentures. They are Andrew Gibbs and Marc Hall.

The Guildable Manor of Southwark

A unique event occurred on 7th October 2018, with the civic opening of Guildable Manor Street by the Foreman, Tithing, and the Mayor of Southwark Cllr Catherine Rose. Although the street had been officially named in 2012 it could not be 'opened' until formally adopted by the Council which had to await the completion in early 2018 of the Thameslink London Bridge Station improvements. The opening was done with formality as an Assize of Survey within the ancient powers of the Manor Court granted by Edward VI in a charter of 1550. The Street is one-way from London Bridge Street to Railway Approach. Some 26 Jurors and guests attended.

Acting Warden for the East of England

Sudbury Freeman's Society

The Quinquennial Meeting with the Annual Report and Payment of Common Money will be held at the Sudbury Town Hall on Tuesday 2nd July 2019 at 7.30pm, and I shall be attending as Acting Warden for the East.

The City of Lincoln Freeman's Guild

The next meeting of the City of Lincoln Freeman's Guild that I have been invited to by the Master, and that I shall be attending as Acting Warden for the East, will be the AGM on Saturday 27th April 2019 to be held in the Guildhall, Lincoln at 11am.

The Freeman of Stamford

On March 2nd, I telephoned the Chairman of the Freeman of Stamford, Mr Neil Scholes, who told me that very little has changed since they first became an Associate Member Guild of FEW a number of years ago. Their registered charity called 'The Freeman's

Lands', makes similar returns every year which generally show that all annual income gained from public access to their lands, is often wiped out by the cost of maintenance and rubbish clearing of the 33 acres along the River Welland.

Their charity has five trustees, all of whom are male and are named 'Scholes'. There is no likelihood that this number will increase in the near future, nor is there any groundswell anywhere in favour of admitting Freewomen - there possibly being no perceived benefit or great honour, which might itself eliminate such a demand.

Roaming Warden's Report:

The Town Freemen of Montgomery

Following a recent request by the Vice President, I have re-established contact with the Freemen of Montgomery. I am able to be a liaison contact for them as I travel from London to Wales fairly regularly and can attend their business meetings.

On March 1st, I telephoned the current Chairman of the hereditary Freemen, who is also the Mayor, Lionel Corbett Weaver. As a result of our conversation, I shall be attending their next meeting on Monday 3rd June in the Activity Centre in School Lane, where the annual payment of the common money will be made to fifteen Freemen. There are about 90 acres of land, much of which is let to farmers for grazing.

The Freemen give financial assistance annually to a variety of worthy community groups and causes, and they are very much a part of the town's social fabric.

Warden for the South Midlands :

Coventry Freemen's Guild

As Coventry Guild events are usually recorded in the FEW Journal, I shall just highlight two items. The Guild's banquet weekend will be on 3rd - 5th May this year, and banquet tickets should be available from Past Master George Wilkinson on 024-7646-3203. We now have a '2021' committee which covers the Guild's 75th anniversary, and also Coventry as City of Culture that year. I remain hopeful that committee will organise the FEW AGM that year, and the weekend of 24th-26th September 2021 has been provisionally booked for St Mary's Guildhall.

Gild of Freemen of the City of Leicester

Ceremonies for the admittance of hereditary Freemen were held in the Town Hall on 14th August and 18th September 2018, with a total of 15 candidates swearing the oath before the Lord Mayor and Gild officials. Gild members also attended the: County Service at Leicester Cathedral; the Justice Service at St Mary's in Melton Mowbray; and the Victoria Park Remembrance Day Service and Parade. Local Gild events included the St Andrews Freemen's Carol Service, the Gild Christmas pantomime outing and the annual skittles challenge match with Coventry Guild on 22nd February 2019 in Thurcaston. The Leicester Gild banquet will be held on 1st June at the usual Devonshire Place venue on the London Road, Leicester. Tickets are £44 each, and menu and booking details are available from Deputy Master Jeff Lewitt on 0116 283 4357 or jeffrey618@btinternet.com Note that bookings cannot be accepted after 24th May. On 2nd June the Freemen's Service will be held at Leicester Cathedral at 10.30am.

Guild of Freemen of the Borough of Northampton

Freemen Trustees attended the Remembrance Day Parade and Service at the Mayor's invitation. Under the 1988 Northampton Act, Freemen can be admitted by patrimony or

apprenticeship, and also at the Mayor's discretion by the request of the Northampton Freemen Trustees. The latter discretion was exercised on 27th October last year to honour Professor John Mallard OBE of Northampton as a Freeman of the Borough, having led the team that developed the MRI scanner now in universal use. The fifth Annual Charity Weekend takes place on 29th - 30th March at the usual Moulton College venue. Friday evening has a supper and quiz, and Saturday has a guided tour of Delapre Abbey and talk on the Battle of Northampton, with a dinner and entertainment in the evening. Full details are in the 'News from the Northampton Guild' in the latest FEW Journal.

Alcester Court Leet

This is a very active Leet, and in 2018 often held two events every month. Besides the usual Street market and assizes of food and ale events, novel events for 2018 included: a Dambusters 75th anniversary event with film and dance; a Grand Yorkshire Day event; and a revival of Flitch Trials. The latter revives an ancient tradition where three couples are tried by a Judge and Jury to see who has the most harmonious marriage for a year and a day – with the winners awarded a flitch – which is a side of bacon.

Henley -in-Arden Court Leet

The annual calendar of events for 2018 included: a Court Leet Day and Artisans Market in the Guildhall garden; the Mop Fair in October; the AGM in the Guildhall in November; and also the Remembrance Day Parade and Service.

Warwick Court Leet

The 465th annual Leet Meeting was held in the Courthouse on 25th October 2018, presided over by the Town Mayor in his role as Lord of the Leet, and with the High Sheriff and Officers from other local Leets in attendance. The retiring Bailiff Mo Sutherland, and other Leet Officers, gave their reports of the year's activities, and an overview of the FEW Association was given by the FEW Area Warden. The new Bailiff John Atkinson, was duly sworn and enrobed, followed by the new Low Bailiff Gail Warrington – only the fourth ever lady to hold a Warwick Bailiff's role. The new Bailiff then addressed the Court, before swearing two new jurors into service. The Court then agreed levels of funds to be directed to town grants, and also agreed to promote the Beer Festival and Classic Car Show for 2019. The Leet Steward & Town Clerk Jayne Topham then reviewed progress on previous Presentments, and new Presentments from the Leet and the public were reviewed and agreed for action. Subsequently the Leet agreed to promote a fund raising Beer Festival for the Lord Leycester Hospital – which was sold out some time before the February event. The next public meeting of the Leet is scheduled for 26th March in the Jury Street Courthouse, and the Warwick Classic Car Show takes place in the town centre on 11th August – well worth a visit if you are in the area.

News from the Guilds.

Coventry:

The annual Apprentice of the Year competition judging took place mid January, with the usual high calibre candidates presenting a challenging task. The Presentation Dinner was held on 29th January, with over 120 attending. Winners of the small/medium, and large employers categories each receiving £1000 and a trophy, courtesy of our sponsors. Other candidates received a £100 cheque and a trophy, as did the two Endeavour award finalists.

Commander Ben Keith of Coventry's affiliated Destroyer HMS Diamond, also offered a VIP visit to the ship for the award winners. Our thanks to Enterprise Warden Matt Johnson and his team for organising this now major event in the Guild calendar.

On 5th February our Junior Warden Steve Morson organised a behind the scenes visit to Warwick Records Office, with the Archivist advising on history and current organisation, with digital copying for on line records in progress.

Ladies Night on 12th February was attended by 59 guests, including Deputy Lord Mayor Linda Bigham and consort, with musical entertainment and a red rose for the ladies - courtesy of Charity Warden Ron Robinson.

On 22nd February a Coventry Guild team joined Leicester Freemen at their Thurcaston Skittles event, with a welcome hot buffet after. Coventry's Ron Robinson and wife Sue tied for highest individual scores. Return match is planned for 9th August in Barnacle Village Hall.

The annual Past Masters lunch was held on 24th March. Regrettably since last year we lost Past Masters John Barrell, Jim McCranor, and Tony Cross.

On 26th March the Charity Awards dinner in St Mary's Guildhall saw ten local charities collecting awards, with the Master's charity McMillan Cancer Support receiving the principal amount.

The Guild AGM was held in the Council Chamber on 17th April, with Master Brian Jackson in the chair, and Clerk John Wilkinson reviewing Guild activities during the year. Guild Officers for 2019/20 were confirmed, including Master Elect Carole Wilson – our first lady in that role.

The banquet weekend events took place on the usual first weekend in May, with a new venue for the Friday Social Evening of the Bella Italia restaurant in Bond Street. The Saturday banquet in St Mary's Great-hall was well attended, with guests including Masters from: London; Leicester; Chester; and York, besides our President the Lord Mayor Cllr John Blundell. Other Guilds attending included Northampton and Lincoln, and representatives from Coventry's affiliated ship HMS Diamond. The robed procession and Freemen's church service on the Sunday included the Lord Mayor and Councillors, and a Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands. Our newly installed first Lady Master duly installed the Vicar of Holy Trinity as Guild Chaplain for the forthcoming year. A superb buffet in the Lord Mayor's Hospitality Suite was then enjoyed, before farewells.

As Coventry's Godiva Festival is now billed as the UK's largest free pop music event, the Guild Court decided instead to support the Earlsdon district Festival on 6th May, with Guild PRO Peter Wilford and Court Members helping to publicise the activities of the Guild and receiving a lot of inquiries.

Leicester:

A long-Alley skittles night was arranged by Maurice Hill at the Wheatsheaf Inn in

Thurcaston on the 22nd February. Freemen from Coventry joined us for what has become an annual competition between the two Gilds. Once again the Coventry side won the trophy for the highest score on the night.

Jeff Lewitt and his wife Christine, along with Malcolm Ballard and his partner Mary attended the Northampton Annual Dinner on Saturday 30th March 2019.

Malcolm Ballard and his partner Mary represented the Gild at the York Banquet weekend, 12th – 14th April. They both enjoyed the occasion.

Common Hall was held this year on 17th April 2019 in the Community Centre at the Holt. It was a very successful evening, with over thirty persons attending, including the Leicester Lord Mayor. We now have eight members of the Court, which means we only need another one Warden to make up the required nine. The Officers were then elected. I was very honoured to be re-elected as Master, which will be my final year. Jeff Lewitt was re-elected as Deputy Master, Hazel Lake was re-elected as Clerk, Maurice Hill was re-elected as Chamberlain, Val Moore was re-elected as Editor of the Gildhall News and Jon Tolton was re-elected as Archivist. Once again, no one offered to be our FEW Representative.

The seats for the Robin Hood pantomime have been reserved for the 13th December 2019 at the Little Theatre

I have received invitations for Members of the Leicester Gild to attend the Armed Forces Day Service and Parade at the Leicester Cathedral at 10:30am on Saturday 22nd June 2019.

Northampton.

The Northampton Guild of Freemen held their Annual Charity Weekend on the 29th & 30th March, where we were joined by fellow freemen and members of several other guilds. The weekend began with a pie & pea supper on the Friday evening which was well attended and included a general knowledge quiz with questions set by John Keggan. An excellent time was had by all, and it was a lovely way to welcome our guests to Northampton at the start of the weekend.

On Saturday we visited the historic Delapre Abbey starting with lunch followed by a talk from Matt Farmer on the Wars of the Roses Battle of Northampton, which took place in the grounds of the Abbey. Following the talk, we enjoyed a guided tour of the Abbey where we were able to learn about the Abbey through the ages from its original purpose as one of only two Cluniac Nunnery's in England and, following the reformation, as a private residence and as the County Records Office.

The highlight of our weekend took place on the Saturday evening with our Annual Charity Dinner at Moulton College. In addition to our guests from other guilds, Freemen from Northampton and other friends we were honoured to be joined by his Worship the Mayor, Cllr. Tony Ansell, and his Mayoress Mrs Jayne Crofts. This year our dinner raised money

for the Mayor's Charity, the Hope Centre, which does excellent and much needed work with the homeless community in Northampton.

Following an after-dinner speech from the Mayor we were led in the loyal toast by our Chairman Phil Ager, and then were greatly entertained by the traditional music performed by Richard and Liz York who played a variety of fascinating medieval instruments. The Northampton Freeman's Trustees would like to extend our great thanks to all who travelled to Northampton from the other guilds to join us for the weekend, and for their great generosity in supporting our Charity Dinner.

On 16th May 2019 the Northampton Freeman's Trustees were in attendance at the Guildhall for the installation of the new Mayor of Northampton, Cllr. Naz Choudhary. Northampton's Deputy Mayor is Cllr. Brian Sargeant. Brian is a Hereditary Freeman of Northampton and a Trustee of our Guild. Historically only Freeman of the town could hold this office, so in these modern-day times Northampton Guild feel especially honoured to support a fellow Freeman in his civic duties.

Secretary's Notices.

This is the list of Nominations that were received by the Secretary prior to the Journal publication closing date of May 16th. Further Nominations may continue to be submitted after May 16th 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 21st September.

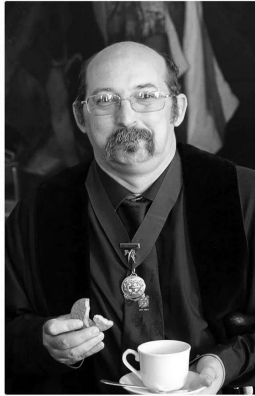
A Proposer must call the name of the Nominee, who may be supported by a Secunder. The Nominee must indicate his or her willingness to accept the nomination for the particular Office if elected, and he or she must have senior officer experience within their own Guild, or, if no such guild exists must 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 – Stephen White.
Deputy President - No Nominations Received.
Vice President - Alan Shelley
Secretary – Lee Hensley.
Treasurer – Stephen White
Membership Secretary - No Nominations Received.
Archivist – Alan Fallows
Editor - Tom Gibson,
Officer without Portfolio – Charlotte Yeates.

Officer Profile.

Honorary Editor. Tom Gibson.



As you will see from my report from the Durham Court meeting, I am asking officers and wardens to submit profiles for publication. As a result somebody, who will remain nameless said, tongue in cheek, I should do mine, so here it is.

I was born in Salisbury, Wiltshire in January 1968, I was adopted by my parents and brought up believing I could never be a Freeman of York, although my two brothers would be. In 1989 I became the second adopted son of York Freeman to be admitted in the City (My cousin being the first, a year before I believe) and joined the Gild that night. The June after I was admitted I was elected onto the Court where I have served ever since in various positions, becoming the first Adopted son of a Freeman to be master of the Gild (2008/9). I am currently Clerk of the Gild, a Pasture Master of Monk Stray and Chairman of the York Strays Council.

Having trained in Horticulture after leaving school, then social care, I have worked in Christian Bookshops and Theatres in York as well as at the Yorkshire Museum of Farming. However I worked for York Archaeological Trust for most of my career, mainly on the team that ran the award winning Archaeological Resource Centre (Now known as Dig) in York until breaking my back in a car accident. I know do freelance historical research and as attendees at the FEW AGM in York a couple of years ago saw, I specialise in the Viking/Saxon period, when I gave a talk complete with artefacts. For almost 20 years I was volunteer chairman of Tang Hall Community Centre, a local charity and served on the residents association from 1984 to 2008. I was also a volunteer on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway for many years.

I have been married to Donna, a Freeman of York in her own right, for 28 years and we have three, now adult, children.

I first encountered F.E.W on the first time the AGM was held in York after I had joined the Gild Court, which was held at York University. I eventually joined after attending F.E.W courts when held in York. In September 2009 I was asked to become the Hon. Editor by the then President, Colin Hardcastle, whose father had first nominated me for the York Court.

I hope that gives a picture about me, it is of course just a snap shot. Now its over to the other officers and Wardens to bite the bullet.

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