



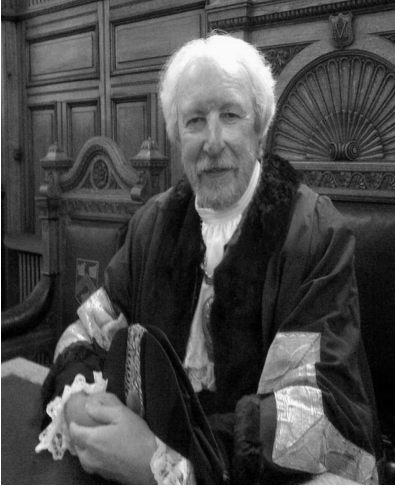
Chartered Freemen



Gloucester

*Freemen of  
England and Wales.  
Journal 194. Autumn 2019  
With Annual Report and Gazette.*

## President's Letter.



Having been installed as your new President at the recent AGM, most ably organised and arranged by Lee and his colleagues from the Chartered Freemen and Women of the City of Gloucester, I thought that there was no better way of introducing myself, especially to those who may not know me, than to replicate my acceptance speech.

Lord Bathurst, Jim, Executive, fellow Freemen, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great honour for me to accept the position of President of the Association, not just personally but also for the Freemen of Grimsby who have been well represented over the years not least by my late father-in-law Ted Ellis, one-time Honorary Secretary.

I have been asked several times in the past to consider taking on the role of President but I always declined firstly because I had a young family and secondly because I always felt that there was somebody “more worthy” who should do it before me.

I was, after all, only 30 years old when I was first appointed Treasurer back in 1986, a position I have held almost continuously since then and I have been fortunate enough to have known all previous 12 Presidents and served under 11 of them but I have lost count of the good friends that I have made, and lost, over the years. I suppose the moral of the story is to not put things off until it is too late.

Those of you who are good at maths will have worked out that means that I am the 13th President. I hope that is not an unlucky omen but please be assured that no radical changes are planned. You, and I, have a very good Executive working on your behalf and the only changes which are envisaged, as you have seen today, will be to remove any ambiguities for the smoother running of the Association and to improve the Website.

Thank you for your vote of confidence.

As I was writing this news came in that Colin Hardcastle had died. Colin, a Freeman of York and London, was a good friend of mine, one-time Warden for the North - which includes Grimsby – and we enjoyed many exchange visits over the years. He had a seaside flat at neighbouring Cleethorpes so I would frequently receive a ‘phone call, “I’m on my way over this weekend”. Colin went on to be President 2008-10 but regardless of the position that he held he set about it in the straight-forward, no-nonsense style that personified the Yorkshireman that he was. With Colin you knew exactly where you stood, something which I personally found refreshing. He will be sadly missed by his friends throughout FEW and we send our sincere condolences to his family. A full obituary will appear in a later edition.

Stephen White. President.

## Open Forum 2019

1, Derek Austin, FEW Warden - "What plans has the FEW got for the development of the website, when you open the website there is a lot of historical information, but what I would like to see in particular is an active calendar of future events of all Guilds and Leets, because not long ago, in fact last year, one of the Guilds in my area, cancelled their main event because they only found out at the last minute that it clashed with another Guilds event, so I'd like to see maybe a 2 year rolling calendar where all Guilds can actively promote their event. Also, I would like to see a section where the Wardens at least could actually publish their reports as well, I know other people have questions they would like to raise about the website as well, thank you".

Capt. James Evans, FEW President, replied "The website is an ongoing thing and we have a problem that we have to receive information to be actually put in it."

Steve White, Deputy President - "On the old website there was an area to place events and a diary, but despite lots and lots of requests, I received very few notifications, probably only a couple, that it became embarrassing, so I actually hid that from view because there was nothing there other than things that had already happened. So, we do rely on you advising us as to what is happening. Now that the new website has a live stream from Facebook of course any Guild can post on Facebook any event that they are holding and that will feed straight through on to the website front page so that is a way of keeping it live and current For example, we recently received a request from Chester to publicise their banquet, it went to Tom Gibson and he put it on the Facebook feed straight away"

Capt. James Evans - "We cannot stress enough that for information to go on it must firstly be received from someone, if nobody passes information in cannot be appear on the website"

2, Angela Priestley-Gibbins Freeman of Lincoln - "Following on from Derek, yes, most of the Guilds are getting better at using Facebook and trying to use websites. We have our own problems with our website in Lincoln, but I don't know whether it's the same in other Guilds or just Lincoln. We have the issue we can't get the youngsters involved so a lot of the people that are involved in organising events and going to the events are of more mature years and are not necessarily the best at using Facebook and the website so are there plans that people can request information by snail mail format? so I just want to make sure the intention is the information will be available still to everybody in all the formats".

Charlotte Yeates, FEW Officer without Portfolio - "If you are trying to get younger people involved, most young people now don't use Facebook, because they know we ("older generation") use it, so actually they are not interested, so you are probably looking at different forms of social media, like Instagram, twitter or something like that, to try and get younger people involved".

Steve White, Deputy President – FEW communicate by both letters and emails with Guild Representatives and offer the Journal in posted/printed and pdf (by email) format. It is up to individual Guilds to communicate with their own members in a way that is acceptable

to the individual concerned.

3, Angela Priestley-Gibbins – “How are other Guilds getting on with the inclusion of younger Freeman or younger family members of Freeman, is anybody making any progress on this”.

John Edwards, FEW Warden replied “Can I just say the basic problem is that people who look on these things are already interested, and the idea of how you get people to know what’s going on who aren’t directly involved in this is going to be a struggle. I should say that I’ve been doing the Stafford website for over 20 years now, and when I started it was a highly technical affair, but nowadays it’s now super easy and should be easy to hand over to anybody”.

Capt. James Evans – “In Berwick we have found we are getting younger people coming to our functions but what we cannot do is get them to stand for committees, this seems to be impossible. Having said that we have a similar problem with FEW itself, we are having difficulty filling the posts on the Executive committee, nobody is putting their names forward, now we have the situation where the Executive can appoint assistants to Executive positions where people can come along and try out the role and see if they wish to progress on or to withdraw, it’s up to them, but at least it brings them in. We have 1 assistant, at the moment, it is a good way of getting involved in the administration of FEW and we would welcome people putting their names forward to be assistants to members of the Executive”.

4, Capt. James Evans – “There has been talk in the Executive of the possibility of there being what we call Alderman, which is where the long-serving members of the Executive or people who have worked in the Association would (if agreed by a unanimous decision by the Executive) be appointed Alderman which would be a purely honorary post. Alderman, of course, traditionally was the position of ex-mayors in towns throughout the country, has anybody any comments or thoughts on that”.

Steven Morson, Freeman of Coventry put forward “that is was a fantastic idea”.

Capt. James Evans – “It is in a way a revival of a traditional office that used to be given to administrators who were ex mayors”.

5, Stewart Bristow, President of Lincoln Guild – “we are pleased to be hosting the FEW weekend in 2022, are we happy with the format of the past few years? Obviously there are certain things you have to do, i.e. AGM, open forum and things like that. Would the AGM be better in the afternoon? that way if people where coming a great distance they would only have to stay one night which would keep costs down.

Capt. James Evans replied - “The answer on that particular one was it is up to the host guild to come up with suggestions what to do, we do have a hosts pack which is based on experience from all the Guilds that have held the AGM over the years. It is an aide memoire, not a dictatorial order that you have to follow, and certainly we have done various things in the past. In fact I think we have held the AGM in the afternoon and certainly had variations on what is now called the open forum, there is nothing set in stone on how the AGM should be run, the actual AGM as such of course has to go forward at

sometime or another, but other than that there is a wide variation available within how each host runs the AGM”.

John Edwards – coming back to costs, the prices for these weekends are going up and up, and to have a bit more flexible option such has been suggested might well be worthwhile, particularly where we have host guilds working in very prestigious locations where price reflects the status of the place your meeting. Perhaps we could do with a little more prestige and a little less cost”.

Steve White – originally the AGM was held on a Saturday afternoon and that was it as far as the AGM was concerned. It then expanded to hold a banquet on a Saturday evening which then led onto an overnight stay, then a church service was tagged on the Sunday, of course that was in the days of Charles Sparrow who used to do a talk on the Saturday morning. Couple that with the open forum there was no time to hold the AGM in the morning. There then was a complaint that the Freeman attending never got to see anything of the place they were staying in so after Charles’s demise the AGM was moved to the morning to allow for free time. Then, because the Saturday was so packed, we started to convene on a Friday which involves a second overnight stay which then does see a big increase in the cost. As far as I’m concerned it is nice to have the opportunity to do a bit of sightseeing of our hosts town or city and to do some shopping as well”.

Stuart Bristow - “if anybody’s got any thoughts please contact him, we are not out to change anything but It’s very easy to get into the “we’ve always done it like that” mentality.

Charlotte Yeates - “Would it make you more comfortable if there was a show of hands here to see if people would prefer it in the afternoon”.

A show of hands took place and it showed that those members present preferred the AGM in the morning.

6, John Edwards - “when Stafford came to renew their badges and ties, they found that prices in Pakistan were 4 times cheaper than that of the UK, and of an excellent quality. I just thought it worth mentioning to any Guild looking to renew their ties etc., and that the workmanship is really good. If interested, please see me and I will pass the details on.”

Steve White - “I’d just like to add that the FEW ties we have for sale now, although they are provided by Thresher and Glenn - who have always made ties for association, the last batch were made in China”.

## **Minutes of the 53rd AGM**

**of the Association of Freeman of England and Wales. held on Saturday 21st September 2019 in The Buckholt Suite, The Cheltenham Chase Hotel, Shurdington Road, Brockworth, Gloucester.**

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

**Attendees:** Lord Bathurst – Few Patron, Peter Ainsworth – Chester, Michelle Ainsworth, Geoffrey Anderson – Alnwick, David Appleby – Alnwick, Terry Aubrey – Associate

Gloucester, Carol Aubrey, Derek Austin – Coventry, Ann Bessey, Keith Bretherton – Gloucester, Stewart Bristow – Lincoln, Ruth Bristow – Lincoln, Colin Burrows – Oxford, Emma Carr – Gloucester, Penny Christison - Berwick Upon Tweed, Alex Christison - Berwick Upon Tweed, Nic Christison - Berwick Upon Tweed, Howard Crapper – Oxford, Andrew Croose – Gloucester, Anthony Drew, Heather Drew – Gloucester, John Edwards – Stafford, Jim Evans- Berwick Upon Tweed, Pat Evans, David Fairnell - Berwick Upon Tweed, Shelia Fairnell, Micheal Farmer – Stafford, Shelia Farmer, Robin Folland – Pembroke, Racheal Folland – Pembroke, Roy Folland – Pembroke, Angela Priestly Gibbons – Lincoln, Tony Gibbons, Sharon Gladwin, Shirley Griffin, Terry Griffin - Stafford Burgesses, Mervyn Hall – Alnwick, David Hanlon - Stafford Burgesses, Caroline Hanlon, Victor Harrison – Lincoln, Julie Hayward – Gloucester, Stephen Healy - Newcastle Upon Tyne, Alan Heath – Gloucester, Jacqueline Heath – Gloucester, Erin Hensley, Lee Hensley – Gloucester, Michael Herriott - Berwick Upon Tweed, Fiona Hogg - Newcastle Upon Tyne, Elizabeth Laidler – Alnwick, Ronald Leek – Alcester, Janet Leek, Carl Mattison – Alnwick, Jimmy Mattison – Alnwick, Tommy Mattison – Alnwick, Steven Morson – Coventry / London, Alan Myatt – Honorary Gloucester, Denis Nixon – Alnwick, Elsie Pate – Chester, Howard Pate- Chester, Ian Phillips – Pembroke, Jocelyn Phillips – Pembroke, Alan Shelley – Sudbury / London, Kathy Shelley – Sudbury, Robert Shepherd – Alnwick, Terry Sibley – Northampton, Carole Sibley – Northampton, Amanda Stevenson - Berwick Upon Tweed, Terry Stevenson, Roger Sutton - Henley In Arden, Molly Sutton - Henley In Arden, John Tolley – Altrincham, Brian Weatherburn - Berwick Upon Tweed, Sarah Weatherburn - Berwick Upon Tweed, Lynda Weatherley - Berwick Upon Tweed, Bridget White – Grimsby, Matthew White – Grimsby, Stephen White – Grimsby, Jane Williams - Berwick Upon Tweed, Charlotte Yeates - Berwick Upon Tweed

Together with the Patron of FEW, Lord Bathurst and the Mayor of Gloucester, Colin Organ, the President, Capt. James Evans, having been announced by Mr. Alan Myatt, Gloucester Town Crier, processed into The Buckholt Suite preceded by the FEW Mace led by the Acting Macebearer, Hon Secretary Lee Hensley.

The President, before calling the meeting to order, welcomed the Patron of FEW, and the Mayor of Gloucester, who then addressed the members and guests present before having to immediately leave for other pressing engagements, the President then called the meeting to order and declared the AGM in session.

Apologies for non-attendance were recorded from Tom Gibson, Honorary Editor; Alan Fallows, Honorary Archivist, Nick Johnson, Warden for the South East; James Shepherd (Alnwick), William Strawn (Alnwick), Maxine Taylor (Beverley Pasture Masters), J Pinches (Chester), Howard Pate (Chester), Elsie Pate (Chester), Eric Bulmer (Durham), Keith Bretherton (Gloucester), Charles Davies (Haverfordwest), Chris Butterfield (Oxford), Stella Machin (Stafford), Anthony Piddock (Stafford), Jayne Topham (Warwick), Sara Giles (York).

Following a proposal by Steve Morson (Coventry), which was seconded by John Edwards (Stafford), the Minutes of the 52nd AGM held on September 22nd, 2018 in the Ballroom, The Court House, Warwick, were approved as a correct record of the proceedings and were signed by the President. There were no matters arising.

Ratification of the following two proposed changes to the constitution was put to the

Members present, the President advised members this would be voted by a show of hands.

The 1st Proposed change to the Constitution will be at Part 13b, with the addition of *or April* added to the statement below.

“Court meetings shall be held in March, and if desired June”

So, (if agreed) it will read in future

“Court meetings shall be held in March **or April**, and if desired June”

The 2nd Proposed change to the Constitution will be at Part 11, with the removal of *Executive* from the statement below.

The court shall consist of the Executive officers and the representatives of each Full Member Guild.....

So, (if agreed) it will read in future;-

The court shall consist of Officers and the representatives of each Full Member Guild.....

### **The Changes were agreed by a unanimous show of hands.**

The President informed the meeting that the next Court would be in Coventry on the 4th April, and that the next AGM would take place in Grimsby on 18th – 20th September. Also, the Court in 2021 would be in Lincoln and the AGM for 2021 would be in Coventry, and the AGM for 2022 would be in Lincoln.

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

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

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

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

There was no Report for the Membership Secretary as the position was vacated by Gordon Vardell in March of this year.

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

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

Charlotte Yeates Officer Without Portfolio Report Report was tabled and noted. A copy is appended to these minutes.

The President then asked the Hon. Secretary to read out the Nominations for Executive officer's that he had received. The Secretary informed the Meeting that only one nomination has been received for each of the following Executive positions, and as no nominations had been received from the floor, that therefore an election would be unnecessary for these. For the year 2019 - 2020, they are: - Deputy President – Tom Gibson; Vice President – Alan Shelley; Hon Treasurer – Stephen White; Hon Membership Secretary – Charlotte Yeates; Hon Editor – Tom Gibson; Hon Archivist – Alan Fallows; Honorary Secretary – Lee Hensley.

No nomination had been received for the position of Officer without Portfolio, so the position has been left Vacant

The new President, Stephen White, was then installed in office by the outgoing, and now Immediate Past President, Capt. James Evans. After pronouncing the Oath of Office, the new President was robed by Capt. James Evans, and presented with the President's Medallion of Office.

Stephen White then made a short address, thanking everyone for the confidence now placed in him.

Capt. James Evans then received his Immediate Past President's Medallion and robe from Ron Leek, following which Stephen presented Ron with his Past President's Medallion and Janet Leek with her Past President's Lady's silver pendant. Pat Evans presented Bridget White with the President's Lady's Brooch.

Stephen White appointed Ron Leek as the first Alderman of the Association, as recognition for his service to the Association. The President informed the court that as an Alderman Ron could attend Executive meetings although there is no vote attached to the position.

Stephen White asked the Alan Shelley to present Charlotte Yeates with the medallion for the office of Membership Secretary.

The President informed the court that Alex Christison had taken on the role of Assistant Membership Secretary, and that volunteers would be gladly accepted for any Assistant post.

Alan Shelley called forward Ian Phillips, who was presented with a Wardens robe and medallion, he was then presented to the Court as the FEW Warden for Wales. Alan Shelley then called forward Nic Christison, who was presented with a Wardens robe and medallion, he was then presented to the Court as the FEW Warden for the South West. Alan Shelley called forward Angela Priestley-Gibbins, who was presented with a Wardens robe and medallion, she was then presented to the Court as the FEW Warden for the East.

The 2018- 2019 Wardens were confirmed as: - North East – Capt. Stephen Healy; North West – Denise Laver; North – Roger Sutton; North Midlands – John Edwards; South Midlands – Derek Austin; South East – Nick Johnson; West – Howard Crapper; Wales – Ian Phillips; East – Angela Priestley-Gibbins; South West – Nic Christison.

The Vice President was asked by the President to introduce the Wardens and ask them to



give their Reports.

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

North West: Denise Laver. Verbal report, A copy not submitted.

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

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

South Midlands: Derek Austin. A copy is appended to these minutes.

South West; Nic Christison. A copy is appended to these minutes.

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

West: Howard Crapper. A copy is appended to these minutes.

East: Angela Priestley Gibbins. No report.

Principality of Wales: Ian Phillips. No report.

Any Other Business: -

- a) Howard Crapper asked who is invited to Court Meetings; the President replied that the Executive, Wardens, Guild Representatives and any other FEW members can attend.
- b) Capt. Stephen Healy asked for confirmation that the Executive had received the Wardens concerns that had been discussed by the Wardens in the Wardens meeting the previous day; The President confirmed that their concerns had been received and noted by the Executive.
- c) Stephen White informed the Court of the death of David Clarke former Warden of Wales; Alan Shelley gave a brief account of David's involvement with FEW.
- d) Denise Laver asked if all people who have died, could get a mention on the website and not just the rich and famous. She was informed that we try to be all-inclusive but are reliant on being sent the information to publish.

There being no further business, the President declared the 53rd Annual General Meeting closed, and processed from the room with his Lady, Bridget White followed by the Executive Officers.

### **President's Report.**

We experimented with a SKYPE meeting for our January Executive meeting through the internet rather than face to face. This was reasonably successful and saved Executive members travelling long distances in the depths of winter and dark nights.

Wardens are important Officers of FEW. They are the link between the Executive and the wider FEW membership and are the method by which new Guilds can be encouraged to thrive and play their part in FEW. I would encourage you all to invite your Warden to some of your own events. During this year we have formalised the appointment of new Wardens and have welcomed some new Wardens.

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

Unfortunately Gordon Varndell, our Membership Secretary, had to retire due to ill health earlier this year. We thank him for all that he and Eileen have contributed to FEW over many years. We had considerable difficulty in obtaining a new Membership Secretary. Hopefully we now have a freeman willing to fill this post. There have been some disruption during the changeover and we will make some alterations to the scheme to try and make it easier to operate. We ask for your patience while these amendments are taking place

The Archives project continues. It was realised that this will take some years to make substantial progress. Replies are awaited from some Guilds by Alan Fallows our Archivist. The Berwick project is making good progress and will be extended to include the Guild records after 1835. Details of this are forwarded to Alan to assist with our own Archives.

There have been problems in filling all the posts on the Executive. Some of this have been due to concerns over the work involved. Your Executive can appoint assistants for the various posts which gives the opportunity for members to gain experience of the operation of FEW and hopefully go on to serve on the Executive. We would encourage members to put their names forward to fill these posts.

We continue to update our website and Facebook and welcome any additional information

As I reach the end of my time as your President I would like to thank all our Executive Officers who have supported me over the past two years. It has been a pleasure to work with you and I have appreciated all their efforts and hard work. Finally I would like to thank you the Freemen who make up FEW for allowing me the privilege of being your President.

J.Evans,  
President. 2017-19

### **Report of the Deputy President.**

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 still some outstanding formatting issues here and there, such as the background colour but nobody has made any positive suggestions to me. 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.

A notice for this years AGM was posted together with a downloadable booking form.

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 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 295, up 3 from 292 in June.

### **Vice President's Report.**

Earl Bathurst, Mr President, Freeman All.

My report is concentrated upon the activities of the Wardens of our Association.

To cover the areas of England and Wales, we normally require ten Area Wardens. During the past two years we had two retirements and a resignation. This foreboding dilemma set about a rethink over the personal requirements needed of their replacements. We have successfully set up a procedure for recruitment and I am happy to say that things now look much better for the future.

Today, during our AGM, I anticipate the full restoration of our team of Wardens. The South West is now covered by the energetic Nic Christison, a Berwick Freeman who is operating out of Bournemouth. During the interim, the East has been care-taken by Nick Johnson our Warden for the South East. My thanks to Nick. I am pleased to report that the East will now be administered by Angela Priestly-Gibbins who will replace Val Pettifer who sought retirement and felt obliged to resign from that post. We were very sorry to subsequently learn of her devastating illness and I would like her to know that we are thinking of her.

Further, but by no means least, has been the retirement of Roy Folland, our Warden for Wales who after many years, has found it necessary to hand over his robe and territorial duties. We pass our sincere thanks and good wishes from all at FEW and wish him a happy retirement. Roy has been a stalwart representative of our Association. Replacing Roy will not be easy but in Ian Phillips we have every confidence that business can continue as usual. May I take this opportunity to thank the Warden's recruitment sub-

committee for their willing assistance and to wish our new Wardens every success and enjoyment in their new ventures.

I would be wrong to close my report without extending my thanks to all of our hard working Wardens, without whose assistance this Association would have no substance. They are the pipeline to the guilds and the face of the FEW. This concludes my report, thank you.

### **Treasurer's Report.**

**Included with separate Annual report included in this mailing.**

### **Archivist Report.**

Dear All,

Due to some health issues and various family commitments, I am afraid my involvement with FEW have been severely curtailed this year. For my absence this weekend, please accept my apologies.

I am continuing to re-catalogue the FEW Archives and hope to publish a new listing for the March Court.

### **Editors Report AGM 2019.**

The usual three editions of the journal were issued in the past year, Numbers 191, which was the largest, 192 had a cover photo which gained much positive comment, but as usual for the Winter edition had a reduced number of pages. Unfortunately number 193 was issued later than it should have been. This was due to the need to rebuild the membership data base (many thanks to Charlotte for undertaking this task) following the resignation of the membership secretary. My thanks also to all those who have sent articles for any and all of the editions, it is these contributions that help keep the Journal interesting.

As usual, I would like to remind you all that although the next edition will be full with reports from the AGM, the Winter edition which follows is usually the best for member Guilds etc to publish any news they would like to share. The closing date for Articles for that edition shall be the 18/1/20.

### **Report from the Officer without Portfolio.**

In the last 12 months I have attended the Executive Meetings. One of the changes I've been involved with has been to use Skype in the January meeting to save on travelling costs and time in the winter months.

Due to a technical difficulty when the Membership Secretary resigned the membership database was lost. I created a workable and transferable database at short notice from paper records which will make the role of the next Membership Secretary easier. Unfortunately, there was a slight delay in sending out the Journals.

## Reports from the Wardens.

### Warden For The North East.

#### **Alnwick:**

The Chamberlain's Common Council and Freemen of the Borough of Alnwick have concentrated on estate maintenance over the Summer months, as is usual.

2 new Freemen were admitted in April 2019, one to the Skinners & Glovers Company, the other to the Blacksmiths & Whitesmiths.

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

The Berwick Freemen's excellent new website, noted at the Court meeting earlier this year, continues to evolve.

A database of all Freemen entries from 1800 to the present day and entries up to the 1940's are now accessible online. A book has also been produced highlighting sources, including Freemen records, available for those researching ancestors from the Town. Capt. Jim Evans has continued to work closely with the Borough Archivist who, last year, was one of only nine applicants to successfully secure a grant from Archives Revealed to help enable the Town's Record Office to re-catalogue the entire Borough Archives collection, dating from the early 1500s. A significant proportion of the Archives relate directly to the Freemen, including Guild records prior to 1835. The support of the Guild was deemed crucial in securing this initial substantial grant and the Freemen stand ready to offer further financial and other support as the project continues to develop.

The work with the Archives will also result in them being incorporated into the re-interpretation of the Town's Barracks. Berwick has the oldest stone barracks in the UK and there is a separate and major project underway to re-develop them. The Guild is also represented on the Steering Committee for this project and has already made a significant contribution to its development.

The Guild has been most fortunate in recently being gifted two important photographic collections which complement the material being catalogued. The first is that of a renowned but now very elderly local photographer, Jim Walker. The second is that of the late David Moor, a former Chairman of the Guild and FEW Archivist. Included within the latter collection is a photograph of every house in Berwick, north of the Tweed, taken in the early 1950s. It is intended that, in due course, much of both collections shall be permanently displayed within the Barracks. Meantime, a limited display is being made available within the Town Hall.

The annual Riding of the Bounds has traditionally been held on 1st May run for many years by the Council and the Guild but latterly by a Riders Committee. The Guild has a number of older members who, together with younger fellow members, have always driven around the Bounds by bus, followed by a meal. A few years ago, the Riders Committee decided to hold the Ceremony on the first Bank Holiday Saturday in the month in order to encourage more participants. The Guild is presently consulting with its members to decide whether to move to the same day as the Riders or remain with the first of the month. Meantime, this year, the Guild stuck with tradition and went around on the first.

The Guild continues to welcome healthy numbers of new Freemen; to date some 140 daughters have taken up their right to the Freedom.

The Guild has recently enjoyed reciprocal visits with the Durham Guild. The annual Christmas Dinner Dance was a great success with a record attendance including, once again, our Warden.

The Guild maintains its membership of the Court of Deans of Guilds of Scotland with a substantial number of members having attended their AGM at Stirling in May. The Guild continues to work closely with Berwick Town and the Guild housing scheme continues to be fully occupied, debt free and in good condition. Further development of property is anticipated.

I am grateful to Michael Herriott, Chairmen of the Berwick Freemen, for his assistance with this report.

### **Durham:**

You may have seen news of Durham County Council's proposals for a new multi-million pound headquarters in the centre of Durham, with intentions to build offices and associated parking on riverside land next to the Sands. 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. They have therefore lodged a formal objection, following a meeting at which the wardens of the eight trade guilds recorded their unanimous opposition to the scheme.

The Freemen continue to support the Durham Pointers, community volunteers recognised by their distinctive pink tabards, who can be seen on the city's streets every day, in all weathers, offering a warm welcome and directions to the tens of thousands of visitors from across the world who arrive annually between Easter and October.

Two brothers were sworn into the Drapers' Company at the Lammas Guild Day (August 5th); family folk-lore suggests a family link with Durham City's Freemen may stretch back to the 14th century and the Battle of Neville's Cross, but firm evidence has only been found back to the 1680s. They are joined by a new recruit to the Plumber's Company. The freemen's eight guilds currently have between them 250 members – a fifth of them women. Concern however continues amongst the Officers and Wardens regarding the number of 'active' Freemen and discussions continue on how to resolve this, a sadly only too common problem for many Guilds.

### **Newcastle upon Tyne:**

Nothing to report.

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

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

York Gild's Annual Banquet was held on the weekend of April 12th – 14th. On the Friday night the Gild held a Quiz that raised £600 for the Master's charity. On the Saturday night the banquet was held at the Principal Hotel, York, with visitors from Coventry and Leicester Guilds. On Sunday a service was held at All Saints Church, the Pavement, York.

Thanks in part to the Gild's Clerk, Tom Gibson, the York Gild had the pleasure of hosting a visit from the Chartered Freemen and Women of the City of Gloucester.

A sad event for the Gild was the death of Freeman, Eddie Errington, and one time FEW Warden for the North.

The York Gild's new year started with the election of the new Master, Sarah Giles, at the Court AGM held on the evening of 28th June 2019 in Bedern Hall, York. At the beginning of the meeting the outgoing Master, Andrea Smith had the pleasure of awarding Honorary Membership of the Guild to, Verna Campbell, past Sheriff of York. Honorary Membership of the Gild was also awarded to York Guard for services to the City. The last duty of Master, Andrea Smith, was to hand over a cheque for £1,120.05 to Emily Sharman of Martin House Children's Hospice, the proceeds of the Master's Charity. The new Master, Sarah Giles was pleased to explain that her charity for the year would be "Candlelighters", a children's cancer charity that helps families stay in-touch when their children are in hospital.

At the same meeting the Gild was updated on York's bid for World Heritage Status. The City submitted its last bid in 2011 but was turned down. The Steering Group agreed to continue to meet and develop a revised bid ready for 2020. The Gild was pleased to learn that the Gild Clerk, Tom Gibson, was still a member of the Steering Group in appreciation of the support of the Gild has given to the Heritage Steering Group.

Since the meeting the new master has attended a number of local events in particular a dinner in the Mansion House, York; an invite to the Freemen of London's Dinner, following a visit of members of the London Guild to York and hosting the Three Gilds Dinner in Bedern Hall York in August.

Future events include a Three Gilds Quiz, and a Gin Tasting evening in October. with the Christmas Lunch and Carol Service in December.

### **York Strays Council**

York Strays Council (Chairman, Tom Gibson, of York Gild) and the City of York Council have drawn up a new Agreement for Monk, Bootham and Wamgate Strays (The Micklegate Strays is run under the 1907 Act). The Micklegate Strays has a Trust Fund for the benefit of Freemen and their dependents and York Gild has been asked to make freemen living in the Stray aware of the benefits of the Trust. The other three strays are looking to recruit York Gild Members to volunteer to be Pasture Masters in order to keep a watch on the activities in each of the Strays.

### **The Freemen and Women /Pasture Masters of Beverley.**

The Chairman of the Pasture Masters, Allan English, in an article for the local Press, expressed his concern that the people of Beverley were not aware that the town had two other areas of common pasture, Swinemoor and Figham, for which the Pasture Masters were responsible. The citizens understand that Beverley Westwood is common pasture, and make good use of it - playing golf, cross-country running, family picnics, horse riding and horse racing. He hoped that more interest would be shown in the Role of the Pasture Masters.

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

Next year the Freemen will have the pleasure of hosting FEW's AGM on the weekend of 18th -19th September 2020.

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

I do not have anything very exiting to report on this occasion. My Guilds are ticking along much as usual, each with their activity levels very dependent on a small band of dedicated folk.

In July the Freemen of Bridgnorth hosted a visit by the Freemen of Gloucester, which included a tour of the town, noting its historical importance as well as some social activities. This seems to have been a very enjoyable venture and they look forward to similar events in future. I have been invited to their luncheon in October, but unfortunately I shall be abroad and cannot accept. Sadly, there have been too many such invitations that I have been unable to attend. This the price you pay for having active people with many commitments, while those with nothing to do always seem too busy.

In May, I was privileged to attend the swearing-in of ten new freemen and women in the City of Derby. I was permitted to address the candidates before the ceremony to explain the functions of FEW and my role in the organisation. We then moved into the mayor's parlour where the recently elected mayor admitted them to the freedom. The scroll bearing the names was amended to include the newcomers and signed by the mayor. That scroll is an interesting document being some 20+ meters in length and it was unwound down the city hall stairs so that various family members could be identified. This is a relatively new scroll and their efforts to restore the earlier fire damaged version continues. Regrettably, the Mayors Secretary, who has been so helpful to the freemen, has been moved in a reorganisation and they need to re-establish a rapport with her replacement.

Things are rather quiet at Newcastle under Lyme although I am aware that they participate in some civic functions. It is a pity that a group with so many prepared to collect their annual pay out, leaves the administration to the committed few, as I mentioned earlier. Shrewsbury and Stafford both have regular participation in civic events such as Mayor-making, Battle of Britain Commemoration and Remembrance, as well as a good social programme. Stafford are also invited to such things as the Civic Carol Service and have now become regular participants in the Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's Church. Two trees are decorated; one on behalf of the Guild and the other on behalf of the Freemen's Allotments. The latter has a bewildering number of knitted vegetables, wheelbarrows and the like. However, this is a very useful way of showing the 9,000 or so visitors what we are all about. There is a good take up of our leaflets explaining who the Burgesses of Stafford are and what they stand for.

Unfortunately, owning land which is laid out to some 150 large allotments and catering for the needs of some 300 gardeners of all ages, ethnicities and temperaments is far from easy. Add to that, our aforementioned share of rough sleepers, drug takers, vandals, thieves and arsonists and one wonders whether King John knew what he was letting us in for, 800 years ago. However, helping people with physical and mental disabilities, schoolchildren to see where their food comes from, support groups for such things as autistic children, and seeing many racial groups getting on well together, make it all



worthwhile. At long last we have found the right police advisor to help us with the miscreants, so things are looking up.

Our tame arsonist accidentally did the trustees a favour by burning down the old shop, because the insurance company paid out enough to build a new one at a better and safer location. (*"It's an ill wind that does nobody any good"!*)

Overall, the North Midlands area seems to be going through a satisfactory, if quiet period, so as Warden I have had little to do, other than some public relations.

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

**Coventry Freeman's Guild.** 2019 is a historic year for the Guild – in May our first Lady Master Carole Wilson was installed at the annual banquet in St Mary's Guildhall. I hope that this may encourage more Lady Freeman to join our Court. Our usual annual schedule of events is proceeding, with the forthcoming Christmas Dinner already sold out.

St Mary's Guildhall is the venue for nearly all the Guild's formal events. Last week the bombshell news that the Guildhall would be closed for the whole of 2020 was advised. Hence all events and dates will have to be reprogrammed. Hopefully the planned work will not impact on the 2021 FEW AGM, based in the Guildhall.

**Gild of Leicester Freeman.** Besides the administrative burden of the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), funding for the 'Gildhall News' magazine was also impacted from November 2018 on. The Gild Court is now back up to strength, but some Gild outings have had to be cancelled due to lack of support. Principal Gild event the annual Banquet weekend was held in June, but numbers were down a bit this year. Civic events like the: Armed Forces Day parade; the Damson Rose Ceremony; the Civic Service at Leicester Cathedral all had Gild representation. Gild members also supported the Coventry and Northampton weekend events, and further afield, the York Banquet.

**Northampton Guild of Freeman.** Principal event, the fifth annual Charity weekend, was based at Moulton College on 29th – 30th March, with Freeman from Northampton and other invited Guilds visiting the historic Delapre Abbey. The Saturday Dinner and Friday meal at Moulton College also benefitted from having accommodation on site. Following last years' successful informal Freeman's lunch, a similar event was held this year on 31st August at Stoke Bruene.

Hopefully 2020 will bring clarification as to whether the forthcoming West Northamptonshire Unitary Council, or a new Northampton Town Council will be able to confer the Hereditary Freedom on new candidates.

**Alcester Court Leet & Court Baron.** Traditional calendar events due this year included: Heart of England Town Criers Competition; Assizes of food & drink; Street market; Family Fun Day; Court Leet Church Service & Parade on 13th October.

**Henley-in-Arden Court Leet & Court Baron.** The active calendar of events includes the June Court Leet Day and Artisans Market, and also the Shakespeare's Birthday & Armed Forces Day Parades. Annual meeting in the Guildhall is due in November.

**Warwick Court Leet.** Charitable fund raising activities continue apace, with £5000

presented to the Lord Leycester Hospital for renovation and essential maintenance of this medieval Guildhall from monies raised at a winter beer festival on site. The July Beer, Cider, & Music Festival was held in a new venue of Pageant Gardens, and despite some rain, large crowds attended. All proceeds going to local charities and good causes. Assizes Day in August saw robed Officers assessing local food and drink as 'fit for a man's body'.

Finally a plea to all Guilds – please get the date of your major events listed in the FEW Journal, to help stop clashing events.

### **Warden for the South-West.**

Having been only appointed 6 months ago, to a dormant & non-active region, with no membership for the FEW. My first task was to research, locate & contact Gilds within the Area. With the intention of communicating with them to encourage membership to the FEW. Whilst maintaining that there Gild's heritage survives, as a lot have faded into the history books.

Research has taken vast amount of time, contacting many different organisations, national archives , councils ( both district & county ), local historians, local archives & studies services, cross referencing information from the FEW website ( HW2 file ) and Harry Ward book “ Freeman of England “.

Have received numerous responses for different local archives & local studies services within the region. Which has taken me down many different avenues. The majority have informed me that Gilds did exist but have now disappeared, some still have the title honourable Freeman . Most notably Southampton, Bournemouth & Ringwood. Although I sure this list will increase.

With the research I have concentrated on active responses and finding contact details to pursue a positive outcome.

At present initial contact for Portland, Ashburton, Exeter & Wareham is ongoing. With the hope of a face to face meeting so that they know more about the FEW and what we do.

My indention for the next report is to have further details / information on the Gild's mentioned, spending more time conversing with other Gilds and less time researching.

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

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

The Admiralty Court was convened in the Rochester Guildhall on Saturday 29th June 2019, where, following the empanelling of the Jurymen, two presentments were approved by the Court:

Presentment 1 referred to a Declaration regarding the licensed fishing and dredging of the Oyster Grounds. Presentment 2 referred to the continuation of the No-Take Zone in the River Medway, protecting the Bass stocks, as well as other juvenile species on the salt marsh.

Two local men became Freeman of the Fishery. Gary Waltham and Bradley Starling, having served their seven year apprenticeships were granted the Freedom of the River,

and were presented with their Certificates by the Mayor.

### **Acting Warden for the East of England**

#### **Sudbury Freemen's Society**

The Quinquennial Meeting with the Annual Report and Payment of Common Money took place at the Sudbury Town Hall on Tuesday 2nd July 2019 at 7.30pm, and I attended as Acting Warden for the East. The Freemen were paid £4 each and the Freemen's widows were paid £2 each. The Chairman, Michael Wheeler having completed his period as Chairman, introduced the incoming Chairman, Andrew Grimwood of Long Melford.

The Sudbury Common Lands comprise of seven areas of acreage of varying sizes, and amounting to a total of 107.04 acres.

#### **The City of Lincoln Freemen's Gild**

I attended the AGM on Saturday 27th April 2019 held in the Guildhall, Saltergate, Lincoln at 11am. During the minute for Election of Officers, it was proposed, seconded, and carried, that Neil Bristow would become the next Master, taking over from Angela Priestly-Gibbins. The Deputy Master will be Richard Storey, and Vic Harrison will continue as Treasurer. There were no proposals for Secretary at this time.

### **Acting Warden for the Welsh town of Montgomery**

#### **The Town Freemen of Montgomery**

A business meeting of the Freemen took place in the Activity Centre, School Lane, on Monday 3rd June 2019, chaired by the Mayor (who is a hereditary Freeman) Lionel Corbett Weaver. Part of the business of the meeting was the payment of the common money to fourteen Freemen, who each received £225. The Freemen own about 90 acres of land, which is let to local farmers. They also 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.

Their next meeting is on Monday 2nd December, and I have been invited to attend.

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

I am delighted to be reporting here in Gloucester. Our host Guild have been very busy preparing for this brilliant AGM. I thank both the President and the Hon. Secretary of the Chartered Freemen and Women of the City of Gloucester for keeping me up to date with recent admissions and the good will they have built up with the City Council.

They joined the St Georges parade at Gloucester Cathedral in April which was watched by a good crowd. Gloucester encourage good relations with neighbouring Guilds and visited Bridgnorth Guild in July, this included a ride on the Cliff Railway and copious hospitality.

In May, Gloucester freeman had free entry to the visiting Tall ships in Gloucester docks and thirteen neighbouring Freeman also took up the opportunity.

In the summer, a civil war re-enactment was played out in Gloucester Park and Freeman sat with the Sheriff to watch this impressive display.

Earlier in this month of September, the new Banner of the Chartered Freemen and Women was blessed at a church service before parading behind it through the City, this event was witnessed by our very own Vice President suitably robed for the event.

In Oxford, the Spring Admission Ceremony included a Lord Mayors Childe becoming a freeman, Peter Smith, our dynamic historian relating to WW1 aviation on Port Meadow was duly rewarded for his leadership in getting the memorial erected to the seventeen airman who had not been previously recorded.

The Freeman Apprentice Awards Ceremony was held on the same evening. We have categories for each trade, It is an inspiring and celebrated occasion, Facebook had a busy night, many thanks to the Lord Mayor and Sheriff for their time and support.

Last year we had real problems with grazing cattle on the Port Meadow, crossing the silted upriver boundary. Temporary fencing akin to snow fences has been erected on the opposing riverbank with good results and happier farmers.

On Monday 23rd September, the annual Sheriffs roundup will take place at dawn. Around 50 good folk will walk the cattle up the meadow to the compound for counting and health inspection.

I am grateful to the Freemen of Malmesbury and Chippenham for communications and to Hungerford Court Leet for their apologies to this meeting and their best wishes for a good AGM.

### **Passing on the Baton.**



Hon. Secretary, Lee Hensley, President of the Chartered Freemen and Women of the City of Gloucester passes the Baton over to the President, Steve White, Chairman of the Enrolled Freemen of Great Grimsby, hosts of the 54th AGM.

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**Cover Picture:** AGM Weekend Procession to Gloucester Cathedral.

**Back Cover:** AGM Group Picture.

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**Please note the closing date for the editor to receive items for the next issue (No. 195) is the 18/1/20.**

**We would especially welcome news and articles from our Member Guilds and organisations for this issue.**

If you would like to receive future editions of this journal by email (as a PDF) rather than through the post, please contact the editor with your details.

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