

Freemen of England and Wales. Journal 200 Spring 2022



Chartered Freemen



Glocestet



With Compliments





Message From The President

Firstly may I wish you all the very best for 2022, let us hope things can return to a more usual state for us all this year.

This is the 200th edition of the Journal and includes news from each of the Guilds who responded to the appeal in the last edition. My thanks to all those who sent news from their Guild for inclusion. It is a shame not all responded, I hope this is not a sign that they are not in difficulties as a result of the pandemic. However, it is gratifying to see in the reports that many are beginning the process of recovery and local events are being held once more.

As part of the recovery of FEW the Deputy President has recently begun regularly writing to the Guild Representatives, giving information and trying to get some from them to enable us to better serve you. I hope you will all support this initiative to improve communications between us and help us to improve your voice in FEW as we endeavour to move forward as an association.

As 2022 began we were sad to receive the news that Leslie Morgan, past Warden for the North West had died. Leslie was a stalwart of FEW for many years and was a student of history, which was usually reflected in his reports, especially to the AGMs he attended. At one held in York he proudly announced that he had traced an ancestor who had been held at York Castle, before being taken to be hung at the York Tyburn, which of course was on Freemans Land, the Knavesmire. I had many a chat on the phone with Leslie, discussing matters Historical from the origins of the town of Copley, to the latest steam locomotive restoration. My sincere condolences to his son, family and friends, Leslie will be fondly remembered by those of us who knew him, I am sure.

Stop Press: As many of you may know, while compiling this edition I was rushed to hospital. I am now slowly recovering from the emergency operation necessary, comprising several serious procedures and would like to thank all those from F.E.W for thier messages of goodwill to me as news spread. I will be out of action for several weeks, but look forward to being back in full harness as soon as possible. My thanks to my Daughter, Christine Gibson, (a Freeman of York) who completed the compilation of this edition, so it could be sent to you all without delay.

Tom Gibson. President.

News From The Guilds

Shrewsbury.

We are pleased to be able to report that after a long absence we have again been able to schedule some of our usual events.

On Sunday November 14th we attended an outdoor Civic Remembrance Service providing Halberdiers for the Mayors Escort and laying a wreath of remembrance.

On Thursday December 9th we held a Gild Christmas Buffet Dinner in the banqueting suite of the Shrewsbury Town Football Club with some 45 members and guests attending. We were pleased to be able to entertain members of Bridgnorth Gild at this event and thank them for their support.

Unfortunately at the dinner we had to announce the death of Court member Kenneth Barton the previous day. Had Covid not intervened 2021 would have been Kenneths' first year as Chairman of the Guild so a most poignant loss to us all.

On the weekend of April 23rd and 24th we will be holding our AGM at the Conservative Club in Shrewsbury and our St. Georges Day Service at the Abbey Church.

Many members of FEW will probably have fond memories of Gild functions at the Lord Hill Hotel. Unfortunately this has gone the way of many hotels and has been converted to housing.

Newcastle under Lyme

Despite being severely restricted by Covid the Burgesses have been able to return to the Guildhall at Newcastle for their annual election of Trustees which was completed in January.

February 2nd sees the Burgesses attend their AGM and distribution of the Burgess Lands Charity payments where hopefully restrictions will not prevent too many from participating.

At this time no further events have been planned.

Bridgnorth

Eight robed Freemen of the Guild attended the Remembrance Day Service in November. The Guild provided the Mace Bearers for the Mayor and Tony Head acted as Town Marshall. The silence was taken in the Castle Grounds where Jim Head laid a wreath for the Freemen and was followed by a service at St Marys Church.

The Guild AGM is planned to be held in April at a date to be confirmed.
At this time no further events are planned

Alcester

The Annual Court Meeting on 7th October was marked by a demonstration by mainly women urging the Court to accept women Jurors. Whilst this topic had been previously reviewed by the Court, the Steward correctly advised it was a matter for the Lord of the Manor – the Lord Hertford. As the protest featured on the local BBC News and newspapers, Lord Hertford has again reviewed the topic and agreed that women are eligible for consideration from October 2022.

In view of the pandemic situation, the High Bailiff David Henderson and most other Officers will continue in post, with Mark Venables being elected as Low Bailiff.

Robed Court Officers attended the Remembrance Day Parade and Church Service in November, and the Greig Hall Christmas Fayre in December.

Pandemic permitting, Pancake Races are planned for 1st March, Town Crier competition for April 16th, and Annual Assizes for April 23rd.

For more information check www.facebook.com/AlcesterCourtLeet/

Coventry

Despite the continuation of the Covid pandemic, the Guild successfully salvaged some events over the past months. September saw the Banquet weekend events, starting with a welcome evening on the Friday with a chafer type meal, also attended by visiting Guilds members. This coincided with some schools 'Prom' events – so Coombe Abbey was rather busy. Next day was the formal banquet, with principal guest Brigadier 'Jock' Fraser, Naval Regional Commander. Other guests included our Guild President Lord Mayor Cllr John McNicholas, the London Guild Master, and visitors from York, Leicester, and Chester Guilds. Our first ever Lady Master Carol Wilson installed Matt Johnson as Master for 2021/2 with due ceremonial. In turn, the Deputy Master and Guild Officers were introduced and received their medallions of office. Sunday had a robed procession from the Council House to the Guild church of Holy Trinity for a service, and installation of the Rev. Claire McArthur as Guild Chaplain – the daughter of Past Master Keith Talbot.

October saw a party of Coventry Freemen visiting Chester Guilds to support their banquet events, and also the autumn issue of 'The Guildsman' magazine- always a good read. December saw the Guild's Christmas dinner, also in Coombe Abbey's High Court room, with the Guild's President as principal guest, and entertainment by the Bianco Quartet. The first six prizes of the annual Charity raffle were also drawn.

The St Mary's Guildhall extensive renovations are continuing, with the Freeman's Room now stripped for stone repairs. We have no visibility of Guildhall availability for future meetings and events.

Virus permitting, the Guild also hopes to visit the Leicester Guild for their Skittles event in February, and also have a Ladies Evening event.

Great Grimsby



Remembrance Day Service in Freeman Street Market (Left)

Right: The official opening of the service road alongside the new YMCA building, both attended by the Deputy Mayor (& Ward Councillor) Steve Beasant and our Chaplain Revd Mary Vickers (yes, her real name).



Above: The Mayor's Court, and new Freeman, from last October which could do with a bit of cropping. Along with the new freemen are (In Robes L to R) Mr. Steve Wakefield, Deputy Chairman Freeman, with Mayor Cllr David Hasthorpe. Stephen White and Jonathan Goolden, Clerk to Freeman, in black gown.

Chester

Chester Freeman & Guilds send everyone their very best wishes for 2022. We were fortunate to finish 2021 with our usual events.

In October the Annual Banquet weekend was able to go ahead and was a great success. We hope everyone who visited us enjoyed the event.

Please note the date for the 2022 Annual weekend has needed to be brought forward to Friday September 30th for the Pre Banquet Supper, Banquet on Saturday & concluding with the Guilds Church Service on Sunday.

Our President attended the City's remembrance service alongside the Lord Mayor & Lady Mayoress in the gardens of Chester Cathedral and laid a wreath on behalf of the Freeman. In November the Student Awards evening took place in Ellesmere Port where awards were presented by some of our Guilds to 17 students of Cheshire College.

At Christmas time Freeman received a calendar and their copy of the Deva Pentice (Journal of the Chester Freeman & Guilds) - 50 years since the first edition appeared.

Northampton

2021 was a significant year for Northampton Freeman, with the Government directed demise of the Borough Council, and the emergence of the Town Council. As previously reported in these pages, it was fitting that Freeman Cllr Brian Sargeant was the last Borough Mayor, and was able to admit Earl Spencer and eight new Freeman over the Zoom platform.

The continuation of the Covid pandemic led to the cancellation of the 2021 – and now the 2022 Charity Dinner weekend events, although it is hoped that a 'get together' can be held on 9th April 2022.

January 2022 will see the funeral of Freeman Trustee Mike Ingram, a notable Northampton historian, who ran guided tours of medieval and Victorian Northampton, and had recently published 'Northampton – 5000 Years of History'. In March Terry Sibley achieves 50 years of service as a Northampton Freeman's Trustee – probably a local record. Terry is currently the Secretary & Archivist.

Check site [www.facebook.com/ Freeman-of-Northampton-770543973099554](https://www.facebook.com/Freemen-of-Northampton-770543973099554) for up to date information on future events.

Leicester

With the easing of the pandemic restrictions, six new Freeman were admitted on 26th October at a City Hall ceremony, with the Lord Mayor, Gild Master and Deputy, all resplendent in robes.

A Gild Carol Service was held at St Andrew Church on the 20th December, with the refurbished organ in use – and followed by refreshments at the Holt afterwards. Talks at the Holt have resumed, and pandemic restrictions permitting, the future programme

includes Skittles at Thurlaston on 18th February, and Gild Banquet weekend events on 18th -19th June: venue to be advised.

Warwick

The Leet were pleased to welcome members and visitors to the Annual Court Meeting on 28th October 2021 in the Courthouse, chaired by the Mayor of Warwick, Cllr Richard Edgington, in his role as Lord of the Leet. The Low Bailiff Mark Roberson was sworn into the Bailiff's role, with Alan Lettis to the Low Bailiff position. Six new Jurors were individually sworn onto the Court. Reports from Officers, and progress on 'Presentments for the Good of the Town' were reviewed.

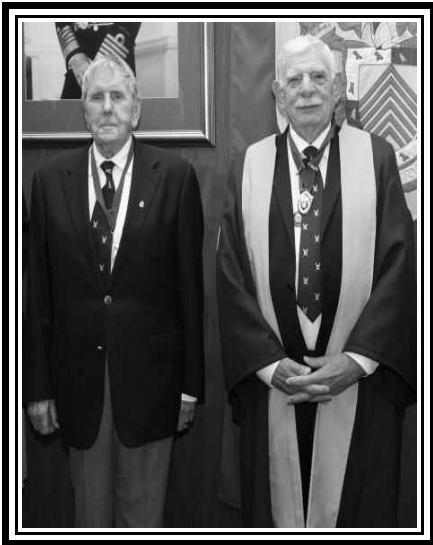
The Remembrance Service at St Mary's in November was attended by the Court, and a wreath laid at the War Memorial. The year ended with a Carol Service and supper at the Lord Leycester Hospital, recently awarded a £1.4M grant from the Lottery Fund for renovations.

2022 events so far, pandemic permitting, include a Beer Festival at the Lord Leycester on 18/19th February, and a similar event on July 15/16th in the Pageant Gardens.

For further information check

www.facebook.com/Warwick-Court-Leet-1554-247464642441818

Pembroke



Master Retires After 30 Years Of Service

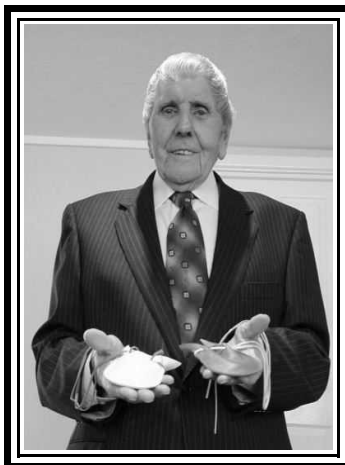
For only the third time in its recent history the Gild of Freeman of Pembroke has elected a new Master.

At the AGM on 28 October, held in the Council Chamber of Pembroke Town Hall, Mr Roy Folland retired as Master of the Gild, a position he held for 30 years. (Picture Left: Mr Roy Folland, previous Master (L) and newly elected Master Cllr Dennis Evans (R) at the AGM.)

Roy, along with his brother Claude, was enrolled as a Freeman of Pembroke in 1974 and, following the reforming of the present Gild in the mid-1980s, he was elected Deputy Master in 1989 and Master in 1991.

Roy is well known to all at FEW where he was a loyal, faithful, and respected attendee at Annual General Meetings for very many years. He served as Warden for Wales from 2007 to 2018, and was instrumental in the Pembroke Gild hosting the AGM of the FEW at Pembroke in 2011 and again in 2017.

The outstanding success of both occasions was the result of his organisation of the events and his attention to detail. In 2018 Roy was installed as a Burgess of Haverfordwest, and this year was honoured to receive Maundy Money from Her Majesty the Queen (Right: Roy with his Maundy Money Purses).



The Deputy Master, Cllr Dennis Evans, was elected Master and enrobed by Roy who had very generously donated his personal property of the Master's Robe and the Master's Jewel to the Gild.

The annual church service, conducted by the Gild Chaplain Revd Canon Roger Jones, took place on 28th November at St Mary's church, Pembroke. It was attended by some thirty-five members and guests, among whom were the Mayor of Pembroke Cllr Linda Asman and her Consort Mr Stuart Asman, together with the Master of the Haverfordwest Gild of Freemen Mr Charles Davies.

Following the service, the annual luncheon took place. The highlight of the speech by the Master, Cllr Dennis Evans, was his presentation to Roy of a specially commissioned painting of Pembroke Castle in recognition of his service of thirty years as Master of the Gild.



Above: The Master of the Gild Cllr Dennis Evans presents a painting to Mr Roy Folland.

Durham

Durham City Freemen are holding their Butchers Guild 500 year Celebration Event on Saturday 14th May 2022 in the Durham City Market Place and Guild Hall. Contact boothjohn555@gmail.com for more information.

York

Like many Gilds we in York are reviving activities of the Gild steadily. So far, as well as in person court meetings we held a Christmas dinner, although the Carol service was mainly on line due to a local rise in cases. In the next few months we shall be holding the Harry Ward Memorial Lecture, which this year shall be given by Catherine Sotheran who shall give an illustrated talk that accompanies her self published book “York in Close up” and concentrates on the numerous small historic items etc to be found in the City Streets. It will be held as usual in Bedern Hall, starting at 7:30pm on the 17th March, for more information please contact Hazel.hague@btinternet.com

Our Annual Banquet is planned for Saturday 2nd April in the Oak Room at The Principal York, formerly the station hotel, where FEW was founded. Tickets are £50 and more information can be found by contacting: hornby.steven@yahoo.co.uk

The day after our Banquet will be the annual Gild service at All Saints Pavement, beginning at 10:30 am. Our procession for robed attendees will leave Bedern Hall at 10am and this will be the first occasion that the Staffs of Office donated to the Gild by new Court Member Bruce Harrison will be on show. These are reputed to have been the property of a High Sheriff of Anglesey in the 19th Century, and are now on display with our Mace in Bedern Hall as part of the new exhibition in the hall when not being carried by our senior and Junior wardens in Procession. We are in touch with the High Sheriff of Gwynedd and the successors to the makers of the Staffs (Brigg and Sons) to try to find as much history of them as possible. The Staffs will be dedicated during the service, then all attendees are welcome to process back to the Hall after the service for light refreshments.

It is very sad to report the death of Past Master Alec Stephenson (Pictured Right in 2013 on his installation as Master). Alec will be remembered by many in FEW. Alec joined our Court in 1993 as a court assistant, serving as membership secretary for a number of years, with his wife, Beryl, serving as Welfare Officer alongside him. He retired as Membership Secretary and from the court in 2004, though he and Beryl continued to be familiar faces at Gild Events, and those of Guilds of other Cities. Alec returned to the Court in 2010 and Served until 2021 when he retired. He became Master in 2013. In total Alec has served on the Court for 22 of the last 29 years. The court were proud to be asked to provide a Guard of Honour at his funeral.



York Strays Council

The Strays council continues to watch over the strays in the city, working with the council and residents for their preservation and betterment. During the pandemic each of the strays has become invaluable to families and others, increasingly recognised as valuable lungs in the City.

Henley-in-Arden

The Annual Court Leet & Court Baron of the Manor of Henley-in-Arden was held in the medieval Guildhall on the 10th November, with guests from the local Court Leets of Warwick, Bromsgrove and Alcester. A tribute to Honorary Burgess John Rutherford who sadly passed away earlier in the year was given by Past High Bailiff Graham Smith. A resolution was passed to create two new officers that of Fish & Flesh Taster and Surveyor of the Highway. Officer's reports were presented, before the Jury retired to elect officers for the ongoing season. The new High Bailiff Laurence Marshall was sworn into Office and presented with his ceremonial chains. The elected Low Bailiff is Alistair Price. The Steward appointed Ray Evans as Town Crier replacing Les Long who had decided to retire due to ill health.

The Court Leet Service was held on the 21st November at the adjoining St John's church. For more information see www.facebook.com/groups/HenleyCourtLeet

Gloucester.

Activities have been few and far between due to COVID pandemic however, in September, a small contingent of members took part in the parade to celebrate Gloucester day, the President of the Guild attended the remembrance day service with the civic party. No Annual dinner took place for the 2nd year running, it is hoped that things will be back to normal this year. Also a few members took part in a small parade to mark the lighting of the tree of light (Pictured Below) an initiative by the Gloucester Rotary club that raises funds to support local charities.



Lincoln

We are the same as many other guilds this year with COVID fear and restrictions having decimated any programme of events we had hoped to offer. In some form, our Guild traces its origins back to Edward the Confessor with a dedicated Guild, not trade or social religious, first seen in 1893, but it's had its ups and downs and been in hibernation at times! We hope we grow stronger from this experience of the last two years, but things will change in our Guild.

Our charity fundraising has been curtailed, we've managed a stall at both Boultham and Heighington markets with our famous teddies raising over £400. The President took part in the Santa fun run and raised over £800.

Also, as an ongoing income stream, we now have both Christmas and blank cards for sale, a little late for this year, but we're ready for next year.

September saw the reinstatement of civic events with the Master and President at the Battle of Britain service in the cathedral, then the Guild supported the civic party at both the remembrance events and ended with the turning on of the Christmas lights and in December the President was proud to help open the Medieval Christmas Market.

April is our AGM, that we hope it will be face-to-face and not zoom as last year, maybe we will be overrun volunteers!

We have had a Mayor since at least 1206, Councillor Jackie Kirk is the current Right Worshipful Mayor of Lincoln and is the 814th First Citizen of the City of Lincoln. 23 cities have a Lord Mayor we do not! WHY? Lincoln is the 3rd oldest Mayoralty in the UK. It is to be hoped the Queen will think of us when she is giving out her gifts and honours for her platinum anniversary.

We look forward to returning to having social events but the light at the end of the tunnel still seems a little bit dim, love to you all and stay safe.

Archivists Notices.

The Archivist reports on two matters subject of recent enquiry.

You may recall that I recently wrote in Journal 196 regarding changing rules of admission to the Freedom among some Guilds.

As a result of that article it has been brought to my attention that some Guilds have been rewarding membership of their Guilds to non-freemen, i.e. persons who have not been sworn as Freemen of a town or city and having their details recorded on the Burgess Roll of that place.

You may be confused by my concern over this practice, so I will explain the facts:-

- 1 If your constitution permits you to award such persons of merit with Guild Membership that is perfectly acceptable. If it does not you should cease the practice until you can amend it.

- 2 These members will never be able to attain the Freedom so you should differentiate their membership title. I understand that many of you do this by referring to them as Associate or Honorary Members or even Burgesses.
- 3 As these “Honorary Members” cannot be Full Freemen Members of your Guilds they should not be included in your list of members as advised to FEW.
- 4 As they are not Full Guild Members they cannot stand for any executive officer position within FEW but may act as your Guild Representative too FEW.
- 5 The most damaging aspect is that these “honorary members” may think, (may even have been told), that they are being awarded the Freedom, which they cannot attain. They must be aware that the honour of membership of your Guild is the only reward that you can give them for what is probably lengthy and diligent support and service to the Guild. It is a difficult balance to strike when by their exuberance many apparently achieve officer positions, possibly even becoming indispensable to the operation of the Guild.

To prevent any embarrassment in the future please make it clear from the outset that Freedom of the Guild is not Freedom of the Borough.

Legitimacy

With constant changes over the last fifty years in family reform and more lately gender recognition it was only a matter of time before such questions began to inveigle their way into the Freedom.

Up to this point in time we have only been requested to examine the question of legitimacy and entitlement to claim the Freedom, but even this, when combined with gender equality being recognised in the 2009 Local Democracy Act, necessitates exercising caution in forming an opinion.

GDPR means that we can only provide anonymous examples so it will, by necessity, mean that each case must be examined under its own merits. There are, however, a few basic principles we can observe.

Illegitimacy was normally a barrier to attaining the Freedom and was almost guaranteed to be quoted as such in borough charters.

In 1926 a Legitimacy Act enabled children to be legitimized by the subsequent marriage of their parents provided that neither parent was married to someone else at the time of conception. In 1959 a second Legitimacy Act removed this discrimination against such adulterous relationships. A third Act in 1976 further allowed the legitimization of a child of a void marriage (ie incestuous , polygamous or same sex) provided that one or both parties to the marriage believed it to be valid , and that the child was domiciled in England or Wales at the time of birth.

The 1976 Act also allows (under modification by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act of 2008) to legitimise the child from the subsequent formation of a civil partnership of the female parent and the mother. NB A vital requisite of the 1976 Act Section 9, is that parents MUST re-register the birth of any children within 3 months of the marriage even if the father is already named on the birth certificates.

Such clarifications of legitimacy are useful in overcoming that particular bar as quoted in charters, but we must also consider the question of succession (note I do not say inheritance) to the Freedom.

The various legitimacy laws effectively deal with the subsequent effects of marriage, re-marriage and civil partnership, but seemingly fail to differentiate between inheritance of titles (ie primogeniture) or the grant of Freedom which I consider to be a birthright, ie the registration of attainment to the Freedom at 21 or 18 is just that; registration or written evidence. Your Freedom (if you are entitled by birth) is yours from birth. To satisfy attainment to the Freedom of a child born illegitimate and where there is no subsequent marriage to legitimise his or her status we must turn to the 1987 Family Reform Act. This Act removed all legal distinctions between children born to married or unmarried parents, thus the lack of subsequent marriage or re-marriage should not be a bar to attainment of the Freedom.

One item to beware of is the custom of your own place. If your custom restricts the number of generations over which you can link your claim and your claim is further removed, legitimacy would be irrelevant. The only option here would be to rely upon the enabling clause of the 2009 Local Democracy Act inserted by FEW to allow your Gild to modify your customary rules of admission. In all cases changes must follow the procedure of the Act and be with the agreement of the local council and the relevant Secretary of State.

I cannot claim expertise in this field. As I stated earlier each case must be approached independently and as statute changes regularly, with consultation of local experts where possible.

Notices from the Secretary

Nominations for FEW Executive Officers 2022 – 2023

Nominations are requested for FEW Executive Officers to serve for the year 2022 – 2023. The following positions are open for nomination: - Deputy President; Vice President; Hon. Secretary; Hon. Treasurer; Hon. Membership Secretary; Hon. Archivist; Hon. Editor; and Officer without Portfolio. Each nomination must be sent to the Hon. Secretary on the correct Nomination Form accompanying this notice (photocopies are acceptable) and be accompanied by the proper statements as detailed. Statements may be typed; however, they will require an inked signature to validate them.

All nominations must adhere to the criteria set out in Section 10 of the Constitution. If you require a copy of the constitution or clarification, please contact the Hon. Secretary.

All nominations must be sent to myself (Hon. Secretary) and received by the closing date of 12th May 2022, in order that they can be published in the Summer 2021 Journal. Any nomination received after this date will not be considered.

Freemen of England and Wales
Election of Executive Officers to serve for the year 2022-2023

NOMINATION FORM

Any nomination, properly proposed on this form, must be submitted to the Hon. Secretary on or before the date of May 12th 2022 in order that it can be published in the Summer 2022 Journal, thereby allowing time for its consideration by Member Gilds/Guilds/Societies before the AGM in September. This form **must** be accompanied by the following: -

- 1) A statement from the candidate, in not more than 150 words, detailing experience within the Freedom validating the candidate's suitability to fulfill the nominated office.
- 2) A short prospectus from the candidate, in not more than 50 words, detailing his or her aims in furthering the constitutional objectives of F.E.W.
- 3) A short statement by the principal proposer, in not more than 100 words, supporting the suitability of the candidate to serve F.E.W. in the nominated office.

The first two accompaniments must be handwritten by the Nominee, then all three are to be attached to the Nomination Form and forwarded together as a set of Nomination Papers.

We, the undersigned

propose

a Freeman/Freeburgesses

of

for election to the position of

of the Association of Freemen of England and Wales for the period 2022 - 2023.

Proposer

Seconder

I declare that if elected, I am willing to serve as

..... of the Freemen of England and Wales for the period 2022 – 2023

Signed

F.E.W. Hon. Secretary, Lee Hensley, 86 Painswick Road, Gloucester, GL4 6PT.

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leehensley@btinternet.com

Hon. Treasurer: Stephen. P. White (See IPP above).

Membership Secretary: Charlotte Yeates. 6 Cicester Terrace Moreton in Marsh Gloucestershire
GL56 0HD 01608 650291 cpdc2000@yahoo.co.uk

Hon. Archivist: Alan Fallows.(See Deputy President above)

Officer Without Portfolio: Vacant

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Warden for the North: Vacant

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Opinions expressed by contributors are their own and not necessarily those of the Hon. Editor, F.E.W. Court or Executive.

Front Cover: Collection of the Badges of the Member Guilds and organizations which have provided them.

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The editor can accept text for publication either electronically (email or on disk) or bold print hard copy to Scan. All submissions preferred in the **Times New Roman font, size 10**. I can also accept images (I can convert to Black and White if necessary) either as hard copy to scan, electronically by email as **JPG** files please. If you require return of hard copies an SAE is appreciated, please indicate if this is desired. Photographs of identifiable individuals, may only be published in the journal if all those individuals included have completed a GDPR permission form for F.E.W. Giving their permission.

Please note the closing date for the editor to receive items for the next issue (No. 201) is the 26/5/22.

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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