



A BEAUCEANT!!

NO 10

A little Knight Templar news does you good



Staying in touch

Dear Brother Knight

I am sure that we would agree that one of the highlights of the year is seeing the Malta ceremony being worked in full.

This week it would have been conducted at the meeting of Temple Slebech Preceptory of Provincial Body Guards in Bridgend but for obvious reasons that can not happen.

It is for that reason that I am placing the focus of this edition on

The Knights of Malta.

In our province there are only three opportunities each year for newly made Templar Knights to become members of the Masonic Order of St John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes and Malta.

In March this year we saw the first of those three ceremonies conducted at St David's Preceptory in Narberth with great style under the direction of their Prior, E Kt Peter Gregory. On that occasion, more than 50 Knights were present to witness candidates from each of our three Royal Arch Provinces being admitted to the Order.



This week's Quiz was kindly devised by the Provincial Sub Prior, E Kt David Court.



At Narberth in March, Malta candidates Kts David Powell, Brian Dowling and Guy Sillett, flanked by the Provincial Sub-Prior, Ekt David Court, with E Kt Peter Gregory, (on the left) and E Kt Basil Philips and the Provincial Prior, RE Kt Paul Calderwood on the right.

1. In what year was the Order of the Hospitallers founded?
2. By who (and when) were they finally expelled from Malta?
3. How many Provinces of the United Orders are there in Wales?

For quiz answers please see the bottom of the last page.



This week it would have been the opportunity for the talented team at Temple Slebech under the direction of their Eminent Prior E Kt James Lloyd Harries Williams to welcome yet more Brother Knights into the Order.

Hopefully, those candidates not admitted this week will have the profound experience of being received into the Order at the Provincial meeting in Llanelli on 14 November.

In the meantime, for your enjoyment and with my warm appreciation, RE Kt Dr Vivian Thomas has penned the following interesting article which links both the Templars and the Hospitallers.



Hoist The Jolly Roger

I have often been asked if the Jolly Roger (skull and cross bones) was a KT emblem.

When I gave a talk to the conference of all 10 Grand Priorities meeting at Winchester, I was able to show pictures of old KT aprons, embossed with skull and crossbones and there are many such aprons stored in the archives at Great Queen Street.

But where did the name “Jolly Roger” arise? There was a certain Roger de Flor, born at Brindisi in 1267 who began his life at sea with a Templar vessel at Marseilles. That he was a very able man was shown by the fact that by the age of 20 he had become a Sgt-Brother and went on to command an army of Catalan Knights.

It is recorded that at the siege of Acre in 1291, he helped to evacuate from the city many of those trying to escape the slaughter.

Sadly, he was unable to escape the temptation of all the riches he was also evacuating!



Jacques de Molay found out and Roger de Flor was immediately expelled from the Order. He promptly turned his hand to piracy, at which he became extremely successful, creating enough enemies to lead to his assassination in 1305 at the age of 38.

Was he the origin of The Jolly Roger? Some would claim this, but in fact the piratical Jolly Roger did not appear on ships’ flags until the late 1600’s and may have been simply “borrowed” from the French privateers who had as their banner Le Jolie Rouge (Red Flag)

The romantic idea, therefore, of Jolly Roger de Flor is unlikely to be true.

After the suppression of the Order of the Temple by the Pope in 1314 much of its wealth was transferred to the Hospitallers and you are well versed in how they moved across the Mediterranean from one island to another. Their final home was on the island of Malta of course—patrolling not deserts but seas ! From Malta, their navy defended Christian interests throughout the Mediterranean.

In 1571 they played a significant part in one of the largest naval battles in history which involved some 400 vessels. It might be better described as a land battle fought (hand to hand) on floating platforms at sea, and it was especially important because it marked the end of Turkish westward expansion.

Music, being such an important part of our life here in Wales, I am sure that many will enjoy the following poem about the battle. It was written by G K Chesterton and is one of the most lyrical in our literature It was inspired by the military deeds of the Christian forces under the command of Don John of Austria.



White founts falling in the courts of the sun,
And the Soldan of Byzantium is smiling as they run;
There is laughter like the fountains in that face of all men feared,
It stirs the forest darkness, the darkness of his beard,
It curls the blood-red crescent, the crescent of his lips,
For the inmost sea of all the earth is shaken with his ships.
They have dared the white republics up the capes of Italy,
They have dashed the Adriatic round the Lion of the Sea,
And the Pope has cast his arms abroad for agony and loss,
And called the kings of Christendom for swords about the Cross,
The cold queen of England is looking in the glass;
The shadow of the Valois is yawning at the Mass;
From evening isles fantastical rings faint the Spanish gun,
And the Lord upon the Golden Horn is laughing in the sun.

Dim drums throbbing, in the hills half heard,
Where only on a nameless throne a crownless prince has stirred,
Where, risen from a doubtful seat and half attained stall,
The last knight of Europe takes weapons from the wall,
The last and lingering troubadour to whom the bird has sung,
That once went singing southward when all the world was young,
In that enormous silence, tiny and unafraid,
Comes up along a winding road the noise of the Crusade.
Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far,
Don John of Austria is going to the war,
Stiff flags straining in the night-blasts cold
In the gloom black-purple, in the glint old-gold,
Torchtlight crimson on the copper kettle-drums,
Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the cannon, and he comes.
Don John laughing in the brave beard curled,
Spurning of his stirrups like the thrones of all the world,
Holding his head up for a flag of all the free.
Love-light of Spain—hurrah!
Death-light of Africa!
Don John of Austria
Is riding to the sea.



Mahound is in his paradise above the evening star,
(Don John of Austria is going to the war.)
 He moves a mighty turban on the timeless houri's knees,
 His turban that is woven of the sunset and the seas.
 He shakes the peacock gardens as he rises from his ease,
 And he strides among the tree-tops and is taller than the trees,
 And his voice through all the garden is a thunder sent to bring
 Black Azrael and Ariel and Ammon on the wing.
 Giants and the Genii,
 Multiplex of wing and eye,
 Whose strong obedience broke the sky
 When Solomon was king.

They rush in red and purple from the red clouds of the morn,
 From temples where the yellow gods shut up their eyes in scorn;
 They rise in green robes roaring from the green hells of the sea
 Where fallen skies and evil hues and eyeless creatures be;
 On them the sea-valves cluster and the grey sea-forests curl,
 Splashed with a splendid sickness, the sickness of the pearl;
 They swell in sapphire smoke out of the blue cracks of the ground,
 They gather and they wonder and give worship to Mahound.
 And he saith, "Break up the mountains where the hermit-folk can hide,
 And sift the red and silver sands lest bone of saint abide,
 And chase the Giaours flying night and day, not giving rest,
 For that which was our trouble comes again out of the west.
 We have set the seal of Solomon on all things under sun,
 Of knowledge and of sorrow and endurance of things done,
 But a noise is in the mountains, in the mountains, and I know
 The voice that shook our palaces—four hundred years ago:
 It is he that saith not 'Kismet'; it is he that knows not Fate ;
 It is Richard, it is Raymond, it is Godfrey in the gate!
 It is he whose loss is laughter when he counts the wager worth,
 Put down your feet upon him, that our peace be on the earth."
 For he heard drums groaning and he heard guns jar,
(Don John of Austria is going to the war.)
 Sudden and still—hurrah!
 Bolt from Iberia!
 Don John of Austria
 Is gone by Alcalar.

St. Michael's on his mountain in the sea-
 roads of the north
(Don John of Austria is girt and going forth.)
 Where the grey seas glitter and the sharp
 tides shift

And the sea folk labour and the red sails lift.
 He shakes his lance of iron and he claps his wings of stone;
 The noise is gone through Normandy; the noise is gone alone;
 The North is full of tangled things and texts and aching eyes
 And dead is all the innocence of anger and surprise,
 And Christian killeth Christian in a narrow dusty room,
 And Christian dreadeth Christ that hath a newer face of doom,
 And Christian hateth Mary that God kissed in Galilee,
 But Don John of Austria is riding to the sea.
 Don John calling through the blast and the eclipse
 Crying with the trumpet, with the trumpet of his lips,
 Trumpet that sayeth ha!
Domino gloria!



King Philip's in his closet with the Fleece about his neck

(Don John of Austria is armed upon the deck.)

The walls are hung with velvet that is black and soft as sin,
And little dwarfs creep out of it and little dwarfs creep in.
He holds a crystal phial that has colours like the moon,
He touches, and it tingles, and he trembles very soon,
And his face is as a fungus of a leprous white and grey
Like plants in the high houses that are shuttered from the day,
And death is in the phial, and the end of noble work,
But Don John of Austria has fired upon the Turk.
Don John's hunting, and his hounds have bayed—
Booms away past Italy the rumour of his raid
Gun upon gun, ha! ha!
Gun upon gun, hurrah!
Don John of Austria
Has loosed the cannonade.



The Pope was in his chapel before day or battle broke,

(Don John of Austria is hidden in the smoke.)

The hidden room in man's house where God sits all the year,
The secret window whence the world looks small and very dear.
He sees as in a mirror on the monstrous twilight sea
The crescent of his cruel ships whose name is mystery;
They fling great shadows foe-wards, making Cross and Castle
dark,

They veil the plumèd lions on the galleys of St. Mark;
And above the ships are palaces of brown, black-bearded chiefs,
And below the ships are prisons, where with multitudinous griefs,
Christian captives sick and sunless, all a labouring race repines
Like a race in sunken cities, like a nation in the mines.
They are lost like slaves that sweat, and in the skies of morning
hung



The stair-ways of the tallest gods when tyranny was young.

They are countless, voiceless, hopeless as those fallen or fleeing on
Before the high Kings' horses in the granite of Babylon.

And many a one grows witless in his quiet room in hell
Where a yellow face looks inward through the lattice of his cell,
And he finds his God forgotten, and he seeks no more a sign—

(But Don John of Austria has burst the battle-line!)

Don John pounding from the slaughter-painted poop,
Purpling all the ocean like a bloody pirate's sloop,
Scarlet running over on the silvers and the golds,
Breaking of the hatches up and bursting of the holds,
Thronging of the thousands up that labour under sea
White for bliss and blind for sun and stunned for liberty.

Vivat Hispania!

Domino Gloria!

Don John of Austria

Has set his people free!



Cervantes on his galley sets the sword back in the sheath

(Don John of Austria rides homeward with a wreath.)

And he sees across a weary land a straggling road in Spain,
Up which a lean and foolish knight forever rides in vain,
And he smiles, but not as Sultans smile, and settles back the blade....
(But Don John of Austria rides home from the Crusade.)

Page One Quiz Answers:

1. 1099;

2. Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798;

3. Monmouth & South Wales; Cheshire and North Wales