



A little Knight Templar news does you good Staying in touch



Dear Brother Knights

Traditionally, the middle of July marks the end of the Masonic season – the point at which family holidays and travel replace our Meetings and most Masonic activities. It is also my cue to “park” the newsletter for the next six weeks and to let you enjoy some peace from me and hopefully some warm sunny weather.

Barring the unexpected (and my goodness haven't we had a lot of that this year) I shall be back at the start of September with the newsletter and we can take stock of where we are then. In the meantime, please keep sending me articles, ideas and contributions for *A Beauceant* so that we have plenty of material for future editions. Especially appreciated would be photos etc of anything Templar or Hospitaller that you come across on your summer travels.

Today's edition contains some thoughts from RE Kt Dr Vivian Thomas, a further very good suggestion from VE Kt Naunton Liles for combating boredom and a link to an online Templar Quiz . Finally, I hope that you have enjoyed these newsletters over the past four months – please let me know what you think about them and if you want them to continue in this format. Write to me at provprior@kt-msw.org
Yours in the Bonds of the Order
R.E.Kt. Dr Paul Calderwood



Good news:
E Kt Keri Evans is recovering well after hip surgery

Last week we published three Quiz questions posed by E Kt Derek Hemfrey.



In total he supplied five – so here are the last two - plus a hyperlink from him which will take you to an online Templar Quiz.

1. Where was the Swift due to visit in June 2020 if meetings had continued?
2. Who led the Christian forces against Moslems in 1571 at one of the largest naval battles in history involving 400 vessels?

For the answers please see the last page.

For the online quiz go to <https://www.funtrivia.com/trivia-quiz/History/The-Knights-Templar-298520.html>

The Way of the Knight

Reflections by RE Kt Dr Vivian Thomas

Those who may recall the contents of my last article will remember that I made mention of those artefacts held in reverence by the Knights: supposed slivers of the True Cross, the veneration of John the Baptist etc.

One can readily understand the confusion that arose in a Brother Knight's mind once he had arrived in Outremer. Leaving his home, usually France, England, Italy or Spain - all firm adherents of the Church of Rome - there was never any question in their minds about their form of worship.

In and around the Holy Land, however, they were undoubtedly exposed to a multitude of other faiths and religious groups or beliefs. It was inevitable, of course, that they encountered the Muslim world, particularly members of the Nizari Ismaili Sect, who arose in Persia and Syria, from 1090 and existed until they were effectively destroyed by the Mongols in 1275.

At some stage, the name given to them was the Hashishi, or, more familiar to us, the Assassins. They were devout, holy warriors, who would choose death over retreat - a trait so familiar to us in the Templar Knights. The Assassins' creed was that they would kill, usually by stealth and with their chosen weapon the dagger, anyone seen to be their enemy.

This could include Muslim leaders opposed to their own sect and aspirations and it was recognised that at some stages, collaboration between Assassins and Crusaders occurred. It is even on record that they paid a formal monetary tribute to the Templars. Although they were on opposing sides, it is interesting to read of their similarities in their approach to battle. Neither made welcome enemies!!

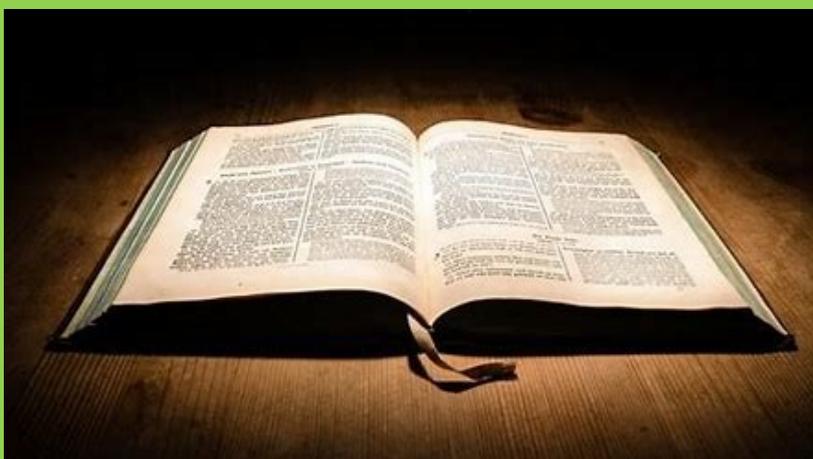
On safer ground, the Knights held in veneration a great number of Saints, including a chap called St George, who, I believe, has something to do with England?

But, what I was aiming at in this article was to stimulate your interest towards another important person who was held in the greatest esteem by the Templars and that was Mary Magdalene, whose feast day is celebrated on 22nd July.

I would not presume, at this stage to expand on any theological discourse, despite the huge amount of literature that exists on this subject. However, Bernard of Clairvaux, who, as you will recall, was responsible for the major revision of the Templar Rule, commended this veneration.

Leap forward, Brother Knights, to the fall of the Cathar stronghold at Montsegur and then on a few centuries to the nearby very poor hamlet of Rennes-le-Chateau, where we find the as yet unsolved mystery of the life and death and the sudden wealth of the priest Berenger Sauniere, the Magdala Tower and we are still left with a multitude of unanswered questions. It is not all fiction, Brother Knights !!!





The Troubled History of the Freemasons' Oath ***an article by VE Kt Naunton Liles***

If you were initiated before 1987 you would have taken an oath which included a physical penalty, as Freemasons have done from time immemorial. We had been doing this for decades, and indeed it continued until 1987. At that time, the physical penalty was dropped in an effort to overcome much public misunderstanding about Freemasonry, but the oath had also run into trouble much earlier in 1799.

The Unlawful Societies Act became law and required Lodge secretaries to send a list of members annually to the Magistrates sitting in Quarter Sessions. This 1799 Act of Parliament was not aimed at Freemasonry but arose from concerns of restricting the activities of radical secret societies like the London Corresponding Society, United Irishmen, United Englishmen, United Britons and United Scots. All these were proscribed by the Act as they demanded an oath from their members, some of which were seditious.

However, before the legislation was passed, the leaders of Freemasonry lobbied the Prime Minister of the day, William Pitt the Younger, and they were successful in securing an exemption. Thus when the Act of 1799 was passed it specifically stated that Freemasons could continue to impose an oath of secrecy upon candidates who wanted to join.

However this concession came at a price - and one that proved in the end to be a great blessing for us today as researchers - because the condition for being allowed to continue imposing an oath of secrecy was that every lodge secretary was obliged by law to send a return (containing full details of members) to the Clerk of the Peace at the Quarter Sessions every year. These annual returns not only provided a list of lodge members but also their addresses and their occupations and it stated where and when each lodge met."

Much research has been carried out by Professor Andrew Prescott who also pointed out that Freemasonry in other countries had strayed from the high ideals of our Grand Lodges, so this set in motion the requirement, of which we are still reminded today, that we must not visit lodges abroad without checking with the Grand Secretary that they accord with our standards.

Nowadays, everyone expects to click on the internet and find the answer to their question within moments. You could certainly find the list of Lodges and the dates of their meetings, but you could not drill down into the membership lists as these had been handwritten - handwritten often in handsome copperplate writing. But this needed to be digitized so that a computer could hunt every name rapidly.

Quatuor Coronati is the world's premier Masonic research lodge. The secretary to their Editorial Committee Dr. Paul Calderwood is coordinating a team who are carrying out the huge task of the digitising early Lodge records. It is quite interesting work because it shows the progress of lodges.

Surprisingly the membership was as varied then as it is today, with wealthy ship owners sitting alongside merchants, shopkeepers, solicitors and artisans. The growth and demise of a lodge can be traced from the annual returns. In South Wales we have lodges that grew from 38 members to 70 in three years.

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Lodges were very big with memberships of over 200 until the 1950s when Lord Swansea pursued a policy of encouraging smaller lodges, so that most brethren could set their sight on getting to the Chair - which was very unlikely if you were one among 200 other members.

Finally, you may know that some early lodges like Glamorgan Lodge No:36 in Cardiff have had their numbers changed. This arose from a ruling that in that period only those in existence before 12 July 1799 were protected by the act of parliament. So it is thought Grand Lodge reissued several numbers to employ protected numbers.

UGLE records of lodge memberships are a valuable source of interesting historical research and we should be grateful that the 1799 Act of Parliament demanded accurate records of membership. In 2020 it is possible to find detailed records of our history, and the wealth of information is growing as the copperplate handwriting of our forefathers is being transcribed into a computer readable form. It is something that can be done at home. If you want to get involved, send an e-mail to paulcalderwood@btinternet.com.

So, did *you* swear an oath that included a physical penalty? Or was your initiation more recent when candidates were told that such a penalty was no longer necessary '*as the Obligation you have taken is binding for you as long as you live*'.

A Closing Thought

As we close this edition of *A Beauceant*, for the summer months it is good to bring to mind the passage from the Gospel of St Matthew (ch18 v20):

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them”

It is referred to in the prayer that is used at the opening of our Preceptory meetings:

**Merciful Redeemer of perishing mankind,
Who has promised that Thou wouldst be
in the midst of those assembled in Thy Holy Name,
look down upon us, thy humble servants,
with an eye of tender compassion,
and so direct us that our labours may be
begun, continued and ended in love to Thee,
affection to our Companions,
protection to the distressed,
and obedience to our Order. Amen**

Answers to the Quiz on the front page:

- 1. Sant Madoc Preceptory**
- 2. Don John of Austria**

No one guessed correctly the answer to the following question:
“When did the annual meeting of the Province move to Bridgend?” The answer was 1994.