

3 February 2022

A BEAUCEANT!!

NO 36



A little Knight Templar news does you good

Dear Brother Knights

Staying in touch

At the end of January, the lifting of more restrictions to counter Covid in Wales was a clear sign of progress and something that was widely welcomed.

Inevitably, it came at the end of a month which saw very little Knight Templar activity within our province. The only Preceptory that was able to meet was Castell Nedd at Neath—which nonetheless proved to be a very hearty occasion. The Acting Registrar, E Kt Alun H Thomas wrote to me afterwards:

There were 16 attendees, 13 members and 3 visitors (E Kts Tony Jones, Julian Pye and Stephen Howlett). Our Eminent Preceptor, E Kt Steve Avo, conducted the Installation ceremony up to and including the obligation, and then invited E Kt Peter Gilbert to conduct the Inner Workings, in both KT and Malta. The main thing to report is that everyone had an enjoyable time, - most importantly, the newly installed Eminent Preceptor E. Kt David Lyn Matthews. I also reported that we have a candidate."



What good news! And February has got off to a similarly good start, as reflected in the following report received from R E Kt Dr Vivian Thomas with regard to a meeting of Sant Madoc Preceptory at Porthcawl:

"15 attended, including two visitors from Castell Nedd. E Kt Michael John conducted the KT Installation of E Kt Alan Hulbert, while R E Kt Gordon France did the Malta Installation. As you might expect, both did an excellent job. Despite the numbers, our caterers prepared a meal for us, with a belated Burns starter of Haggis (which, of course, was caught locally!!) Inevitably, a large number of officers were absent but we did manage to complete all that was necessary and it was pleasing to hear the announcement that there are two candidates eagerly awaiting admission, having already obtained their regalia."

No doubt more good news will follow from other parts of the province as we gradually re-establish old patterns. As I have said before, at all the meetings which have been held since September, the joy and enthusiasm of the members present was resounding. Similarly, respect and affection was also expressed for all those members who were not able to be present and for whom the time was not yet right for a return.

During January a meeting of Provincial Priors was held (mainly via Zoom) and it was attended by more than 40 people from many countries. On that occasion, The Great Vice Chancellor, R E Kt Ryan Williams, delivered a very informative talk - which is summarised in this edition of *A Beauceant* together with some reflective words from The Great Prelate, R E Kt Revd Malcolm Lane.

Yours in the Bonds of the Order,
R E Kt Paul Calderwood

The past year and looking ahead



***A report by The Great Vice Chancellor,
R.E.Kt. Ryan Williams***

Last year the Orders administered from Mark Masons' Hall, like our sister Orders elsewhere (Craft, Royal Arch and Ancient & Accepted Rite in particular), faced considerable challenges in maintaining contact with our members, retaining their interest and, when a resumption of meetings was possible, to mobilise them back to face to face gatherings.

Double digit losses seemed almost inevitable as lockdown or partial lockdown continued in the home nations and overseas during 2021 so it is pleasing to see that at the end of last year the total headcount had reduced by 3,844 or 4.5%. Losses of any magnitude are unwelcome but, in the circumstances, a reduction of this amount, given the prevailing situation is entirely acceptable.

Memberships reduced by 4,033 which equates to a 3.57% reduction year on year and the single biggest cause of losses during the year was resignations which accounted for around 60% of the total reduction.

The average number of memberships held by a Brother choosing to resign was just one, suggesting that it was the less committed who left, leaving the core of those with multiple memberships still on the roll.

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

Headcount - for the year ended 31 December 2021, the Order fared a little better than the majority of those administered from Mark Masons' Hall with the number of members (headcount) reducing by 370 equivalent to 4.22% and the fourth lowest fall of the 10 Orders. Given the age profile of KT, such a reduction is perhaps surprising but nevertheless welcome and is testament, I am sure, to the sterling efforts of Provincial Priors to maintain contact and engage actively with Brother Knights under their charge.

Membership - some 562 memberships were lost during the last year which equates to 3.75% and places the Order fifth in the league of lowest losses. The average number of memberships held by a Brother Knight leaving the Order last year was 1.5 which is slightly higher than the average but suggests that it is the less committed members in terms of multiple memberships that have left.

WELLS CATHEDRAL SERVICE

The intervention of Covid-19 last year forced the postponement of the planned Cathedral Service at Wells on 11 September. I am pleased to say that with the considerable assistance of the Provincial Prior for Somerset, we have been able to secure a new date for the service which will now take place on Saturday, 24 September 2022.

Precise details are yet to be worked out but I expect to be able to share further information with Brother Knights following a call with the Cathedral authorities early in February.

It is also hoped that the Provincial Priory of Somerset will move its meeting to Monday, 26 September 2022 to enable Brother Knights to make the most of the weekend by remaining in the Province and supporting the annual meeting.

EYE TO EYE 2021 APPEAL

The suspension of face to face meetings during 2021 due to Covid-19 undoubtedly impacted on the success of this appeal yet Brother Knights from across the Order have, once again, made a tremendous effort to generate additional funds for the Eye Hospital.

The total raised so far is £75,941 plus gift aid monies to be determined and although the formal appeal has now closed, lapel pins remain available to Brother Knights to purchase and further add to the total already raised.

EYE HOSPITAL UPDATE

By the end of December, the Hospital treated more than 135,000 patients compared with 107,000 in the previous year. Around a third of those treated as outpatients were children.

A 7% rise in eye surgery was achieved with over 6,100 patients benefitting from this life changing treatment.

Paediatric services, which will be of particular interest to Brother Knights now that the £100,000 annual grant from the Benevolent Fund has been re-directed from the Mobile Outreach Programme, achieved a new hospital record in 2021 with more than 850 patients treated. Three plaques are being produced to be sited in the refractive surgery department, children's ward and paediatric department which have all received generous funding from the Order.

This month marks the end of a three-year agreement to provide an annual grant of £100,000 to the Eye Hospital for the benefit of paediatrics. Further discussions will take place in the coming months about future funding requirements before any decision is made about continuing such support which is over and above the considerable direct giving from members.

During the pandemic I have been constantly impressed by the efforts of our leaders at all levels in the Orders to try to mobilise brethren back to meetings and/or remain engaged via virtual gatherings. The resilience of our members and the desire to stay involved even when face to face meetings have not been possible is admirable as is the commitment to supporting the work of our Benevolent Funds despite a prevailing climate of financial hardship.

This year, more than any other, must be the year of optimism. A year when we can build on the lessons we have learned during the pandemic. A year when we must think outside the box and show our members that we really are progressive. Your support for such initiatives is crucial and I look forward to working with you to deliver these for the benefit of our members.

*R.E.Kt. Ryan A Williams, K.C.T.
Great Vice-Chancellor*

Templar Reflections

by The Great Prelate

The Feast of the Epiphany arrived on the 6th January once again and so what of this story for us as Knight Templars?

Embarking on a journey of discovery, like the Magi, is what we are all about as Christians and especially as Knight Templars.

We are a pilgrim people, we have set off to follow Christ and learn more about God as we journey. For many this idea is an unsettling and uncomfortable idea, a journey in which we do not know the landmarks; where we will have to keep trusting the voice inside that urges us not to turn back or stop.

It is far more preferable for some to have a voice of certainty with all the answers, a voice which has a hotline to God and can speak all the truth all of the time. Sadly such voices are usually common and should not be listened to, no matter how comforting they appear to be.

There will be questions for all of us and we will change direction and move in different ways, this is all a part of the pilgrimage and shows that we are capable of growth towards maturity.

It is a frightening thing to place one foot in front of another and trust that we will find the way, yet we walk that path with the hand of God.

What the Magi saw was hardly impressive; a poor family in a nondescript village and an infant. However, the Magi had been led by the light of the star. Was it really a huge star in the heavens like the Christmas show, or a small brightness of Jupiter or even as some Christians believe, an interior light that kept them looking and then shone brightly for them revealing the truth at the end of their quest? We will never know, but what we feel is that God was present among the obscure; hidden in an out-of-the-way place.



Today we as Templars like the Magi, ask God to stir up a hunger in us. For the courage to let go of the comfortable and familiar and request the energy to once again go looking for God.

To be open to finding the holy in unfamiliar and "unholy" places. May we also have a sense of wonder and awe, the spirit of a searcher, one willing to look up and follow a star beyond familiar borders.

May we all recognise the revelation of God despite all appearances to the contrary. Amen