

# Provincial Priory of London

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**NIGHTLY**



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**TOPICS**

Issue 4

Autumn 2002

## Editorial

Welcome to this issue of your Provincial Newsletter. Why not write to me with news of your Preceptory to include in the Spring issue?

### *Dates for your diary are:*

Prov Priory 30 Sep 2002  
Great Priory of Malta 19 Nov 2002  
Londinium Prec 18 Dec 2002  
Prov Carol Service 19 Dec 2002  
Prov Priory of Malta 29 Jan 2003

Don't forget, if you have an item of interest write to me by January 15<sup>th</sup> for inclusion in the Spring issue and June 14<sup>th</sup> for the Autumn issue.

George Hodge

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## Miscellanea Golgotha

(Pronounced *without* emphasis on the second syllable)

The place outside Jerusalem where Christ was crucified. The word is Aramaic and means 'skull'. It may have been a place of execution where bodies were picked clean by animals or so named because the configuration of the ground resembled a skull.

There is no biblical evidence for supposing that it was a hillock.

Calvaria is the Greek and Latin equivalent of Golgotha.

*Editor*

## Great Honours - London Knights

### Continuing in Office

Rt Em Kt John Martin Tuckey Great Marshal  
Em Kt Richard Wilson Lambert Great Organist

### Appointed to Active Office

Em Kt Fred Rhoden Dixon Deputy Great Marshal (From Northampton, Huntingdon & Bedford Province)  
Em Kt John Knox Great Aide-de-Camp (From Middlesex Province)  
Em Kt Bernard Lax Great Captain of Guards

### Promoted in Great Rank

V Em Kt Roland Bedford Past Great Registrar  
Em Kt Edward Clarke Past Great Standard Bearer (B)

### New Appointments

Em Kt David Ashbolt Past Great Aide-de-Camp  
Em Kt Leslie Fox Past Great Aide-de-Camp  
Em Kt George Smith Past Great Aide-de-Camp  
Em Kt Jim Wellard Past Great Warden of Regalia  
Em Kt Paul Butler Past Great Chamberlain

## Newsflash

### *London re-establishes an old Preceptory*

Coromandel Preceptory No 73 was consecrated in India in 1828 and thrived until 1989 when only 5 members remained. Originally called "Encampment of St John of Jerusalem" it changed its name in about 1916. The Most Eminent & Supreme Grand Master has decided that it shall be re-established in England in the Province of London and membership will be by invitation of the Provincial Prior only. The Warrant of Confirmation will be presented at a meeting to be held on Friday 12 July at which the Grand Master will be present. The centenary warrant is the only warrant in existence and this was brought back to England by E Kt Rev Desmond Payne-Jeremiah who will be appointed the first Eminent Preceptor. More details will be published in a future issue of Knightly Topics when the Preceptory is established.

*Editor*

## ***The Medieval Knights Templar in the British Isles***

***Kt John Barden, a freelance archaeologist, is writing a history of medieval Knights Templar. This feature is the first of a number he has agreed to write for Knightly Topics. He is a member of Britannic Preceptory of Madeira No 282***

Confining myself to the medieval Order, I have covered its general history from inception to final demise (in 1312 AD), as well as having produced a fairly comprehensive history of the Order's presence in the UK. I am now in the process of conducting my archaeological research, which will result in a county-by-county coverage of the Knights Templar sites in England, Scotland and Wales. I will also cover the demise of the Order, and its aftermath, perhaps linking it briefly to modern times; as the book is academic in its approach to the subject, I will avoid all the recently published speculation about the Order, unless I can substantiate it, and will develop my own informed hypotheses based upon fact and *not* sensationalism.

Already, I have reached some interesting conclusions, and I would take this opportunity to share some of them with you. Firstly, it is now clear that the Templars – each of whom was a mix of monk and professional warrior - were amongst the great landowners in medieval England; they held some property in Wales, more in Scotland and Ireland and a great deal in England. All the UK holdings were under the control of New Temple in London, under the management of the Master, who was directly answerable to the Grand Master in the Holy Land. The Order was not under the direct control of any sovereign, answering directly to the pope, although it held lands in many European countries, including modern France, Spain and Italy.

The Templars in the UK lived in obedience to their own form of monastic rule and were closeted as monks, in centres known as “preceptories”, of which there were about thirty-eight; these preceptories were, to all intents and purposes, estate or administrative centres, of

which one was normally chief in any one county, examples of this being Temple Bruer in Lincolnshire, Temple Ewell in Kent, Temple Guiting in Gloucestershire and Denny in Cambridgeshire. The surprising fact is that very few Templars were actually located in these preceptories; very often, there was one brother who was the “preceptor” and another to assist, meaning that only about two hundred Templars were only ever present in this country at any one time. Of the thirty-eight or so preceptors mentioned in 1308-1312, only eleven were knights, which gives the clue that most of the preceptors, although brothers in the Order, were most probably specially chosen for their administrative skills or ability. The whole aim of the preceptories, with their various land holdings, was to raise the necessary wherewithal to fund or support the Order's activities in the Holy Land, where most of the militarily active members of the Order were located. Accordingly, each preceptory was very much a “business centre”, as opposed to simulating a monastery, with much of the property held by the Order being rented out, and where held by the Templars themselves, was farmed or otherwise used to raise produce for subsequent sale, with some being held back for domestic consumption by the Templars and their staff and servants.

Unlike their monastic counterparts, the Templars lived simply, in buildings that were built or adapted specifically for their purpose; compared to the monasteries, these buildings were not at all ostentatious - with the possible exception of New Temple – but were simple, largely unadorned, were not claustal in their layout and did not have large churches. Rather, they were multi-functional, the main structure often being a combination of hall, dormitory, refectory and perhaps “main office”, with a kitchen/buttery/pantry and a chapel nearby, with other functional buildings – such as barns, granaries,

stables etc. – being part of the complex. Again, unlike their monastic counterparts, no two preceptory ranges were identical!

The UK Templars were obviously nomadic; although they actually lived in their preceptories, they had many other – and sometimes dispersed – properties and lands to manage, and “business concerns” to manage and administer. These included flour and wool mills, the production of wool itself, agricultural estates and even fisheries. They were, after all, an equestrian Order, so were probably widely travelled, visiting other preceptories and travelling to – and in some cases running – markets and fairs. It is safe to say that the average Templar was far more travelled than his monastic equal, far more obvious to the general populace and played far more of the trader/businessman role than any monk!

It has often been said that they were illiterate; I no longer share this view, as it is evident that they had to communicate frequently, kept many records including financial and property accounts and acted as royal agents on many occasions; they also became bankers, almoners and were experienced navigators and sailors. Thus the epithet of the illiterate and unschooled Templar no longer fits, although it is possible that many of the rank and file, especially upon recruitment, were illiterate and indeed, may have remained so. In short, the Templars were an exceptionally skilled and able group of men, whose impact upon the medieval scene should not be underestimated.

Many sites in this country are still readily identifiable as Templar properties by the prefix or suffix of “Temple” e.g. Temple Meads in Bristol, Templecombe in Somerset, Temple Ewell in Kent, just to mention a few. All being well, I should be able to identify many of the lesser known sites associated with the Order, and which may prove to be of interest to you all in due course.

***John Barden***

## **THE BRITANNIC OF MADEIRA MASONIC GROUP**

The Britannic Preceptory of Madeira No 282 is one of a group of Masonic units bearing similar names and stemming from the Britannic Lodge of Madeira, which had its origins in Madeira in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Royal Arch Chapter and the Mark Lodge also had their origins in Madeira but the other units were consecrated in London.

In 1937 the Group formed The Britannic of Madeira Association, which survived until the 1950s when regrettably it withered on the vine. In 1999 V E Kt Barry Clarke decided to resurrect meet-

ings between the units and on 29<sup>th</sup> July of that year gathered together the 'Secretaries' and Treasurers both past and present of the Masonic Group. He called it the Britannic of Madeira Mess. His idea is to meet for lunch annually at Mark Masons' Hall to get to know one another to promote fellowship and to invite each other to meetings. This has been happening since the first meeting

### **Provincial Regalia Shop**

Bro Knights don't forget that your new Regalia Shop will not only provide you with cheaper regalia but also add a few quid to the Provincial funds to provide the Province with extra facilities such as this copy of Knightly Topics you are reading.

I can supply you with Provincial ties, new regalia, a mantle badge swap service, and a mantle badge alteration service. And I am also operating a used regalia information service.

### **New regalia**

When you are offered a new Provincial Rank you will receive with that offer a letter from me explaining how your new regalia can be purchased and/or your mantle badge exchanged or altered. If you want any other kind of new regalia either KT or KM just write to me with your requirements.

### **Used regalia service**

If you have regalia you wish to dispose of, just write or phone me giving me details. Itemise them so that I can keep an accurate record to pass on to prospective buyers.

If you are looking for second hand regalia for a candidate then please phone me and I will give you the name and telephone number of a knight who has one for sale. The seller will be expected to make a contribution to Provincial funds through me.

See the editorial column for my telephone and address details.

George Hodge, Provincial Warden of Regalia.