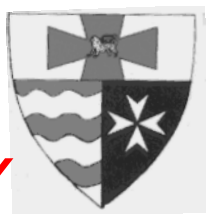


# Provincial Priory of London

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OPICS

Issue 6

Autumn 2003

## Editorial

Welcome Bro Knights to Issue 6 of Knightly Topics, which includes some interesting items from the Province. For example the re-establishment of Coromandel Preceptory into the Province of London from its origins in India and the first task it carried out for the Province, installing 18 Knights from France. V E Kt David Williams' interesting oration on the origins and use of banners begins in this issue with Part 2 following next time.

Most of the articles published so far have been the work of senior members of the Province (for which I am very grateful) but don't forget that Knightly Topics is intended for everyone so please, let's hear about your Preceptory history, customs and events in letters or features with photographs if possible. 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.

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## The Connaught Army & Navy Group

The Connaught Preceptory No 172 was consecrated in 1901 "for the convenience of Officers of His Majesty's Service stationed or visiting Aldershot", the monarch then being King Edward VII. The Preceptory met at Aldershot for many years. This was the first unit in the Masonic Group. Subsequently the Connaught Army and Navy Rose Croix Chapter No 185 was consecrated in 1914, the Connaught Army and Navy Lodge No 4323 in 1921, the Mark Lodge No 748 also in 1921, RA Chapter in 1923 and Ark Mariners in 1924.

The close bonds between these units is reflected in the fact that a number of Masons became members of all six units – 'sixers' and some even attained the chair in all of them to earn the term 'double sixers'.

The Units in the group were named Connaught after Field Marshal HRH The Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, KG etc. He was installed as Grand Master of English Craft in 1901 and was appointed

Preceptor of the Preceptory for the years 1903 to 1942 necessitating the appointment of a Pro Preceptor in each of those years to conduct the business of the Preceptory.

A glance through the list of Preceptors indicates a number of well known names. In 1958 Lt Col Atkinson, later Major General Sir Leonard Atkinson, who became the Director of the Corps of REME; 1959 Brig Geoffrey Galloway, late RE who was a member of the Preceptory for 61 years. He was Gt Marshall for 17 years and was made KCT and then GCT. In 1977 Capt Ted Jones, late REME; 1985 Commander M B S Higham, RN; 1986 Capt Dick Fogwill, RN, currently Commander of the Provincial Bodyguard and in 1972 Major Frederick H Smyth a well known Masonic Scholar and author of the history of the Preceptory from which this information has been derived. The history is fascinating and as room is limited in this publication the Preceptory may be contacted for further information.



## Miscellanea

### Friday the 13th - an unlucky day?

Why is Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> considered unlucky? Many historians believe that it stems from King Phillippe LeBel's order to arrest all Knights Templar in France on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October 1307. Around 2000 Knights Templar were killed at that time and Friday 13<sup>th</sup> was then declared to be an evil day.

*Editor*

# Coromandel Preceptory No 73 - Its Origins and the French Knights

On Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2002 Coromandel Preceptory No 73 was re-established as a Preceptory in the Province of London in the presence of the Most Eminent and Supreme Grand Master (M.E.&S.G.M). The Rt E Provincial Prior entered the temple at 10 Duke's Street, appointed his Officers and opened the Preceptory. The M.E.&S.G.M entered in procession, assumed the chair, and addressed the gathered Knights on the purpose of the meeting.

He began by saying what a rare and remarkable occasion this was and what a significant day of the month the 12<sup>th</sup> is to the Preceptory, from establishment and confirmation of establishment to change of name, Centenary and now reponement today 12 July 2002. He commented on the lively chequered existence it has had and that the meaning of Coromandel work is lacquer work in which an incised design is filled with gold. This led him to hope that the Preceptory will continue the work and service to the Order which it has exhibited throughout its 174 years, to make a positive contribution to the R E Prior and the Province of London, and to inlay that work with the gold of love, honour and affection, commitments of our beloved Order, along with our precepts which are incised on our hearts. After the Warrant of Confirmation was read the M.E.&S.G.M presented it to the Rt E Provincial Prior who had resumed the chair. The Rt E Provincial Prior then declared the 34 members elected and installed the Eminent Preceptor Elect into the chair.

The E Preceptor then appointed and installed his officers, conducted the busi-

ness of the Preceptory and then closed it. The Preceptory will meet on the second Friday in July and the third Thursday in December with the installation of the Preceptor taking place at the December meeting.

## French Knights

In January 2003 the Preceptory convened an extraordinary meeting to act as agents for Great Priory to install 18 candidates from France so that they could form a regular authority near Paris. One with a good command of English was chosen as representative candidate and our Preceptor duly installed the candidates as Knights. The Provincial Prior gave the Accolade, Trevor Dutt the charge and Tim Stock the symbols. Everyone involved in the ceremony performed splendidly to produce a meaningful and moving experience.

Later, at the festive board Jack Dribbell gave a welcoming address in French in which he described the origins of the ceremony in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the German nobleman, Baron von Hund, collated seven groups of degrees in the Rite of Strict Observance at Unwerde. He went on to say that the continental origin of our ceremonies is demonstrated by the fact that the first examples in the Anglo-Saxon world were to be found in seaports – Portsmouth, Bristol, Boston (Mass) and Nova Scotia (Canada). He then described the sequence of events during the ceremony ending with – “Dear Bro Knights; all Masonry is a search. The long search of our Order ends – or, more exactly, pauses, at the summit of Mount Calvary.

The senior French Knight replied inviting members of Coromandel Preceptory to their consecration ceremonies in Paris.

It is believed that Coromandel Preceptory No 73 was consecrated in India in 1828 and worked for about 30 years by dispensation until around 1860 when a permanent warrant was issued. In those early days it was called the Encampment of St John of Jerusalem and changed the name

to Coromandel around 1916. The Preceptory thrived until the early 1980s with about 45 members but then declined until in 1982/83 it could no longer function effectively. Attempts to revive it, notably in 1986, failed and in 1989 the final meeting was held with only 5 subscribing members remaining.

The word Coromandel refers to the coastline area from just north of Madras southwards to the southernmost boundary of Tamil Nadu. The beach at Madras is the largest single expanse of beach in the world. The area has now been re-named Chennai.

The centenary warrant was the only warrant in existence and this was brought back to England by E Kt Rev Desmond Payne-Jeremiah who was appointed the first Eminent Preceptor.

The first members of the Preceptory were all invited to join by the Rt E Provincial Prior who decided to reward those who had given service to the Province.

At the lunch following the reponement meeting the Rt E Provincial Prior proposed the toast to the E Preceptor and outlined his vision for the Preceptory, to become a Preceptory of Excellence. To this end he had selected the members for their masonic experience and had included no less than three Provincial Grand Masters in their own orders, one of which is the Marshall.

The lunch was held at Mark Masons Hall and after a delicious menu accompanied by good wine the members left to wend their way home feeling very satisfied with the day's work.

*Editor*

# Banner Dedication

*The first half of an oration given by V E Kt David Williams  
on the Dedication of the King Edward VII Preceptory Banner  
during their Centenary Meeting on 29 November 2002*

**B**ro Knights, much of what I have to say will be familiar to you, for history informs us that from ancient times, tribes and communities of men have rallied round some totem, which symbolised their unity and the authority of their chiefs. An example is the Totem system found among the indigenous peoples of America and Australia, in which some object serves as an emblem of family or clan and is often regarded as a reminder of its ancestry.

If proof were needed as to the historical significance of such symbols we need look no further than the Bible, for it informs us that as long ago as 740 BC Isaiah wrote when referring to the Messiah "In that day there shall be the root of Jesse which will stand as an ensign of the people, and to it shall the Gentiles seek". We also have the tribes of Israel setting up camp around the standards of their fathers, and in the Symbolical Lecture of the Royal Arch, there is reference to the ensigns on the staves being the distinctive bearings of the twelve tribes of Israel. The Symbolical Lecture goes on to tell us that the four principal banners are those of the leading standards of the four divisions of the army of Israel. These references also imply that standards or banners can be seen as a further symbol of the unity expressed wherever a group of people is gathered together.

As we have seen, the terms Ensign, Standards and Banners were in use in Biblical times and are not the invention of western Europeans, though it is in Europe during the 12th century that we find flags being formally subdivided

according to their purpose into standards, banners, guidons, streamers and pennons, the latter were forked tailed and it may be of interest to note that when the tails were cut off, the resulting flag was square, and so became a banner. This was generally done as the result of a particular act of valour and the knight thus distinguished was known as a Knight Bannerette, the last word sometimes being corrupted into Baronet and it is claimed by some historians that James I used this supposed Order of Baronets to establish the Hereditary Order in 1611.

It is in the military that the banner was really developed, for as well as being a rallying point it also served to distinguish friend from foe, something of vital importance when most men were illiterate but could easily recognize a bold striking simple design.

It is certain that our predecessors, the Military Knights of the Crusades, would have rallied under their banners, for we are informed that the cry "A Beauceant" was a call to the Knights Templar to be aware of two things. One was that their standard of half black and half white was to be carried into warfare and they were to rally to it when summoned and to honour its presence. The other was that it was a symbol of utter dedication, a call to fight to the death if need be, rather than retreat or surrender. When the knights shouted "A Beauceant" they were saying "We commit ourselves to serve our cause to the uttermost, we will not dishonour the Order of which this banner is the symbol, we will defend each other to the

last drop of our blood." I think you will agree that it was quite a commitment.

Yet this commitment to the flag or banner is one that is repeated over and over again in our military history. I well remember as a new recruit, being very impressed by a painting hanging in the Regimental Colonel's office of Ensign Ewart defending the Regimental Colour at the battle of Alma for which he was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. Those were the days not so long ago, when standards and banners were still used as rallying points, although not in these days of modern warfare.

However, I was most surprised to see a photograph in the Daily Telegraph last week showing the Americans deploying in the Saudi desert for the Gulf War in 1990 and there were the standards and company banners very much in evidence, so their significance, at least to the American Military, would seem to be as important now as in the past. This significance is summed up in "The Noble Flag" which was written I believe towards the end of the First World War by an unknown author. The first and the last verse are sufficient to convey its sentiments:

It's only a small bit of bunting  
It's only an old coloured rag,  
Yet thousands have died for its honour  
And shed their best blood for the flag.  
You may say it's an old bit of bunting  
You may call it an old coloured rag,  
But Freedom has made it majestic  
And time has ennobled our flag.

***To be concluded in the next  
issue***

## Dates to Meet 2003

Prov Priory Mon 29 Sep  
Great Priory (Malta) Tues 18 Nov  
Prov Carol Service Wed 16 Dec  
Londinium Prec Wed 17 Dec

## 2004

Prov Priory (Malta) Wed 28 Jan

## Regalia Sale

*There are some used items of regalia left in stock:*

Sundry mantle badges – Provincial and Great Priory.

Preceptor's Mantle

Cap for a Knight (58 cms circ)

*Contact the Provincial Warden of Regalia, George Hodge, on 0118 973 0966 or email: george-hodge@lineone.net*

## Great Honours – London Knights

### Continuing in Office

E Kt Michael Edward Jump, KCT	Great Chancellor
E Kt Timothy John Lewis, GCT	Great Vice-Chancellor
Rt E Kt John Martin Tuckey, GCT	Great Marshal
E Kt John Knox	Great Aide-de-Camp
E Kt Richard Wilson Lambert	Great Organist

### Appointed to Active Office

V E Kt Edwin Goodwin	Great Registrar
E Kt William Desmond Payne-Jeremiah	Deputy Great Almoner

### Promoted in Great Rank

E Kt Brian Wareham	Past Great Registrar
E Kt David Alexander	Past Great Standard Bearer (B)
E Kt Frank Edwards	Past Great Standard Bearer (VB)

### New Appointments

E Kt Mike Fox	Past Deputy Great Sword Bearer
E Kt Derek Ivy	Past Great Aide-de-Camp
E Kt Brian Murcutt	Past Great Aide-de-Camp
E Kt Nigel Perfect	Past Great Aide-de-Camp
E Kt Donald Clapcott	Past Great Warden of Regalia
E Kt Brian Hart	Past Great Warden of Regalia
E Kt David Baker	Past Great Captain of Guards

## Miscellanea - The Seal of Great Priory

**B**ertrand de Blanquefort was the Master of the Temple in 1168 and his personal seal was double-sided, one side showing the Order's symbol of two knights on one horse and on the obverse the cupola of the dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The images on the seal reminded anyone who looked at it that the Templars defended the Holy Sepulchre and were the poor Knights of Christ.

The Master of the Temple in those days was the chief executive of the Order. He led the Brothers into battle when he

was present and represented the Order to the outside world. He was also the spiritual head of the Order.

Blanquefort was the sixth Master, the first being Hugh of Payns who ruled from 1119 to 1136. He and one other knight proposed a community of knights that would follow the rule of a religious order but devote themselves to the protection of pilgrims. The King approved Hugh's proposal and on Christmas Day 1119 he and eight other knights took vows of poverty, chastity and obedience before the Patriarch in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre - the

beginning of the Order. It is not clear whether the two knights on one horse symbolised the poor Soldiers of Christ from the beginning and Bertrand de Blanquefort used it in creating his seal or if it was his own invention. Most probably the use of the Dome on the seal is a reference to the place of the original vows made by Hugh and his knights and a symbol of the Templars' faith.

However, the current Great Priory Seal does seem to have evolved from the Blanquefort seal.

*Editor*



*Great Priory Seal*



*The double-sided seal of Bertrand de Blanquefort*