

Provincial Priory of London

*K*nighly *T*opics



Issue 16

Autumn 2008

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Well Bro Knights I have waited some time to fit in Crusader Knights written by Trevor Dutt so enjoy his excellent prose and presentation. I have nothing in reserve at the moment so please send me news from your Preceptory and other features to include in our future issues.

I am happy to receive your contribution by disk, typed or by email.

George Hodge
Ithaca, Warren Lane
Finchampstead,
Wokingham,
Berkshire, RG40 4HS
Tel: 0118 973 0966

New email address below
george.hodge@tiscali.co.uk

The Crusader Knights in the Early 14th Century

E Kt Trevor P Dutt, then Eminent Preceptor of Londinium Preceptory, delivered this address to the Preceptory on 21st December 2005. Regretfully it needs to be published in two parts, the second part will appear in the Spring 2009 edition.

Election as the Preceptor of so illustrious a Preceptory as Londinium is, of course, a very great honour. However, like many honours, this one has a sting in the tail because, before vacating the Chair, one is expected to deliver some presentation which will interest or entertain the assembled knights.

I therefore present a paper entitled "The Crusader Knight in the Early XIVth Century with particular reference to the Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem." which I hope you will find of interest.

Now, you may well ask, "Why choose the early XIVth Century?" After all, the Crusades were effectively over with the fall of Acre on 18th May, 1291.

Those of you who attended the meeting of the Preceptory eighteen months ago may recall that, after the Installation of the new Knights of Malta, the Marshal explained to them that the date on one of the banners was incorrect. Consequently, while preparing to perform the Ceremony in July this year I arranged to borrow the banners from Mark Masons' Hall which have the "correct" dates, or rather I should say, the dates as stated in the ritual. However, the exchange of emails necessary to facilitate the loan provoked a message from the Right Eminent Knight Dribbell to the effect that, whatever dates might appear on the banners, the date for the capture of Rhodes as given in the ritual – 1310 – was wrong. In support of his assertion he quoted Sir Stephen Runciman who, in volume 3 of his "History of the Crusades" wrote "At last, in the summer of 1308, a galley sent from Constantinople with reinforcements for the garrison" – that is the Greek Byzantine garrison of the City of Rhodes – "was driven by storms to Cyprus and was seized at Famagusta by a Cypriot knight, Philip le Jaune, who took it with its passengers to the besiegers. Its commander, who was a Rhodian, agreed – to save his life – to negotiate the surrender of the city; which opened its gates to the Order on 15 August."

Certainly the implication of Runciman's account is that the City of Rhodes fell to the Hospitaller Knights in August 1308 but you will notice that the year is not explicitly stated and a little digging around in bookshops and on the Internet revealed that, although it is known that the surrender of the City of Rhodes took place on 15th August, it is not known with any certainty whether this was in 1308 as Runciman believes, 1310 as our own ritual and also the official history of the Sovereign Military Order of St. John state, or indeed in 1309 as other sources allege. Even my predecessor, Eminent Knight Leigh-Quine, in the excellent paper which he presented to the Preceptory last year, evades the issue by stating that the Order was able to "*capture the island of Rhodes between 1306 and 1309.*"

The other, more general, characteristic of this period is that it was a time of great upheaval for the Crusading Knights. Firstly however, the term "Crusading Knights" itself merits some attention. Today, some 700 years later, we tend to see them all in the same light but it is clear that medieval Establishment must have regarded the various Orders very differently. On and after 13th October, 1307, large numbers of Templar Knights were arrested and tortured to extract confessions. Many were then put to death. The Order was dissolved by Papal bull on 22nd March, 1312 and was finally destroyed with the death by burning at the stake of the Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, on 18th March, 1314. On the other hand the Knights of St. John were, in comparison, favoured by the Establishment and even received a share of the Templar lands and other possessions. And what of the Teutonic Knights



E Kt Trevor Dutt

and also the smaller Orders such as the Livonian Knights, the Knights of St. Lazarus and the Knights of St. Thomas of Acon?

In order to appreciate the perspective of the XIVth Century, it is worth briefly looking back at the foundation of the Orders in the XIth and XIIth Centuries.

The Order of St. John is, without doubt, the oldest of the Orders. The name today depends on whether one is referring to the Masonic Order which is "The Ancient and Masonic Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes and Malta" or, for example, the Catholic institution which is the "Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of

Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta" but the important point is that both titles begin by referring to the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem.

The first hospital or hostel, the terms were effectively interchangeable at that time, was constructed in about the year 600 AD by Abbot Probus on the orders of Pope Gregory the Great and was enlarged in 800 AD by the Emperor Charlemagne. The buildings were destroyed by Caliph El Hakim in 1005 but rebuilt 18 years later by permission of Caliph Haroun al Rashid on the site of the monastery of St. John the Baptist so the Order really dates from about 1023 though the first members were genuine Hospitallers and were not military knights at all. Indeed this seems to have remained the case for more than one hundred years.

During the later part of the XIth Century, the master of the Hospital, Gerard de Martignes, who later came to be better known as the Blessèd Gerard, established the Hospital's position in the community. The First Crusade, launched by Pope Urban II's speech at Clermont on 27th November, 1095, reached Jerusalem in 1099 and Gerard probably remained in the Hospital during the siege of Jerusalem in the June and July of that year.

The Hospital was originally a Benedictine establishment but, after the siege was over, Gerard founded the new Order of St. John which received confirmation by Papal bull in 1113.

It seems that the Order continued to focus mainly on hospitaller activities and went on to open other hospitals both in the Holy Land and also in Europe – one was founded at Utrecht in 1122. Furthermore, the Order's financial accounts contain no references to any military equipment until 1143 and it was not really until after about 1150 that military activity gained greater importance under the mastership of Raymond du Puy who had succeeded Gerard in 1120.

Although the Knights of St. John (they cannot, of course be called the Knights of Malta until very much later) went on to become an important military force in the Holy Land throughout the later Crusades, it seems that they always managed to maintain their involvement with hospitaller service and the welfare of the community. Indeed that remains true even today – how many people seeing the

reassuring uniform of the St. John's Ambulance Service at a big convention have absolutely no idea that in the background is a whole Order of Chivalry with Knights, Dames, Commanders and Officers, or that the International Order is a sovereign entity and has permanent observer status at the United Nations in its own right. This image of quiet devotion to duty has probably had a considerable influence on the survival of the Order.

Contrast it therefore with the image of the Knights Templar which is much more flamboyant and rumbustious. It reminds me of the rather unkind Englishman's description of American soldiers during the Second World War - "over paid, oversexed and over here" and I can almost hear the ordinary country folk of the Holy Land saying it about the Templars - though, of course, the oversexed part should not have applied since they all took a vow of chastity!

Unlike the Hospitallers, the Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon were warrior knights from their foundation in 1118 for the purpose of defending Christian pilgrims on their way to worship at the Holy Sepulchre.

I am sure that you are all well acquainted with the Templar story so I will not go into any detail here. It is, however, worth bearing in mind that a good part of the overall concept of the chivalrous behaviour of the average medieval knight probably owes more to early Victorian idealism than it does to the truth.

By modern standards I think we would judge the medieval knight to be a pretty rough, uncouth and unpleasant sort of chap with a querulous manner and terrible body odour. This may not have bothered their contemporaries too much but what did, in time, cause trouble was the way the Templars handled money. After all, we in the XXIst Century are comparatively very sophisticated about banking services but how many non-accountants amongst you can honestly say that they understand double-entry book-keeping? Imagine your feelings then as a medieval king or prince used to wielding absolute power but with little fiscal comprehension, when you realise that the real power now lies with the organisation that has lent you large sums of money and whose accounts you cannot even begin to understand.

It all happened very quietly at first when the Templars invented travellers' cheques. Of course they did not call

them that but it is what they were. As an enthusiastic Crusader knight you took your family silver along to the local branch of Templar Bank plc where a rather surly bank manger relieved you of your precious heirlooms and gave you a credit note for rather less than they were really worth. You then went off to the Holy Land secure in the knowledge that if you were attacked by brigands on the way they were unlikely to steal an apparently worthless piece of paper. On arriving in the Holy Land, or indeed anywhere else that Templar Bank plc had branches, you could cash part or all of your credit note to fund your activities abroad - less, no doubt, a significant commission to the Templars for their trouble. A simple, efficient and above all, safe system in what must have been a very unsafe world.

So it is not difficult to understand why the Templars prospered and grew very rich but it is also not difficult to understand why, in time, they generated a great deal of envy and resentment thereby sowing the seeds of their own downfall.

The other factor in the years leading up to the Templar demise was Jacques de Molay's opposition to the merger of the Knights Templar with the Knights of St. John. His reasons, as given in his memorandum to Pope Clement V in 1306, though understandable given that the two Orders had been fighting each other

in the streets of Jerusalem as recently as 1256, have often been described as 'weak' but this is probably because he was unable to publicly declare that his real reasons for opposing the merger were firstly his belief that the identity of the Templars would have quickly been subsumed into that of the Hospitallers and secondly, his fear that the United Orders would be controlled by Philip IV, also known as Philip the Fair, the King of France who had no interest in regaining the Holy Land for Christianity. This rejection of the proposed merger alienated both the Pope and the King and put in train the sequence of events that ultimately had such tragic consequences for the Templars.

The third of the Orders to be formed was that of St. Lazarus which was based on the Leper Hospital in Jerusalem and developed sometime between 1120 and 1130. From 1260 it became compulsory for Templar Knights to transfer to St. Lazarus if they caught leprosy and, until 1253 the Master General of the Order was invariably a sufferer though a

“It all happened very quietly at first when the Templars invented travellers’ cheques”

small number of non-leper brethren did exist. The Order was never very large and, although its knights may have participated in a few of the battles, its military role was never great. It is worthy of note that the leper hospital in Jerusalem, though only half the size of St. John's Hospital, could accommodate over 1,000 lepers.

Somewhat later in the XIIth Century a number of other Orders appear of which the most notable were the Teutonic Knights. Once again, their foundation was based on a hospital. This was a field hospital established by German merchants outside Acre in about 1190 which, by the end of the siege, had become a permanent establishment. The Order initially concentrated its activities on the region between Antioch and Tripoli but its numbers were decimated in battle in 1216 and when, at about that time, the Order received a request for help from the King of Hungary, they transferred most of their attention to the Baltic States. When the Templars were suppressed in 1307, similar accusations of heresy and immorality were also made about the Teutonic Knights and it was probably the move away from the centre of attention in the Holy Land and also their relatively small numbers that saved them from suffering a similar fate to that of the Templars and allowed them to survive to the present day though, of course, no longer as a military force.

Several other small Orders arose in the Holy Land including the English Order of the Hospitallers of St. Thomas of Canterbury in Acre, in the Baltic where there were the Livonian Knights and also in Spain where the Knights of Calatrava and others defended Europe against the Moors. However, by the end of the XIIIth Century, much of the popular support for crusading was beginning to wane. No only had the Crusades failed to win back and hold the Holy Land but sentiment was turning away from large, collective enterprises as a means of securing a passage to a peaceful after-life and was looking more towards the support of local churches and communities.

Although many of the names that have come down to us through the ages are those of the titled commanders of the Orders, the vast bulk of the fighting men of the Crusades were ordinary people who had left their farms and mills and smithies to fight in support of the Church. The ratio of knights to "other ranks" seems to have generally been of the order of 1 to 10. This was now beginning to change and the Orders began to recruit increasingly from the aristocracy,

probably in consequence of the threat to military leadership from the growing middle class. The extent to which this was enforced did vary between the Orders and also between countries; for example, in the Order of St. John, Italy required four noble quarterings (that is four armigerous antecedents), France and Spain required eight and Germany demanded sixteen.

Furthermore, during the XIVth Century, and still more in the XVth, many probably entered the military Orders as just another means of gainful employment. The chance of actually being sent on active military duties was not great and most posts would have been administrative especially when one considers that in 1300 the Pories of the Order of St. John extended from Portugal in the west to Hungary in the east and from their Headquarters Island of Cyprus in the south to the Priory of Dacia in northern Scandinavia. It is true that most of the brethren would spend some time in the garrison at Rhodes but, even there, the fighting was far from continuous during the XIVth Century and, when there was fighting, most of it was often done by mercenaries. Thus for brother knights and for brother sergeants alike, the Order provided administrative posts offering a secure occupation with reasonable status.

Another major change that occurred at around this time was a change of emphasis from land-based to sea-based fighting, indeed the Knights of St. John did not have an Admiral until about 1300. Until the move to the Island of Cyprus after the fall of Acre in 1291, the Knights of St. John usually fought on horseback supported by foot-soldiers many of whom were often mercenaries, but after 1291 and still more after 1310, maritime operations were frequently undertaken. At this period the Order's fleet was never large and other ships were often utilised. The modern acronym is "STUFT" meaning "ships taken up from trade" of which the S.S. Canberra was a good example in the Falklands campaign in 1982. However, in the XIVth Century the vessels were often already fully equipped as the usual source of assistance was the local pirates who co-operated in return for a share in the booty.

The Crusader galleys were themselves changing from vessels propelled by oars, each pulled by a single rower, to larger ships with oars pulled by five, six or even seven men each.

To be continued in the Spring 2009 issue

Editor

The Great Prior of Malta Visits Malta Preceptories

E Kt Les Sinclair, Preceptor of the Walter Rodwell Wright Preceptory, writes of an historic occasion on the Island of Malta



The Waller Rodwell Wright Preceptory, and its sister Preceptory La Valette, brought the Orders of Knights Templar and St. John back to Malta in 2003 and jointly hold a full Malta ceremony every 2 years. In between they regularly conduct Knights Templar ceremonies in May and October.

A truly unique event happened on Saturday May 3rd 2008. The Waller Rodwell Wright and La Valette Preceptories conducted a Malta meeting on the island of Malta in the presence of the Great Prior of Malta, Rt E Knight Eddie Goodwin. This is almost certainly the first time that this has happened - at least since the original Knights of St. John were driven from the island by Napoleon in 1798 - but hopefully not the last.

The ceremony was attended by 54 Knights and held in the beautiful and historic Masonic Temple in Valletta. In the temple E Kt John Emms very capably installed his successor, E Kt Les Sinclair, who then proceeded to install 8 Knights into the Order of St John. During the ceremony the Rt E Knight Eddie Goodwin assisted the Eminent Prior by investing the newly made Knights with the Jewel of our Order. Again a unique experience – to receive your jewel from the Great Prior on the Island of Malta is a great honour that few can claim.

After the ceremony 48 of the Knights dined at a very lively and happy festive board where Eddie, in his own inimitable style, addressed the Knights. A memorable and heart-

warming occasion that made everyone present feel that this was more than just a bit special.

The traditional final toast was to the memory of Waller Rodwell Wright. If the name doesn't ring a bell with you it would be worth a little research. He was an eminent and respected Mason and very important to our Order. But that's the subject for a future article.

This meeting was the grand finale of four consecutive days of Masonry in Malta, including Mark, Royal Ark Mariner and Red Cross of Constantine meetings, another Knights Templar ceremony and a visit to a Maltese Craft Lodge. In total 136 Knights and Masons and their wives and partners visited the island and took part in the ceremonies or attended one of the numerous social events held that week.

This Festival of Freemasonry happens every October and May although we don't get a visit from the Great Prior every year, at least not yet! Most of us travel out to Malta for around a week which gives us enough free time for relaxing or social activities with our wives or partners outside the activities in the Temple. If you're interested in visiting Malta and attending one or more of our meetings we can promise you a very warm welcome. Contact either David Broxup or Les Sinclair for further details.

David Broxup – 01763 281 234 or

davidbroxup@tiscali.co.uk

Les Sinclair – 07710 400 140 or

les@ecg.uk.com

Letters to the Editor

In the last issue I posed a question on an escutcheon of pretence and I am delighted to say that we have had a magnificent response. These are reproduced below. To remind you of the question I reprint it here:

Editor



In the Statutes the Standard of Malta is described as “Sable, Argent an eight-pointed Maltese Cross, over all the Arms of St John on an escutcheon of pretence.”

This means it is black on which is a white Maltese Cross and superimposed on that are the arms of St John on an escutcheon of pretence.

Is there a student of heraldry out there who can explain in simple terms how an escutcheon of pretence relates to this standard? Letters please to the editor.

From : VE Kt Raymond Head, PGtReg, ProvM (Oxfordshire, Berkshire & Buckinghamshire)

I attended Mount Calvary Preceptory “D” last week as a guest. I was given a copy of “Knightly Topics, Issue 15” in which I saw your question about “escutcheon of pretence” (eop). I have done a little bit of research and thought I would share the results.

In the glossary to a book entitled “The complete book of Heraldry” by Stephen Slater (published by Select Editions) it describes an ‘escutcheon’ as “a small shield”. The next entry in the glossary describes an ‘escutcheon of pretence’ as “a small shield bearing the wife’s family arms set in the centre of her husband’s shield.”

Within the text, in a section describing quartering, the ‘eop’ is explained, and I quote “In England, a heraldic quartering occurs after a marriage with a heraldic heiress – a woman who has no brothers, so that her family lacks a direct male heir. In such a case, the husband, instead of placing his wife’s arms beside his on the marital shield (an impalement) he places them upon a small shield in the centre of his own arms. This is called an ‘escutcheon of pretence’.

In another book in my possession titled “Heraldry, customs, rules and styles” by Carl-Alexander von Volborth (published by New Orchard Editions) I found a reference to a small shield in the centre described as “inescutcheon”.

My dictionary – Collins – describes “inescutcheon” as “in heraldry, a small shield-shaped charge in the centre of a shield”.

Not in any way being a scholar of heraldry, but having a healthy interest in the subject, I am forced to the conclusion, on the basis of the research I have described above, that the arms of St John in the centre of the Banner of Malta should be described as “inescutcheon” and not as an ‘escutcheon of pretence’.

I am aware, having heard the original version of the Banners Address given by its author, (whose name, I regret, I cannot recall) I wonder if the shortened version, as published in the book of ritual, suffers from an editing problem. It will be very interesting to hear what others say on the matter.

From: John F Ashby, Preceptory D

Where a man is defending the name of his wife’s father’s family he can wear his wife’s arms in an inescutcheon. This is called an escutcheon of pretence. The offspring of this union can only use the arms of the father but inherit the arms of the mother’s family. The son is not a pretender but

will inherit the arms and property. The arms will now be shown quartered showing the arms of mother and father.

In the case of the Malta arms the above definition has been stretched to carry the arms of St John in the escutcheon of pretence.

I trust this makes the case a little clearer.

From: John W Mitchell, Preceptory 206

As a member of the Heraldry Society I may be able to assist with the interpretation of the term which appears in the statutes (sic) of the Order. Col A G Puttock’s Dictionary of Heraldry gives the following descriptions:

“**Coat of Arms** - a term which refers to all the bearings

on a Heraldic Shield. This is derived from the Knight’s surcoat on which the Arms were originally displayed.”

This is of interest because in the Knights Templar degree, the bearings are born on the Mantle and a Latin cross appears on the surcoat or tunic.

(During the Crusades English Knights had the red Latin cross on their surcoats; the Templars had the Templar cross on their surcoats). In the KBHS the Templar cross appears on both the mantle and the surcoat or tabard (if worn). In the Malta degree the Malta cross is borne on both the mantle and the tunic.

“Escutcheon - a heraldic term for a Shield (frequently used for those carved in relief) used as a device in a Coat of Arms.

Escutcheon of Pretence – a shield displaying the Arms of an Heiress placed in the centre of her husband’s arms instead of being impaled with them.”

Hence the meaning of "Escutcheon of Pretence", used in the Statutes, is that

- 1. the noble titled “the Order of St. John” died;*
- 2. his eldest daughter married the noble known as "the Order of Malta":*
- 3 on her father’s death she inherited the title of "the Order of St John”*
- 4. she subsequently recorded her Arms (of the Order of St. John) on the Arms of her husband (the Order of Malta) to record her marital position.*

“Inescutcheon - a small shield superimposed on the centre of a Coat of Arms (as shown in the picture in the article).”

The Statutes refer to “the Standard of Malta”. The same



John Mitchell of Annus Mirabilis Preceptory No 206 has also written to pose a question on the common Templar tie. I have contacted the Librarian at Great Priory to ask if he has any record of permission being given for the tie design but nothing has been heard from him yet. Are there any knights out there who can shed light on this?
Editor

According to one of my Heraldic books the arms of the Templars are "per Bend Sable and Argent a Cross Pateé Rouge"

The arms displayed on the widely sold Masonic Knight Templar Ties are “Or a Cross Rouge,” which just happen to be the de Burgh arms. In this respect:

In 1307 Robert I, King of Scotland, married Elizabeth de Burgh, the daughter of Richard Earl of Ulster. In 1330 William de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, married Maud the daughter of Henry Earl of Lancaster.

In 1352 Lionel of Antwerp, Duke of Clarence,

source of reference indicates:

“Standard - a narrow and tapering flag (sometimes with swallow tails) always of considerable length, the higher the rank of the owner the longer the standard.”

Other sources indicate that a standard could only be used if a grant had been received from a Sovereign in addition to the grant of Arms. The length varied from three to fifteen yards according to rank. Standards were never carried in procession; they were used for ceremonial displays or to indicate a rallying point or stand. A standard usually depicted in sequence from the hoist to the fly: - the Arms of the country which granted the right to have a Standard, the Arms of the owner of the Standard followed by horizontal stripes the full length of the fly in the principal colour and metal of the grantees Arms (red and silver for St. John), superimposed on the stripes would be the owner's Motto (on diagonal bands) and the owner's Crest and Badge(s)

“Banner - a square or oblong (the depth greater than the width) flag charged with the Arms of its owner.”

The flag depicted against your query and as displayed at Malta functions is a Banner (not a Standard) with an inescutcheon.

It has always amused me that the public in general and the Masonic Orders in particular do not know the correct meaning of Heraldic Terms and usually manage to get them wrong.

(son of King Edward III of England) married Elizabeth de Burgh, the daughter of William Earl of Ulster.

My queries are

1. Why do Masonic Knights Templar wear the de Burgh Arms on their ties instead of the Knight Templar Arms?
2. Did the De Burgh family ever give permission for their Arms to be worn by Masonic Knights Templar?

John W Mitchell, PPGHer

Rt Em Kt David Williams, KCT writes

Dear George

I don't know if the following will be of interest for a small inclusion in the next Knightly Topics, but I know that a number of Knights have no idea of the responsibilities of some of our military predecessors in the Knights of Malta, so here are a few tit bits:

TURCOPOLIER - Head of the mounted forces and coast guards. Normally the head of the Langue of England

ADMIRAL - General of the Galleys. Normally the head of the Langue of Italy

MARSHAL - Control of military administration. Normally the head of the Langue of Auvergne

GRAND PRECEPTOR (Treasurer) - Responsible for the treasury. Normally the head of the Langue of Provence



Knights Templar win reprieve after 700 years

An edited extract from yahoo news 2007

The Knights Templar accused of heresy and sexual misconduct, will soon be partly rehabilitated when the Vatican publishes trial documents it has closely guarded for 700 years. A reproduction of the minutes of trials against the Templars is a massive work with a £4,125 price tag. The work comes in a soft leather case and includes reproductions of original parchments in Latin and replicas of wax seals used by 14th century inquisitors. The Vatican expects most copies of the work to be bought by leading medieval scholars and specialised libraries at top universities. At the end of the 13th century the Templars were accused of heresy by Philip IV of France, their alleged offences included denying Christ and secretly worshipping idols. The Chino Parchment, or Chart, contains phrases in which Pope Clement V absolves the Templars of charges of heresy which had been the backbone of Philip's attempts to eliminate them. The Parchment was "misplaced" in the Vatican archives until 2001 when Professor Barbara Frale, a medievalist at the Vatican's Secret Archives, stumbled upon it. Frale found that Pope Clement was convinced that while the Templars had committed some grave sins, such as abuses, violence and sinful acts within the Order they were not heretics. Despite this conviction, in 1312 Pope Clement ordered the Templars to be disbanded for what Frale called "the good of the Church" following his repeated clashes with the French King. Frale depicted the trials against the Templars between 1307 and 1312 as a battle of political wills between Clement and Philip, and said the document means Clement's position has to be reappraised by historians. "This will allow anyone to see what is actually in the documents and deflate legends that are in vogue these days" she said.

Diary Dates 2008

Provincial Priory (Temple)	Monday 29 September
Great Priory (Malta)	Tuesday 18 November
Provincial Carol Service	Wednesday 3 December
Londinium Preceptory	Wednesday 17 December

2009

Provincial Priory (Malta)	Thursday 29 January
Great Priory (Temple)	Wednesday 20 May

Contact List

Provincial matters, rules etc	Clive Thompson, Prov Vice Chancellor	020 8398 5410
Provincial finance	Peter Brassett, Prov Treasurer	01277 227 742
Ceremonial matters	Prov Marshal - Not yet appointed	
Provincial Priory history	Simon Brookman, Prov Archivist	07970 951 371
Provincial Regalia Shop	Stephen Neville, Regalia Officer	01708 446 618
Knightly Topics	George Hodge, Editor	0118 973 0966