

Provincial Priory of London

Knighly Topics



Issue 15

Spring 2008

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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.

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New email address below
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The Provincial Prior's Address

After welcoming the Knights assembled the Provincial Prior continued:

Overall we have shown a net numerical decrease this year of 12 Knights and that is a disappointing trend. The reasons are from deaths and resignations, the latter being mainly due to Bro Knights moving away from the London area and health and domestic difficulties. On a positive note 37 Knights have been Installed and 20 have joined Preceptories and that is very encouraging when compared with last years figures of 25 and 11 respectively. Sadly a number of our Brother Knights have departed to the Holy City and

and regularity of the other Orders and in particular their sovereignty and independence. Knights Templar was one of the Orders he specifically mentioned. Brother Knights, my Sub Prior and I, and in certain cases, my Chancellor and Constables have visited the great majority of the London Preceptories during the past year and I have been encouraged by the great enthusiasm shown and by the warmth of our welcome. There are some Preceptories which we do not visit officially, such as Londinium, the Installed Preceptors Pre-

ceptory, and the London Bodyguard Preceptory because the Sub-Prior and or I are members or honorary members and it does not seem necessary. However, if those Preceptories feel deprived, than we can arrange for an official visit to them, but they probably see enough, or some might say too much, of me anyway.

It has been a great pleasure for me today to invest and promote a number of our Brother Knights and I offer formally acknowledge the existence



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It has been a great pleasure for me today to invest and promote a number of our Brother Knights and I offer

them my sincere congratulations. They do not need me to tell them that these honours are given as a reward of merit but also anticipate continued strong support for their Preceptories, this Province and for the United Orders. The same applies to those Brother Knights who were honoured with Great Rank this year.

(A list of those honoured with Great Rank can be found in the Autumn issue of Knightly Topics - Editor)

I congratulate them all and urge them to attend the Malta Investiture meeting in November.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank publicly all my officers who have supported this Provincial Priory so well during this year and to hope that they have enjoyed the experience. In particular my thanks are due to Mike Fox for his strong support as my new Sub-Prior and to Clive Thompson for his hard work as Vice-Chancellor in his first year, a steep learning curve as both Mike and I know from our own experience. Phillip Brown, our Provincial Marshal and his team of Deputy Provincial Marshal, Dave Ashbolt and the two Past Deputy Provincial Marshals, Richard Roberts and Keith Bates and the Commander of my Bodyguard, Dick Fogwill and his Deputy, David Phythian, together with the members of the Bodyguard have ensured that our standard of ceremonial has remained at a high level. A great deal falls upon these Brother Knights particularly at the time of preparation for these Provincial meetings and they rise to the challenge with great enthusiasm and efficiency. I am sorry that Phillip's health has precluded him from attending today and I am sure that we all wish him a complete recovery. My thanks are also due to our Provincial Treasurer, Peter Brassett who has ensured that we are financially secure and

has carried out some useful work in the background to assist Preceptory Treasurers, particularly those who are not qualified accountants, the results of that work will be seen quite soon. I should also like to thank our Provincial Organist, Richard Lambert, who adds so much to our ceremonies with his music.

Now Brother Knights, I am probably about to earn myself a severe reprimand. Not the first in my life I must admit, though it last occurred during my National Service! Last year, when Alf Day retired, as his Sub-Prior I was ordered not to arrange any form of collection to mark his years of service and regrettable departure. Having taken an oath of allegiance to him I obeyed my orders. However I have had a long and detailed discussion with the new Provincial Prior and he has decreed that such a collection should be made. In marking his great contribution to this Province we are also mindful of the great support which Shirley, his wife, has given to him over the years. We have therefore purchased a Waterford crystal fruit bowl which they can both enjoy – and he should be eating plenty of fruit anyway! That will prove a lasting memento but, knowing that Alf and Shirley enjoy coach trips for long weekends and holidays I also present to him a voucher to use for such an event. Alf, thank you once again for all you have done for us and we all hope that you will enjoy your well earned rest.

Brother Knights, it has been a great pleasure for me to see so many London Knights here today and to see so many old friends here as guests of the Province. I do hope that you have all enjoyed our Annual Chapter of Provincial Priory meeting and I wish you all a safe journey home. God bless you all



New Mantle Badges For Great and Provincial Officers of Malta

Great Priory have approved the wearing of mantle badges on Malta regalia, details can be found in an amendment to the Statutes. Great Officers therefore should wear them and Provincial Officers are permitted to wear them at the discretion of their Provincial Prior. In London our Provincial Prior has said that for his Officers it is a personal choice. Mantle badges may be obtained from the Provincial Regalia Shop - see below.

Provincial Regalia Shop

The shop can supply you with the new Malta mantle badges, Provincial ties, new and used regalia for Great and Provincial ranks, a mantle badge swap & alteration service and a used regalia information service.

Your Regalia Officer is E Kt Stephen Neville. He can be contacted at:

77 Harrow Drive, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 1NT

Telephone: 01708 446 618. email: steve-neville@ntlworld.com

The Provincial Priory Family Carol Service



The Rev Colin Calcott-James and the Choir



The Congregation

What better way to begin the Christmas festivities than to experience a joyous Service of Nine Lessons and Carols in beautiful surroundings. Such was the annual event held in The Priory Church of St John on Monday 17th December. The church is in St John's Square, Clerkenwell and I have always found it difficult to find, tucked away as it is alongside the Clerkenwell Road, but after a number of years I've cracked it. Leave the London Masonic Centre behind you and pass the Crown pub. Continue in the same direction until you find an alley on your right. You will know this is the correct alley because there is a Belgian Beer and Food Café in it and I can recommend the many Belgian beers sold there. On emerging into St John's Square the church is on the left and you will see that it is not a traditional church building.

There are many colourful banners adorning the walls but the Church was also beautifully decorated for Christmas. The

service followed the traditional order, the lessons being read by active Provincial officers and the singing of the carols led by a choir of professional singers. The combined voices were uplifting and enriched by the solo performances.

After the service an excellent buffet of food and wine was provided at the London Masonic Centre and before long the buzz of conversation indicated the pleasure found in others' company. The social atmosphere was enhanced by the presence of the ladies and other family members and on leaving one felt that Christmas had truly begun.

So Brother Knights, when the invitation to attend drops into your letter box next year, and if you are not a regular at this event, please make a special effort to attend – you won't regret it!

George Hodge

Pictures kindly supplied by E Kt Trevor Dutt

A Prile of Priors



An unusual occasion was captured on film at the meeting of Londinium Preceptory on the 19th December 2007 when the three Priors of London were all present.

On the right is the first Prior Rt E Knight Jack L C Dribbell, KCT, Past Provincial Prior.

On the left is the second Prior Rt E Knight Alfred J Day, KCT, Past Provincial Prior

In the centre is the third Prior Rt E Knight Edwin "Eddie" B Goodwin, Provincial Prior of London, Great Prior of Malta.

Templar Myths and Legends

At the last meeting of Londinium Preceptory the Preceptor

V E Kt Peter A Taylor, P Gt Reg delivered this paper

The Templars occupied an important place in the society of their time, and the consequent academic interest and analysis has established an historical account which stands up to critical examination. However, for those of us with only a general or passing interest in the Order, exposure to the influence of ecclesiastical or political spin, and the speculations of alternative historians, can blur the distinction between invented and historical events.

It is generally accepted that the earliest surviving account of the origins of the Order was written some fifty years after the appearance of Hugh of Payens and his eight companions in Jerusalem in 1118 or 1119. It describes how they went before the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and vowed to bind themselves to a monastic discipline of poverty, chastity and obedience, to defend the Christian Kingdom and, in particular, to protect pilgrims on the dangerous journey from the coast to Jerusalem. They were then given quarters on the site of Solomon's Temple. We are also told that no more members were admitted to the Order for nine years, after which most of them returned to Europe. The activities of the knights during this period are not detailed. This has led to speculation that there was a hidden agenda and it has been suggested that the real purpose of their presence in Jerusalem was to search for something in the ruins of the Temple. If that was the case, what were they looking for? Amongst the possibilities that have been floated by alternative historians are, lost gospels, the secrets of architecture, the Ark of the Covenant, the Turin Shroud, the Holy Grail, the head of John the Baptist, or even the embalmed head of Christ. Did they find what they were looking for, and, if so, what was it? No one knows. This does, however, provide scope for further speculation and opportunities for creative writing.

I would now like to move forward to Friday 13th October 1307, when Jacques de Molay and the French Knights were arrested. They were tortured to provide the confessions of idolatry, immorality, and heresy required to enable the Pope to dissolve the Order and to make over their possessions to the Hospitallers. However, some Knights avoided the roundup and fled. Those escapees provided the basis for the legends which claim that the suppression of the Templars in the 14th century did not finish the Order, but that the survivors spirited

away the fabulous treasures that the Order had accumulated, and that there has been a hidden succession of Knights Templar down to the present day. Popular versions of this story maintain that the Templar treasure was taken to Scotland and hidden. There are many claims by alternative historians that the Templar treasures are buried in vaults beneath the Rosslyn Chapel. It has not been possible to prove this, as the Chapel is a working church with a congregation and weekly services. Excavation is not permitted, and it is well known that the vault is the burial chamber of the St. Clair family.

Following the Scottish theme, it has been suggested that the Scottish Jacobites, who were living in exile in France during the 1700s, were the originators of some of the so-called 'high degrees' of Freemasonry. The oration given by Chevalier Andrew Ramsay in Paris in 1737 is generally cited by Masonic historians as one of the main reasons behind the interest in the Templar idea. In his 'Freemasons Guide and Compendium' Bernard Jones describes Ramsey, "as a student, who had formed his own individual and peculiar theories as to the origin of freemasonry --- and that he was known to have been a man of marked fertility and inventiveness". The main theme of the oration was the symbolic ceremonies of the crusading knights in the Holy Land, and the preservation of those esoteric teachings when they returned to their own countries. During the oration Ramsey spoke about 'Crusaders', but it was generally perceived that he was really referring to the Templars. In 1743 the Masons of Lyons are said to have invented the Kadosh degree, comprising the vengeance of the Templars, which laid the foundation for all Templar Rites. One of the more successful of these Orders was the rite of 'Strict Observance,' which was formed in Germany in the 1750s.

Prominent in the formation and development of the Order was a Baron Von Hund who based the ritual of Strict Observance on the legendary escape of Pierre d'Amount, the Temple Prior of Auvergne and his knights to Scotland, disguised as operative masons. D'Aumont was elected as Grand Master to replace Jacques de Molay, and the Order lived on in Scotland, with the Knights first calling themselves 'masons' and later 'freemasons'. This ritual claimed that the freemasons were the successors of those Knights, and that when Pierre d'Amount died he was succeeded by an unbroken line of Grand Masters

whose identities were to be kept secret, hence the so-called 'Unknown Superiors'. It has been suggested that the Order was a political scheme on behalf of Charles Stuart, which was dropped after his defeat at Culloden in 1746.

In 1782, a Masonic congress was held at Wilhemsbad. It considered the true origin of speculative masonry and it was agreed that Freemasonry was not essentially connected with Templarism. Also, that, contrary to the doctrine of the Strict Observance, Freemasons were not the successors of the Templars.

In the 20th century, many novelists and alternative historians looked for inspiration in the myths and legends of the Templars. An example of the development of a modern myth is the story of the Priory of Sion. Interest in the Priory of Sion had been raised in 1982 when Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln published their book, 'The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail'. The book set out to inquire into the alleged discoveries made by Berenger Sauniere, the village priest of Rennes le Chateau, a small village in south-western France, the source of his sudden unexplained wealth and various other mysteries connected with the village. At that time, little was known about this outside France where it had been arousing interest since the 1950s. Briefly, the book describes how, when on 1st June 1885, the newly ordained Berenger Sauniere took office in the village, he found that the church was almost a complete ruin. Whilst restoring the church he discovered a number of parchments, some ancient gold coins and other relics. In 1893, he approached his bishop for help in deciphering two of the parchments. The Bishop arranged for Sauniere to go to Paris to have them examined by experts. The contents of the parchments were not revealed, but Sauniere returned from Paris a very wealthy man. He rebuilt his church, and he built himself a luxurious villa with spectacular landscaped gardens. He also entertained lavishly. On 17th January 1917, he had a stroke and died. His estate passed to his long time housekeeper and lover Marie Darnaud. In her old age she told the Corbu family, which had looked after her, that one day they would have more money than they could spend. Unfortunately, she too became the victim of a stroke that prevented her from speaking and she carried the secrets to her grave. The authors followed the trail to Paris where they found reference to a Priory of Sion in the Bibliotheque National. They also found a compilation of privately published documents entitled, collectively, as the Secret Dossiers, which contained genealogies and a list

of Grand Masters. Their investigations led them to a Pierre Plantard who claimed to be the representative of the Priory. Later he revealed that he was the Grand Master, and that the Knights Templar had been the military and executive arm of the Priory, which now held and protected the Templars' secret.

The authors considered the details that had been drip-fed to them by Plantard and his associates, and eventually came up with the theory that the real Templars secret was that Jesus had married Mary Magdalene, that they had a family together and, following the crucifixion, the family had escaped to southern France. Further, that the Holy Grail was not a cup, but the bloodline of Jesus, and that his descendants had inter-married with the Merovingian dynasty of kings. Although variations of this story had been circulating for many years, the interest raised by the book, brought it to the attention of a much wider audience.

Many devout Christians were deeply shocked and upset by this challenge to orthodox beliefs. Margaret Starbird, a Roman Catholic scholar, set out to refute the arguments of 'The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail' but instead found herself convinced that they were right. Her book, 'The Woman with the Alabaster Jar', accepts the marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene and develops the theme that Mary was a priestess and was part of the lost 'sacred feminine' which had been suppressed by the Catholic Church. She also argues that the Cathar heresy supported this view of Christianity, and that a hidden Church of the Grail had managed to keep alive this alternative version of Christianity after the Albigensian Crusade. She also supports the view that the Templars were the predecessors of Freemasonry.

Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince further developed the theme in their book, 'The Templar Revelation', and they stated in the sub-title of their book that the Templars were the secret guardians of the true identity of Christ. Whilst they drew on the arguments made in 'The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail', and 'The Woman with the Alabaster Jar' and accepted the marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene, they argued that the real Christ was John the Baptist rather than Jesus. In support of this theory they argued that clues had been hidden in various works of art.

In 2003, Dan Brown published his book 'The Da Vinci Code', which caught the imagination of the public and became a best seller. Brown drew on the alternative histories offered in 'The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail', 'The

Woman with the Alabaster Jar', and 'The Templar Revelation'. He developed Plantard's story of the Priory of Sion, and introduced an attempt by Opus Dei to protect the Catholic Church by killing off the elders of the Priory to obtain and suppress the secret of the survival of the family of Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

As novelists and alternative historians are continuing to develop the theme, I will stop here and revisit the two main characters involved in the creation of the Priory myth - Berenger Sauniere and Pierre Plantard, or Pierre Plantard-St.Clare, as he later called himself. So, what was the mystery of Rennes le Chateau and where did Sauniere get his money? When Marie Denarnaud died in 1953 aged 85, all Sauniere's papers passed to Noel Corbu whose family had looked after Marie in her old age. It is clear that for most of his life, Sauniere was poor. However, between 1896 and 1905 he began soliciting and selling masses from which he made a great deal of money. Following the separation of the Church from the State in 1905, his mass selling activities failed and he again began to live in poverty. In 1910 following a decision of the Bishop's Court he was suspended from his priestly duties over financial improprieties within the Church. When he died, this suspension was only lifted at the moment of death to enable him to receive the last rites. Although he died on 17th January 1917, Marie was so poor that she could not afford to pay for Sauniere's coffin until 12th June 1917. Until the mid 1950s, Rennes le Chateau was notable mainly for being situated in that area of south western France which is rich in legends of the Cathars, the Templars and hidden treasure. The mystery of Sauniere's wealth was devised by Noel Corbu as part of a publicity gimmick to launch a new restaurant that he was opening in the village. This story created interest and speculation in France and Pierre Plantard adopted it as the basis of a confidence trick. He was born in Paris in 1920, and between 1937 and 1943, he was active in anti-Semitic and anti-Masonic matters. During the war he was investigated by both the French and German authorities and was sent to prison for 4

months. By 1951, he had moved to the town of Annemasse in southern France. He had married and he had a daughter aged about three. In 1956, Plantard was convicted of corrupting minors and served a twelve-month prison sentence. On 7th May 1956, an Andre Bonhomme, together with Plantard and other young men formed a small association devoted to the 'Defence of Liberty and Low-Cost Housing'. They called the association The Priory of Sion after a local mountain of that name. When interviewed by the BBC about the Priory in 1996, Andre Bonhomme said that it was just four friends who came together to have some fun and that the Priory no longer existed. He added that he had not seen Plantard in over 20 years. However, by the 1960s Plantard had revived the idea of the Priory and fabricated a pedigree, which he incorporated into the stories surrounding Rennes le Chateau. Surprisingly, he also claimed to be a direct descendant of the Merovingian king Dagobert II. He was assisted by Gerard de Sede a writer who turned Plantard's unpublished manuscripts into successful books and by Phillippe de Cherisey who helped to fabricate the false evidence, such as 'gravestones', 'genealogies' and especially the 'parchments'. In 1967, de Sede refused to share the profits from the royalties of the books and denounced the parchments as forgeries. Between 1967 and 1985, more false claims and forgeries were produced. Plantard continued to fool the gullible until confronted by the researcher Jean-luc Chaumeil who had started to investigate Plantard's past. He resigned from the Priory in July 1984. When the Sauniere Museum was opened in Rennes le Chateau in 1989 Plantard launched a third version of the Priory, giving a different pedigree and a different list of Grand Masters. Plantard was still claiming to be descended from Dagobert II but this time, only indirectly. Unfortunately, for him, his revised list of Grand Masters of the Priory contained the name Roger Patrice Pelat who was linked to a financial scandal, which was being investigated. When questioned under oath, Plantard admitted that everything was fictitious, and he was given a severe warning. He died in Paris in February 2000.

An Escutcheon of Pretence?



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.

The Centenary Celebrations of The Preceptory of Galilee

No 185

Introduction

This introduction is largely extracted from the History of the Preceptory compiled by R E Kt Arthur Craddock in 2007.

The Preceptory of Galilee came into being through friendships formed among certain members of the Council of Temperance Masonic Lodges who were also Knights Templar. E Kt Lt Col Thomas Richardson, P Gt Swd B eventually recruited ten petitioners and on St Valentine's Day 1907 they handed to the Great Vice Chancellor a signed petition for a new Preceptory and on Saturday the 11th of May 1907 the Preceptory of Galilee was consecrated at Mark Mason Hall, Great Queens Street.

During 1958, due to falling numbers, it was decided that in order for the Preceptory to survive, it would dispense with the requirement that candidates for installation must be total abstainers, but to retain the practice of consuming only non-alcoholic drinks at the Festive Board. However, it became customary for all members to visit a local hostelry after the meeting and before the Festive Board so that despite the original *raison d'être* it was decided after a few meetings to permit the consumption of alcohol at the Festive Board and the Preceptory ceased to be a Temperance Preceptory.

The Celebrations

On the 28th of September 2007 we celebrated the occasion of 100 years uninterrupted working. The Most Eminent and Supreme Grand Master Henry James FitzRoy, Earl of Euston presided over the consecration meeting. The first Preceptor was Sir Knight Thomas Proctor Baptie, D L, the

1st Constable was Edward James Mills, and the 2nd Constable was George Thorne Phillips. At the Centenary meeting the Preceptor was R E Knight Arthur Craddock, O St J, K C T, the 1st Constable was V E Knight Christian Pajolec P Gt 2nd Constable, and the 2nd Constable was E Knight Nigel Perfect. After the Preceptory was opened R E Kt Edwin Goodwin Provincial Prior of London entered, assumed the chair and installed his Provincial team.

The Very High and Right Eminent Knight Malcolm Slater, the Great Seneschal, then entered under an arch of steel, and presided over the presentation of the Centenary Warrant. The R E Knight Michael Morgan gave a very interesting talk with regard to the biblical events surrounding The Sea of Galilee.

On behalf of the Preceptory the Preceptor presented to the Great Seneschal a cheque for £500.00 for the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem.

Galilee Preceptory has strong links with the French Constitution with fourteen active members. Amongst these are the Great Prelate R E Knight Christian Pajolec, the First Great Constable V E Knight Lois Nanot, and the Great Herald E Knight Dominique Madej. In total 22 Knights made the journey from France.

At the consecration lunch in 1907 only 14 dined. Thankfully many Knights dined after the centenary meeting and consumed a fair amount of wine which was sadly missing from the consecration lunch.

E Knight Bill King, P P Herald, Registrar

KT Triennial Conference 2009

To be held in Winchester from Thursday 3rd September to Saturday 5th September 2009

Introduction

The M E & S Grand Master, Leslie Felgate Dring, GCT is to host the next Triennial Conference in England in 2009.

The intention at present is to restrict attendance at the conference to delegates from overseas simply on the grounds of numbers although this could be reviewed if demand is less than anticipated. The Consecration and Celebratory dinner will be open to all Right Eminent Knights and Past Great Constables.

All Knights of the Order and their wives are eligible to attend the Choral Evensong and English tea on the afternoon of Saturday 5th September.

The outline programme

Welcome by the Grand Master.

A talk on the History of KT in England & Wales.
Demonstration of an English KT ceremony c1800
Formal Conference.

Consecration of a new Preceptory - Grand Master's Preceptory No 678.

Celebratory Conference dinner in a Marquee on the Cathedral lawns.

Choral Evensong in Winchester Cathedral.

Traditional English tea for 1,250 Knights and their ladies in a marquee on the Cathedral lawns.

Great Priory Family Church Service.

Saturday 9th August 2008 at Lincoln Cathedral

You should shortly receive invitations to the Great Priory Family Church Service to be held at Lincoln Cathedral on Saturday 9th August 2008.

This splendid occasion is held every three or four years and is well worth a visit. We are most grateful to the Dean and the Cathedral authorities for making us so welcome.

The sight of a thousand or so people in this magnificent setting really has to be seen to be appreciated. The wives, partners and children are seated in the central part of the nave as the Knights process in clothed in their regalia to take their places at the sides. The Most Eminent and Supreme Grand Master then processes into the Cathedral accompanied by senior officers of Great Priory.

The Family Service proceeds with Scripture readings, rousing hymns and a sermon all appropriate to our Order. After processing out of the nave the Brother Knights then disrobe and proceed to the Lincoln Show Ground for refreshment and an enjoyable lunch.

There is adequate parking at the Show Ground and private buses are available to take those attending to the Cathedral and return them to the Show Ground.

I do recommend this very special and enjoyable occasion to you and I look forward to meeting many of you there.

EBG Provincial Prior, Province of London

Coromandel Preceptory installs a new Preceptor

*Rt E Knight Eddie Goodwin
Provincial Prior of London*



*E Knight Trevor Dutt
Preceptor Coromandel Preceptory*

Diary Dates 2008

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|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Great Priory (Temple) | Wednesday 21 May |
| Londinium Preceptory | Friday 4 July |
| Provincial Priory (Temple) | Monday 29 September |
| Great Priory (Malta) | Tuesday 18 November |
| Provincial Carol Service | Monday 15 December |

Contact List

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|
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