

## **Provincial Prior's Address – Tintagel, Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2012**

Right. Time to set your alarms Bro. Knights.!

Bro. Knights, it seems both a very short while ago, and at the same time, an age, since I stood here this week last year. It has been a very steep learning curve but I can honestly say that I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience, made all the more enjoyable by the wonderful support you have given me throughout this year, and again today. I do thank you all most sincerely.

I must congratulate those Knights whom I have appointed or promoted today. This is recognition for your efforts and commitment in your Preceptories and in the Province, and I trust you will continue to give that commitment and support and encourage new members into our Preceptories. To those retiring from office this year, I thank you for your sterling support in joining me on visits around the Province. It has made my visits all the more enjoyable and worthwhile.

We must also congratulate those E. Kts. who were honoured by the Grand Master at Great Priory in May. E. Kt. Gerry Watson was promoted to P.Gt.Reg. and so became a V.E.Kt.; E.Kt. Alan McArthur was appointed to the active rank of Great Chamberlain; E.Kt. Alan Seager to P.Gt.A-de-C and E.Kt. David Lee to P.Gt. W of R. I hope a good number of you will come to Great Priory in November to see them receive equivalent rank in the Malta Degree.

In addition to these appointments, at Restormel Preceptory No. 90 in February, the Great Vice- Chancellor conferred a field appointment of P.Gt.A-de-C on E.Kt. Ron Gould, the 92 year old outgoing Preceptor.

During the year I made two official visits – one to Royal Sussex No. 25 in Torquay and one to Union or Rougement No.F in Exeter. The Sub Prior made an official visit to St Thomas Priory No. 480 at Launceston in the Malta Degree. All three meetings were well supported by Provincial Officers and enjoyable evenings were had by all.

I have visited every Preceptory in the Province at least once during the year including the Banner Dedication at Vera Crux No. 654 at Exmouth where our Provincial Prelate, E.Kt. Graham Hindle, gave a splendid Oration on the Banner.

Our neighbour Province of Somerset entertained several of us at two ceremonies earlier in the year. In January, we attended the Consecration of a new Preceptory in Nailsea and in February we were treated to a whole new experience in Weston Super Mare when they hosted the Saint-Front Le Vaillant Preceptory No.15 of France. This was a unique event. We started at 3.15pm with the installation of the Preceptor Elect followed by the installation of a knight. The ceremony was in French and was followed by a seven course Perigordine banquet with accompanying wines, coffee and cognac. I believe we left the festive board about midnight, very happy indeed, and I believe we all slept well that night! A most memorable evening! Thank you Rt. E. Kt. Barry!

On the social side, we had a very pleasant and well supported Spring Luncheon in April with our ladies and I hope you will support us again for the Autumn Luncheon at Eagle House Hotel, Launceston next month.

We shall continue the practice of 2 Official Visits in the Templar Degree and the Sub Prior will make an Official Visit in the Malta Degree. I had hoped to bring the Provincial Team to one of the Preceptories for a Provincial Working during the year. It didn't work out last year, so we'll see what we can organise this coming year.

Our Provincial website is now well and truly up and running, thanks to the splendid efforts of E.Kt. Alan Cockman. Not only does he keep the site updated with news of the events, but we have to be very careful what we say & do when he is present. I'm sure he has a built in microphone in his camera! Thank you, Alan, for your continued work in keeping the Province up to date. Bro. Kts. I do recommend that you look at [www.ktdevonandcornwall.org](http://www.ktdevonandcornwall.org) in order to find out what has happened and is happening in our Province.

I have asked our Provincial Marshal, E.Kt. Ed Purkis, to develop a local element of the King Edward VII Preceptory of Improvement. He has already held one meeting of interested Knights and would like to have regular, though not too frequent, meetings at a variety of halls around Devon & Cornwall, so that there will always be some who do not have far to travel. The aim, as with that of Great Priory, is not just to improve the ritual and general sword drill, but also to endeavour to ensure that those Knights who are rapidly approaching the office of Preceptor will be able to progress through the offices of the

Constables, feeling relaxed and comfortable with the words and actions. We are not trying to form a new Preceptory and there are no fees involved. Just come along, bring your sword and practise the words and actions to help you and your Preceptory improve your working of the ceremonies.

With this in mind, I would remind you that all the latest rituals for KT and Malta are dated 2011 and should be used for all ceremonies. Confusion is often caused by the use of older books, particularly when a prompt is required. So talk to our Warden of Regalia, who is the agent for all Masonic books.

We will be introducing an "Exit Form" which I will ask all Registrars to complete and return to the Provincial Vice Chancellor in every case of a resignation from a Preceptory. This will bring us in line with other Orders which have successfully implemented this procedure. It will give us an opportunity to talk to the Knight concerned about his reasons and see if there is something we can do to retain or retrieve him.

At the Provincial Committee meeting last month we resolved to donate £200.00 to the Eye Hospital in Jerusalem, and £500.00 each to the Provincial Grand Royal Arch Chapters of Devon and Cornwall towards the Royal College of Surgeons Research appeal.

I must thank all those who have been responsible for organising today. Our host Preceptory, Holy Cross No. 561, Seaton and the Preceptories who have loaned equipment to set up the Sepulchre; the Bodyguard, their Commander, Deputy & Registrar, who have been here since early this morning setting up the Hall; our outgoing and incoming Vice Chancellors for the mostly unsung work that they do, and Mrs Sue Jones for organising the Ladies' outing today.

Nearly there, but I'm going to ask you to indulge me a moment or two longer.

Today is the 13<sup>th</sup> of October – an auspicious day for some and much less auspicious for others. Some of you will know that today is my wife's birthday, and she was born on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October. As it happens, 13 has been my lucky number since primary school, so Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October was indeed an auspicious day for me. My daughters think I should be taking my wife out today, on her birthday, but I have mitigated the circumstances somewhat by paying for her to go on the Ladies' outing to Lanhydrock! (and if any Bro. Kt. of this Province

actually tells her that I said that – he can kiss goodbye to promotion in this Order!)

However, if we go back a few years, 705 years in fact, to Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October 1307, it was a particularly inauspicious day for our medieval predecessors in this Order. On that day, Philip IV of France, who had decided that the Templars were becoming too rich & too powerful, ordered the arrest of the Grand Master, Jacques de Molay and other French Knights. They were charged with various heresies and tortured to extract false confessions. Under torture, de Molay confessed, but later retracted his confession and was subsequently ordered to be burnt alive at the stake. Pope Clement issued a Papal Bull instructing all Christian Monarchs throughout Europe to arrest all Templars & seize their assets, and under pressure from Philip IV, Pope Clement agreed to disband the Order.

According to legend, the Grand Master called out from the flames as he burned, that he would soon meet again with both Pope Clement and King Philip before God. History tells us that Pope Clement died a month later and King Philip was killed in a hunting accident within the year.

So you see, my minor domestic difficulty pales into insignificance compared with our 14<sup>th</sup> century predecessors and their persecutors!

Right! Here endeth the history lesson!

The annual reminder, Bro. Kts. of the Grand Master's Council recommendation that at 5pm on Christmas Day we remember our Bro. Kts. around the world with this short prayer: "Preserve O Lord our Brother Knights, by land and sea and air. And as we keep them in our thoughts, so keep them in thy care".

Bro. Knights, thank you all for your support today. I look forward to seeing you all in your Preceptories during the coming year.

And finally: May your troubles be less, may your blessings be more, and may nothing but happiness come through your door.

Thank you for listening – have a safe journey home.

Rt. E. Kt. Peter Davies 13<sup>th</sup> October 2012.