



GILD OF FREEMEN
OF THE CITY OF LEICESTER



Gildhall News



Jewry Wall Leicester



THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL
OF THE
LEICESTER GILD OF FREEMEN



Number 98

May 2023

Gild Banquet Weekend 10th / 11th June 2023

This is to give you notice of the Gilds Banquet Weekend in June. We would very much appreciate your support.

The Banquet will be held on Saturday 10th June (7.00pm) at Devonshire Place, 78 London Road, Leicester, LE2 0RA. The city's renowned banqueting establishment is located half a mile from the city centre, near the railway station and close to several hotels. There is a carpark at the rear of the building in Prebend Street.

Following a wine / soft drink pre-dinner reception, an appetizing three course menu plus coffee and mints has been selected, with vegetarian alternatives. Tickets cost **£40.00 per person**—please use enclosed booking form to secure your place.

A wine table offering reasonably priced wines will, of course, be available for dinner.

The Freemen's Service will be held on the following day, Sunday 11th June (10.30am) at St Andrews Church, Aylestone, next to Freemens Holt where a robed procession will take place from the Community Centre to the church.

The banquet is open to all members, their friends and relations.

A booking form can be found in the centre pages.

If you require any further information or would like details of hotels, please contact **Mick Ayres on 0116 2242353**.

Please note that another forthcoming event is:

Skittles Night at

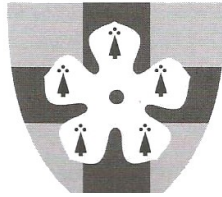
Barnacle Village Hall CV7 9LD Friday 11th August 2023 7pm

GILDHALL NEWS

February 2022

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THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL
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LEICESTER GILD OF FREEMEN



Patron: Colonel Robert Martin OBE DL
President: The Lord Mayor of Leicester

OFFICERS 2022–2023

Master: M. Ballard
Deputy Master: L.A. Roffee
Clerk: H. Lake
Chamberlain: M. B. Hill

WARDENS

N. Cave,
J.D. Lewitt,
S. Freeman,
K. Mardon (co-opted) & Jean Mardon



Malcolm Ballard

Master of the Gild

Hello everyone,

On Wednesday 12th April 2023, at Common Hall, I was elected to be the Master of The Gild. I am very much looking forward to taking up this position and am determined to give it my full attention. I promise to represent the Gild in a good and

appropriate manner and with all those willing to help, keep the Gild moving forward. I would like to thank Jeff for his input to the Gild as Past Master.

The Lord Mayor said he was delighted to be at the Freeman's Estate to open Common Hall and was pleased he had been given the opportunity to meet Freeman on several occasions throughout his term of office. He recalled as a young lad, going scrumping at Freeman's Common.

He told the meeting that Freeman are an important part of Leicester's DNA and that the Gild had supported him on several occasions throughout the year. The Freeman have a long association with Leicester and what it has evolved into. Freeman see themselves as part of the rich and harmonious diversity that the city has become. Leicester is at its best when we are guided by our caring nature and can be emphatic regardless of our differences. The Lord Mayor thanked Freeman for support to both him and the Lady Mayoress.

The Lord Mayor was presented with cufflinks and a cheque for his chosen charity, Sickle Cell Society, which has been supported by him during his year of office, he thanked the Gild for their generosity. He then took the opportunity to inform the meeting and raise awareness of Sickle Cell Anaemia; he explained it is a blood disorder that is more prevalent amongst people with African heritage but affects people of all races. In its mildest form people will feel lethargic and unwell and for the worst case fatal. There is no known cure but there is a potential cure with bone marrow but that comes with its own risk.

Sufferers can have entire body pain which requires them to go to hospital to receive powerful pain relief, others may have a stroke as the blood cells reshape into a sickle and block the arteries and starves the brain of oxygen. When patients have an attack, they must go to the hospital and have regular blood transfusions. It is a paralysing and disabling condition and even a change in weather, be it cool or hot, can effect sufferers. All of this is a sobering thought and we as a gild have every intention of offering any other support to The Lord Mayor.

On the 18th March Mary and Myself attended the Lord Mayors banquet at the Mercure Grand Hotel with the theme "What Makes Leicester

Great" with all proceeds going to Sickle Cell Society. This was a most enjoyable evening with local artists performing.

On a lighter subject we are currently organising a banquet for the 10th June which I hope will be a successful evening for everyone, it is at Devonshire Place in Leicester where we have held it before. I know this is short notice but I'm sure we can make it a most enjoyable evening, more information and booking form is further on in this issue.

On the 11th May I have been invited by the Lord Lieutenant Mr Michael Kapur to a service to celebrate the Coronation of HM King Charles III at St Mary de Castro church in Leicester.

Malcolm Ballard

Master of the Gild

Report by Chair Of The Board Lynn Roffee

I am deeply honoured to have been elected as the Chair of the Board of Deputies at the recent Annual General Meeting. I am truly grateful for the trust and confidence that the Deputies have placed in me, and I am committed to fulfilling the responsibilities that come with this position. I look forward to the year ahead with great anticipation, and I am confident that the board and I will be successful in fulfilling the Charity's mission and serving our Freeman's community with distinction.

The Board Meetings for the rest of 2023 are Wednesday 7th June, Wednesday 6th September and Wednesday 6th December. Board Meetings take place in the Community Centre at Freeman's Holt, starting at 1930, all Freeman are welcome and encouraged to attend.

The 2022 Annual Report and Accounts have been completed and submitted to the Charity Commission. If you would like a copy of any Board/AGM minutes or the Annual Report, please contact the office.

We have had a very busy few months here at the Freeman's Holt. The building work to extend No's, 4, 9, 10 & 24 have all now been completed, the Board are very happy with the standard of work. Five additional car parking spaces have also been added to the estate. The Annual Inspection of the Estate took place 1st April, several improvements were identified which we hope to carry out this year.

Bungalow Vacancies

We currently have one Standard and one extended bungalow vacant. No 9 has been extended to add an extra room and lobby. The additional room can be used as a bedroom or dining room. The work included; new kitchen, new wet room, decorated throughout and larger rear patio.

If you would like to see the floorplan or would like any further information about the current vacancies please contact the office. You would be more than welcome to visit the vacant bungalows and look around the estate.

From the 1st June 2023 the monthly maintenance contributions will be:
Standard Bungalow- £166.36 Extended Bungalow—£232.87

Take Care

Lynn Roffee

Chamberlains Report

At Common Hall in 2022 it was agreed that the Gild's financial year should change and now become 1st January-31st December, replacing 1st April –31st March. This simplifies the accounts bringing them into a single year rather than being split as nine months of one year and three months of the following year.

To initiate the change the new format required the accounts to be audited a second time in 2022 and this was completed on the 31st December and the result of the audit included in the February issue of the GHN.

The second audit shows the guilds finances to be in a very satisfactory state, and the next audit is not now required until the 31st December 2023.

During 2022 we have staged, compared with recent years, a fairly full program.

Open Morning

Fish & Chip supper

Banquet

Visit to the Bell Foundry

Talk Crime and Punishment (cancelled 4days before event, presenter hospitalized)

Talk Peppermint Billy

Balloon Modelling

Visit to Pantomime

Carol Service

To date this year we have staged a very successful Skittles evening and arranged the annual banquet to take place this year at Devonshire place on Saturday the 10th June. Necessary booking and menu are contained elsewhere in this issue. Time is pressing so please book A.S.A.P

We have already reserved seats for the December Pantomime Puss in Boots, at the Little Theatre on Friday 15th December. Booking forms will be included in August GHN. All organized by a very small band of court members.

Some events were quite profitable others made varying degrees of profit and loss. However to stage all of the above events only depreciated the gild funds by £49

We do so desperately need more court members bringing in fresh ideas because our priority now is to fill the social program for the rest of the year.

The Court only meet six times a year. Always in the evening, so please consider joining us if you would like to be part of the Gild.

Before closing I must bring to your attention the situation arising from the Common Hall meeting on Wednesday 12th April. Only fifteen people attended and not all of those were Gild members, some being associates or non members. A count was made of the Gild members but sadly not enough members were present to form the necessary quorum, therefore decisions could not be made during the meeting.

The Gild Court will now have to meet and decide how to cope/deal with the situation.

Maurice Hill

Chamberlain

**The Annual Banquet of the
Gild of Freemen of the City of Leicester
To be held at
Devonshire Place, 78 London Road LE2 0RA**

**Saturday 10th June, 7pm for 7.30pm
Black Tie or Dark Lounge Suit
Medals and Decorations may be worn
Tickets £40.00 per person**

Please forwardtickets @ **£40** each

I enclose a cheque for £.....Payable to **“Gild of Leicester
Freemen”**. **Or**

If you would like to pay by **Bank Transfer the Account Name is:**
“Gild of Leicester Freemen”.

sort code: 30-96-18 Account Number: 01409164

Please use Your Full Name as the bank reference.

.....
Address.....

Postcode.....Tel No.....

Email Address.....

My guests are.....

.....
Please advise of any special dietary requirements and allergies
against the guest name.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE MENU CHOICE ENCLOSED.

Send to :

Maurice Hill. 33 Mossdale Road, Leicester. LE3 2UT

Please complete the Banquet Menu Below

Starters

- A) Prawn Cocktail
- B) Broccoli & Stilton Soup
- C) Melon & Coconut (V)

Mains

- D) Cod Loin
- E) Lamb Shank
- F) Brie, Potato & Courgette Crumble (V)

Desserts

- G) Traditional Treacle Sponge
- H) Raspberry Crème Brulee
- I) Fresh Fruit Salad (V)
- J) Cheese & Biscuits

Filter or Decafinated Coffee, with Petit Fours

Guest's Names

A B C D E F G H I J

| Guest's Names | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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**SKITTLES NIGHT - Booking Form
Barnacle Village Hall CV7 9LD**

Friday 11th August 2023 7pm

£10 per person

Chips, with either fish/chicken/sausage/vegetarian

Book by 20th July 2023

Please reserve for me..... places at £10 per person

My name is.....

My address is.....

.....

..... Post code.....

Telephone.....Email address.....

I enclose my cheque for £.....

Made payable to "Gild of Leicester Freeman

Please send to:

**Maurice Hill 33, Mossdale Road, Kingsway Leicester LE3 2UT
mozjune@talktalk.net**

All applications are dealt with on a first come first-served basis

GILD OF FREEMEN OF THE CITY OF LEICESTER

Application for Full Membership

Full Name
(BLOCK LETTERS)

Address

..... Post Code

Tel No.: email address

I am a duly sworn Freeman of the City of Leicester and apply to be enrolled as a Member of the Guild of Freeman, for which I enclose the sum of £10.00 (Enrolment fee of £1.00 plus the first annual subscription of £9.00).

Signature.....Date

Application for Associate Membership

Full Name
(BLOCK LETTERS)

Address

..... Post Code

Tel No.e-mail address

I certify that I am the (please delete where applicable)SPOUSE / WIDOW / WIDOWER / SON / DAUGHTER / GRANDCHILD,aged 18 years or over of

Mr / Mrs / Ms(Freeman of Leicester)

Or

I am a full member of the Guild of Freeman of.....(City or Town)

I apply to be enrolled as an Associate Member of the Guild, for which I enclose the sum of £7.00 (Enrolment Fee of £1.00 plus the first Annual Subscription of £6.00)

Signature.....Date

Please make cheques payable to 'Guild of Leicester Freeman'
and send with this application to:

Maurice Hill, 33 Mossdale Road, Kingsway, Leicester LE3 2UT

RENEWAL OF GILD MEMBERSHIP

(Payment by Standing Order)

(Kindly complete where marked by all dotted lines)

To: Maurice Hill,
33 Mossdale Road,
Leicester
LE3 2UT

Date.....20.....

I,

agree to pay my Annual Subscription to the Gild of Leicester Freemen on 1st April each year by means of the signed Standing Order that I have sent to my bank.

I understand that the annual subscriptions at present are £9.00 for a full member and £6.00 for an associate member, and that I can stop or amend this Standing Order simply by giving instructions to my bank.

Signature.....

Address.....

.....

..... Post code

Tel. No.....

email

Please complete the Standing Order form below,

STANDING ORDER-PLEASE SEND TO YOUR BANK MANAGER

To: The Manager.....Bank Plc

Address:

.....

.....Postcode.....

Please Pay to:- Lloyds Bank Plc,
 Old Market Square Branch,
 Nottingham NG1 6FD
 (Bank Sort Code 30-96-18)

For the account of the **Gild of Leicester Freeman** (Account
No.01409164)

The sum of £.....,

Commencing 1st April 23.....,and yearly thereafter until further notice.

.....(my surname and initial/s)

Name of Account to be debited.....

Account No.....

Signature.....Date.....20.....

Address.....

.....

Postcode.....

RENEWAL OF GILD MEMBERSHIP
(Payment by Cheque)
FOR THE YEAR 1ST APRIL 2023 – 31ST MARCH 2024

I would like to pay the annual subscription for my membership/
associate
membership of the Gild for the year commencing 1st April 2023

Membershipat £9.00 = £.....

Associate Membershipat £6.00 = £.....

My name is (BLOCK CAPITALS).....

My address is (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

.....

Post code.....Telephone.....

e-mail address.....

I enclose a cheque/postal order for £.....

made payable to “**Gild of Leicester Freemen**”

Please post to:

Maurice Hill,
33 Mossdale road,
Kingsway,
Leicester LE3 2UT

Any queries, please phone Maurice on **0116 289 5394**

The Guild of Freemen of the City of Leicester
GILD PRODUCTS ORDER FORM

- | | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------|----------|
| 1. | Tie - navy | at £10.00 each | = £..... |
| | - green | at £10.00 each | = £..... |
| 2. | Gild Scarf | at £15.00 each | = £..... |
| 3. | Cuff Links | At £16.00 per pair | = £..... |
| 4. | Lapel Badge | at £2.50 each | = £..... |
| 5. | Gild Pens | at £3.00 each | = £..... |
| 6. | Gown, made to measure, (includes delivery) | price on request | = £..... |
| 7. | Register of the Freemen of Leicester 1986 –1996 | £2.50 each | = £..... |
| 8. | Register of the Freemen of Leicester 1931—1985 | £3.50 each | = £..... |

plus postage* @ £3.20 second class
@ £3.95 first class

TOTAL = £.....

I enclose cheque for the above total, made payable to:
“Guild of Leicester Freemen”

NAME

ADDRESS

..... POST CODE

EMAIL ADDRESS

Signed

Please post to:

Sue Freeman, 5 LITTLE MILL CLOSE, BARLESTONE, LEICS. CV13 0HW

Tel: 01455 291771

e-mail: suefreeman10@gmail.com

*Please note that any orders at and above £20 will need to be sent by recorded delivery at £7.25 (contact Sue for further details)

A Freeman Remembered: A Story of Harrison & Sons – Seed Growers

This article came about after seeing a book called *“Leicester Past and Present 1860-1974”* by Jack Simmons in a local charity shop. A chapter in the book titled *“Prosperity”* discusses the tradition of horticulture in Leicester in the 1840s. Leicester had many gardens in the Old Town and by 1845 the Allotment Society had 860 members. Market gardens and orchards were being cultivated in many places and Avenue Road was given as an example of one of the many streets having a significant number of fruit trees. The book also discusses the setting out of allotments on part of Freeman's Common. The chapter starts with Simon Greaterox, who was not a Freeman, a County Magistrates Clerk who lived in Avenue Road, Leicester. He had gathered a pip of a Blenheim Orange variety of apple in 1857 and propagated it, naming the tree after his baby daughter, Annie Elizabeth, who died in 1866.

John Harrison was a Merchant seedsman, whose business premises were at Market Place, Leicester. He was the first son of Thomas, a gardener, and served his apprenticeship to his father taking his Freedom on 28th April 1865. It is not known how Harrison & Sons became aware of the *“Annie Elizabeth”* variety of apples or how they obtained the seeds from it. However, Harrison & Sons introduced the variety to their line of seeds in 1868 and were awarded a First-Class Certificate by the Royal Horticultural Society in 1868 for the *“Annie Elizabeth”* sapling and apple they had entered the society competition. The apple is a top-quality *“kitchen Apple”* otherwise known as a cooking apple. It was grown commercially until the 1930's when it is said to run out of favour. The fruit size is larger than normal, firm red and green then going golden when ripe; the flesh is a crisp white colour and sweeter than most cooking apples. The apple keeps well and can be stored right through until the end of March if stored cool. It was these qualities that meant Harrison & Sons decided to propagate and sell the variety.

Harrisons & Sons adverts stated they had the *“newest and best varieties”* of peas, potatoes, carrots, leeks, beet, cabbages, and swedes. They were well-known seed merchants known to produce exhibition specimens for both farming and gardening and had exhibited at Birmingham cattle Show and Smithfield and attended the Harborough Market on Tuesdays.

The original *“Annie Elizabeth”* tree is still living and was tracked down by Leicestershire Heritage Apples (LHA) in 2011. The tree has been identified by LHA who spend a lot of time trying to find and preserve varieties that were once common but have, for whatever reason, gone out of fashion. Identification was helped by a watercolour painting, commissioned by the then-owner of the property where the tree is, in the early 20th century. It is still possible to purchase an *“Annie Elizabeth”* variety from well-known suppliers online, but it cannot be found in supermarkets or garden centres.

In the 1881 Census, John and his wife Sarah, nee Barber, and their children lived at 2 Ash Street, Leicester and later moved to "Overdale" Farm Buildings in Aylestone. They had married on 16 January 1860 at St Mary Magdalen Church in Knighton. Sarah and John died in April and November 1929 respectively and are buried in Gilroes Cemetery. The following details some information about their sons that is available to the public. John and Sarah also had at least four daughters and a second son who had died young.

William Augusta Harrison

William was educated from 20th January 1885 at Wyggeston Boys School, then Charterhouse in 1896 and then worked in the family business. He took his Freedom on 8th March 1897. William commanded a voluntary company of the Leicestershire Regiment during the Boer War. He was made Captain on 24th March 1900, then promoted to Major on 3rd November 1906 serving with the 4th Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment. He married Hannah Marion Pickard at Holy Trinity Church, Leicester on 15th February 1900.

On 17th December 1912, William was awarded the Territorial Decoration. When the First World War started on the 4th of August 1914, he was appointed Lieutenant Colonel of the 1st/4th Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment. The 1914 Wright's Directory of Leicester shows William's occupation to be a seed grower. He entered France on the 2nd March 1915 later becoming ill needing to be hospitalised in a French Hospital. William was then invalided home. In 1916 he relinquished his commission and sailed aboard the "City of Manchester" on his own as a First-Class passenger and Merchant to South Africa on 5th February 1917. the journey taking about 100 days. He died at the Barberton Hospital, Transvaal, South Africa of Tuberculosis on 27th July 1917 aged 44. Probate records show his home address as White Cottage, Meadow Court Road, Leicester.

Thomas (Tapper) Percy Harrison

Thomas was born on 21 February 1876 and attended Wyggeston Boys School. He took his Freedom on 8th March 1897 and his occupation was shown as a seed merchant and worked in the family business. He enlisted in the Army Service Corps in the Mechanical Transport section and was mobilised on 27th May 1918 at the age of 42. Thomas married May G. D. Cubitt in 1921. The 1939 Register shows Thomas living at 106 Letchworth Road, Leicester and working as a seed grower and merchant. He died on 13th December 1974 at the age of 99 years and his home was in Rothley.

John Harrison Junior

John was born on 6th August 1878 and attended Wyggeston Boys School. He was a seedsman and married Elsie Edith Bruce on 10th June 1903. He- took his Freedom on 2nd June 1905. The 1911 Census shows

John and his wife living at 328 Aylestone Road, and having two daughters. The 1939 Register shows John living at The White House, Scraftoft and his occupation was seed grower and merchant. He was made Chairman of the family business and died in late 1974 or early 1975.

Hubert Arthur Harrison

Hubert was born on 1st July 1880 and attended Wyggeston Boys School from 1890-1896 and was baptised at St Andrews Church, Aylestone. He obtained technical education at Crewe Technical Institute in Maths, Machinery Design, and Applied Mechanics in 1899-1900 and won the Directors Prize at Owens College, Manchester in 1901-2. The 1901 Census records Hubert, aged 20, as being a border and apprentice studying mechanical engineering at Monks Copperhall in Crewe. In 1908 Hubert married Mary Aunna Millard. According to the Sussex and Kent Morning Post of 14 October 1908, Hubert was in the volunteer force with the Cheshire Royal Engineers (Railway Battalion) serving as a Lieutenant.

The Mechanical Engineer Records 1847-1938 show Hubert being a member since 1914, He was working as a Locomotive Superintendent with the Antofagasta Bolivia Railway, Antofagasta, Chile. It details his apprenticeship, starting when he was 17 ½ years old, and his technical and subsequent career as follows:

- 8 months with Messrs W. Richards and Sons, Leicester from January 1898.

- Sept 1898-Sept 1901 premium apprentice at Crewe.

He then worked:

Sept 1902 - July 1903 as Draughtsman. L & N. W. Crewe Works

July 1903 - Oct 1905 Assist. Locomotive Foreman at L& N.W. Crewe Sheds

October 1905 – July 1906 Locomotive Foreman, N.W. Stafford Sheds

July 1906 – February 1908 Locomotive Foreman, L & N. W. Preston Sheds

Feb 1908 - July 1911 Locomotive Foreman, L & N.W. Netherfield, and Colwick Sheds

July 1911 – July 1912 Locomotive Foreman, N.L. Bow Sheds

August 1912 –December 1913 Assistant Locomotive Superintendent

The 1939 Register shows Hubert and Mary residing in Croydon. Hubert was working as Secretary & Editor of the Institution of Locomotives, Chief Inspector (Engineer) to the Ministry of Supplies under the D.T. E. Hubert did not take his Freedom.

There were at least three other brothers, two on whom are shown below the other dying at an early age:

Joseph Ernest Harrison was born in 1886 and died in 1889 and was buried at Welford Road Cemetery.

Alan Richard Harrison was a surveyor who took his Freedom on 2nd June 1905. When he married Ethel Wilkinson on 29 July 1911 at St Mary Magdalen at Knighton. His occupation was shown as a corn merchant.

Lynn A Roffee

Freemen of England & Wales Association (FEW)

Leicester Gild members who hold individual FEW membership will have received their spring issue of the FEW Journal in February. Non members can receive a specimen on-line copy by request to my FEW e-mail address of 4smw@mypostoffice.co.uk

The FEW Spring Court Meeting was held in York in March, a report on proceedings is awaited.

Local news from the other Freemen's Guilds in the FEW South Midlands Area includes:

Coventry Freemen's Guild

After the pandemic's interregnum, Lord Mayor's Admission Courts are now back in action for 2023, with the first one in January seeing eleven new Freemen admitted, of which nine took up complimentary Guild membership to the end of the year. The next Admission Court is programmed for 25th April in the Council Chamber, with the Lord Mayor presiding. Like the Leicester Gild, Coventry Guild Court has not been able to recruit new Officers, so our Past Masters will be 'recycled' for 2023/4 duties. The Ladies Night dinner in February had to be postponed due to lack of applicants, but a new venue has attracted a good attendance for the 18th April revised event. The Guild Banquet on 13th May likewise has been a slow starter, but we are hopeful this main event in the refurbished Guildhall will still go ahead. The following day will see the Freemen's Sunday Service at the Guild Church of Holy Trinity, preceded by a robed procession from the Council House in Earl Street. The return Coventry Guild vs. Leicester Gild skittles match is at the usual Barnacle Village Hall [CV7 9LD]

venue, and starts at 7pm on Friday 11th August. The hot supper of chips, with either fish/chicken/sausage/vegetarian will cost £10 each, and needs to be booked by 28th July with Tony Archer on 01926-851439, or e-mail anthon.aa@hotmail.com

Northampton Freemen's Guild

It is hoped to hold an annual dinner later in the year. As on previous occasions, robed Freemen will support the Mayor on appropriate processions and events.

Derek Austin



Things Ain't What They Used To Be.

On Wednesday 12th April the Gild Court held its Common Hall; the Annual General Meeting; and at that point I still had no idea what I was going to write for the next issue of the Gildhall News, and it had to be submitted to the editor by the weekend. However, the meeting itself provided me with an inspiration due to its poor attendance.

It is easy to say that in the past we used to do this, or that never happened, because we look at the past through rose tinted glasses, but in recent years there has been a definite decline in interest in the Gild by its members. There is no one particular cause for the fall in support, no one is to blame, not even the pandemic of a few years ago. I have no axe to grind about the lack of support; I am not a member of the Gild Court, but it is disappointing as a founder member of the Gild when I think of all the time and effort we put into the Gild's early formation.

Councillor Bert Baker, the Lord Mayor of Leicester from 1977 to 1978 invited the Gild to hold its Common Hall in the Council Chamber in the Town Hall, a situation that continued until very recent years, and it was well supported. But it is not just the Common Hall that has experienced a fall in its support by the membership, other events have had the same drop in numbers. Coach trips have had to be cancelled due to lack of sufficient passengers to balance the books and talks at the Holt have been cancelled again due to lack of interest. The cost of hiring a coach has risen considerably recently because of the rising cost of fuel and inflation generally which makes a day trip anywhere an expensive day out, particularly for a family. Sometimes the choice of destination might not be to everybody's taste but if members do not say so or offer alternative suggestions the Gild Court will continue to be in the dark.

Last year the Board of Deputies (not to be confused with the Gild) organised a garden party held at the Holt in the summer and freemen and

their families attended in droves, and the whole day was enjoyed by everyone. There was a variety of entertainments to suit all ages and a hog roast to complete the day. The cost of the day was borne by the Board and all the entertainment and food was free for those attending, which may be the reason for the huge support.

Whatever the reason for the disparity of attendance figures between the functions organised by the Gild Court and the Board of Deputies they are all put on with good intention, and if you feel strongly enough about their respective decisions they would welcome your ideas with open arms, or better still, as a helper.

I mentioned above that coach trips had been arranged and subsequently cancelled because of a lack of demand for seats on the coach. In 1945 the board organised a coach trip for the residents of freemen's cottages (then referred to as inmates) along with some of the Board Members for the grand sum of £12 7s 6d (12 pounds 37½p in today's currency). The destination for the day was Wicksteed Park, a popular venue for a day out and on the return journey the coach stopped off for tea and sandwiches. The chances are that that outing was their first day out since the war started in 1939 for a number of those on the coach. Over the next twelve years the Board made annual outings to various destinations including Skegness, Hunstanton and Matlock Bath, and by the time of the last visit, which was to Stratford-on-Avon, in 1957 the cost of hiring a coach had risen to £22 1s 9d.

Coach outings have been organised by the Gild over the years and have proved to be very popular, indeed on some visits it was necessary to provide two coaches to satisfy the demand. London attracted a very good response from the members, particularly to certain venues such as Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament, and Windsor Castle went down very well. Surprisingly, a day out to Chester proved to be the first time two coaches were necessary when we were invited by the Freemen of Chester to visit their city, and excellent hosts they were too. Sadly, the cost of hiring a coach now is so expensive that the cost to hire the coach cannot compete with the price of a ticket directly with the coach companies offering day trips to various destinations.

Sadly, the cost of hiring a coach now is so expensive that the cost to hire the coach cannot compete with the price of a ticket directly with the coach companies offering day trips to various destinations.

The Common Hall was a disappointment in that there was a poor attendance, so poor in fact that there were not sufficient numbers to constitute a quorum to approve the proceedings of the meeting. Hopefully this was just a blip in the life of the Gild, and that things will improve, but without your support that is not going to happen.

John Tolton

Gild Archivist

Have you changed your address?

In the event that it is necessary to inform the Gild or the Board of any change in circumstances, the information should be sent to both:

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**Leicester Freemen's Deputies
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***Copy for the next issue should reach the Editor
by July 15th 2023***

Write with your suggestions and contributions to:

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Telephone: 0116 286 1507

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Facebook: search for "Leicester Gild"

Guests at The Lord Mayor's Charity Dinner



The Grand Hotel Leicester 18th March 2023

Common Hall April 2023



**Lord Mayor Cllr. George Cole & the Lady Mayoress
At The Holt**