



GILD OF FREEMEN  
OF THE CITY OF LEICESTER



# Gildhall News



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THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL  
OF THE  
LEICESTER GILD OF FREEMEN

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆  
Number 96

November 2022

**Maurice Hill presenting Garden Party Donation Cheque  
To**

**Robert Fleming of Against Breast Cancer**



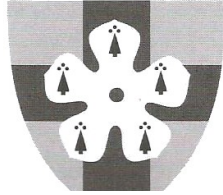
**October 2022**

# **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 2021–2022

Master: J.D. Lewitt  
Deputy Master: M. Ballard  
Clerk: H. Lake  
Chamberlain: M. B. Hill

WARDENS

N. Cave,  
L. A. Roffee,  
S. Freeman,  
K. Mardon (co-opted) & Jean Mardon



## Editor's Comments

Here we are back to the last Gildhall news of this year and where has this year gone. We have had events going ahead which we have missed in previous years and with the good weather it made such a difference. We need to start looking at events for next year and hope we have a time that is free from the constraints of Covid and any other illnesses. It will soon be the time to get the

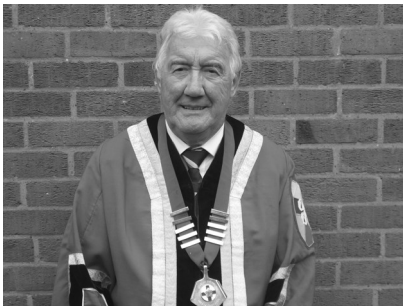
Christmas trees and decorations out again and look forward to family get togethers, wishing everyone a very merry Christmas.

*Malcolm Ballard*

**Deputy Master of The Leicester Gild of Freemen**

## Report by Jeff Lewitt Master of the gild

Thankfully this year most of our traditional events, have or will be, taking place. Indeed due to the sad passing of our beloved Queen, several traditions not seen since the Queen came to the throne, have taken place. On the 11<sup>th</sup> September I was invited by the Lord Mayor Councillor George Cole to join The Lord-Lieutenant of Leicestershire Mr



Mike Kapur OBE and the High Sheriff of Leicestershire, Ms Mehmooda Duke MBE, to the reading of the Proclamation in the Town Hall Square. I didn't know so many watched T.V or was able to recognise me in my robes. People are still stopping me and saying they saw me on "Tele"

On the 13<sup>th</sup> I was invited to a special meeting of the Council to consider an address to His Majesty, King Charles 111, offering profound sympathies after the passing of Queen Elizabeth 11.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> I was invited to a Service of Commemoration and thanks giving for Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth. This was at the Church of St James the Greater, London Road.

**The Lord Mayor's Civic Service is on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct. @ 4:00pm @ the Parish Church of St Mary De Castro, Castle View. Freemen are encouraged to support the Lord Mayor, at this event, especially Freemen with robes to process. Please contact me on 01162834357 as I have to reply by Friday the 14<sup>th</sup> October.**

**We have been invited to the REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE & PARADE on Sunday the 13<sup>th</sup> November. This will take place at the Arch of Remembrance, Victoria Park @ 10:55am non processing members of the Gild are invited to witness the Parade from reserved seats. Robed Members of The Gild are invited to join a small procession from the De Montfort Hall to the Arch. Please let me know if you are able to attend by the 21<sup>st</sup> Oct as I have to let them know how many will be there ( both categories ) Also I need to know how many parking spaces are required.**

**On the weekend 30<sup>th</sup> Sept – 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct Chris and myself attended the Chester Banquet We stayed at the rather large and splendid Queens Hotel near the station. Even better, the whole event was at the Hotel. Fridays pre-banquet was very enjoyable. It was nice to catch up with other Guild Members. The meal was excellent, and after we played stand up bingo. Needless to say me and Chris did no good. The Banquet on Sat was also very enjoyable. It was nice to meet the many other Guild Masters and Court Members. The speeches were not too long and quite interesting. It was nice to meet up with Mr John Dodd The Chester Master and the Past Master Mr Ian Dutton who are old friends. On Sunday we robed and processed from Bishop Lloyd's Palace to St Peter's Church ( The Freemen's Church ) The service also incorporated The Harvest festival. You would really need to go to this church to appreciate the very interesting style of service.**

**On Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October 19 Freemen were at a very interesting talk in the Community Hall by Jo Vigor Mungovin ( the lady who gave us a talk on the Elephant Man. ) This talk was about a local villain. William Brown, Otherwise known as " Peppermint Billy or Blinking Billy, due to an eye affliction. ) He met the usual grisly end for his crime. We would like to thank Lynn Roffee for arranging it.**

**Fri 25<sup>th</sup> Nov. Talk and Demonstrations of Balloon Modelling by  
Thelma Levett Add this to your Diary as  
it will be very interesting.**

**Bookings for the Panto Aladdin on 15<sup>th</sup> Dec. are now closed .**

**The Freeman's carol service is on the 19<sup>th</sup> Dec. Come along and  
enjoy the popular carols.**

*Jeff Lewitt - Master*

## **Report by Chair of the Board Barry Daniell**

On behalf of the Board, I hope you are all keeping safe and well. I was very pleased to attend the Making Free Ceremony at the Town Hall in September where eleven people took their Freedom, I would like to congratulate and welcome you all.

Earlier this year we sent a letter to all Freeman explaining the current situation and the concerns we had regarding the number of Deputies. Having enough Deputies to administer the Charity is of paramount importance. I am pleased to report that since then five Freeman have joined the Board as Deputies, giving a total of 16 Deputies serving on the Board.



The extension of No.24 is now underway and the builders are making excellent progress. This is a huge relief after the delays and setbacks we have had with this project. Quotes are being sought for three further bungalow extensions on the estate, which are currently vacant.

No.8, a vacant standard bungalow, has been rewired and had a new kitchen fitted. It will be decorated throughout in the coming weeks.

The monthly maintenance contributions are:

Standard Bungalow—£158.44   Extended Bungalow—£221.78

If you would like more information about living at Freeman's Holt, please get in touch with the office.

0116 283 4017   [office@leicesterfreemen.com](mailto:office@leicesterfreemen.com)

A new bungalow application form has been approved by the board, if you would like to apply for a bungalow please contact the office who can send you an application form.

The next board meeting will be held on Wednesday 7th December at 19.30, all Freeman are welcome and encouraged to attend. If you would like to attend, please inform the office so we can let you know how to access the estate.

Take care and stay safe

*Barry Daniell.*



## Chamberlains Report

### November GHN Chamberlain's Report

Against a background of a dramatic rise in prices and the cost of living, the threat of a possible recession and the war in Europe we would appear to be as far away from normality as we were in the pandemic, and if that is not enough it is reported that the number of covid cases is on the increase.

However, all is not gloom, the Gild soldiers on trying to get back to as near normality as possible.

Over the Autumn we have staged quite a full social calendar albeit one event, the talk "Crime and Punishment", was cancelled at almost the last minute because the speaker was admitted to hospital for an overdue operation.

Three social events are still outstanding for this year, and we have started on next year.

Full details of these events are given at the end of this report and necessary booking forms are included.

We must not forget the tying up of the loose ends of the 12<sup>th</sup> June Garden Party.

The winner of the wordsearch competition was Mrs Tina Oldham who found over three hundred words and wins the £20 Prize. On the day we raised £880. I travelled to Leamington Spa on 27<sup>th</sup> October to meet the Head of Research of the charity Against Breast Cancer and presented him with the cheque for £880.

We are now turning our thoughts towards 2024 and the possibility of the next garden party.

I started my report by trying to paint as bright a picture as possible but unfortunately, I must now address the downside.

The Gild's only income is via subscriptions plus any modest profits that come from events we stage but always remember that with any event we never set out to make a profit but aim, if possible, to not make a loss.

During the pandemic with the activities of the Gild virtually suspended and only zoom meetings being possible many Gild members overlooked the need to pay their subscriptions meaning they are now in an arrears situation.

To bring the books back into order could prove both difficult and messy so the Gild Court have agreed that any member or associate who has not yet made a payment to cover 2022 will be considered to be one year in arrears and will be written to and ask to clear that arrear asap.

This action means that the books will be up to date for a clean start from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023.

Now let us revert to a happier note detailing events planned.

Friday 25th November 7.00pm Talk and Demonstration of Balloon Modelling by Thelma Levett

All of you who attended this year's Garden Party will have seen Thelma balloon modelling for the youngsters and producing some of her fantastic models. She has been given the prestigious award of "International Balloon Twister of the Year" for her balloon excellence. During the evening there will be a degree of audience participation when you will be given the opportunity, with instruction, to make a model yourselves. See the enclosed booking form for more details.

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December- Visit to Pantomime to see Aladdin**

All tickets now sold if you still want to attend then contact the Little Theatre box office direct.

**Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December 7.00pm- Annual Freeman's Carol Service St. Andrews Church Aylestone**

You are all invited to join us to come and sing Christmas and start your celebrations and after the service in the Holt Community Centre for mince pies and mulled wine etc.

**Cars should be parked at the Holt**

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2023 7.30pm Skittles Night at the Wheatsheaf Inn Thurstaston LE7 7NT**

**£11 per person (Includes supper)**

Unfortunately, the Wheatsheaf, due to all round rising costs, have had to increase their charges for the evening, but one thing that has not changed is the food which is still excellent.

The food is all that is required to ensure a good and strong bowling arm. What could be better than? faggots, sausage, chips, cheese onion and potato pie, minted mushy peas and beans. There is a vegetarian option of homemade Mediterranean roast vegetable lasagne.

What ever you choose to eat remember we need a high score to prove to the Coventry Gild that unlike our local football team we can win matches.

So do come along and join in. What better way is there to spend a Winter evening than in a centrally heated, double glazed, carpeted room with excellent food and company.

*Maurice Hill*

**Talk and Demonstration of Balloon Modelling**  
**By Thelma Levett**  
**Friday 25th November 2022 7.00 pm**  
**In the Community Centre, Freeman's Holt**  
**Tea & Coffee included: Bring your own drinks and nibbles**

Please reserve for me ..... places at £3.00 each

My name is.....

My address is .....

.....

Post Code.....

Telephone.....

Email address.....

I enclose my cheque for £.....

Made payable to **"Gild of Leicester Freemen"**

Please send to  
**Maurice Hill 33, Mossdale Road Kingsway Leicester Le3 2UT**  
Applicants are dealt with on a first- come, first- served basis

**Visit to the Little Theatre, Dover Street, Leicester, to see  
"Aladdin"  
On Thursday 15th December 2022, starting at 7pm**

Please reserve..... adult seats at **£15.75** each

..... children's seats (under 16) at **£13.50** each

Name (capital letters)

.....

Address (capital letters)

.....

.....

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

Email address.....

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

Made payable to **"Gild of Leicester Freemen"**

Please send to

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

Please print your address in capital letters we don't want to send your tickets to the wrong address

Applications will be dealt with strictly on a first come, first serve basis

# Booking Form

**Skittles Night**  
**The Wheatsheaf Inn**  
**Thurcaston, Leicestershire, LE7 7JN**  
**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2023 starts 7.30pm**

Please reserve for me..... places at £11 per person

My name is.....

My address is.....

.....

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

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

I enclose my cheque for £.....

**Made payable to "Gild of Leicester Freemen"**

Please send to:

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

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 'Gild 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 2022 – 31ST MARCH 2023**

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

Membership .....at £9.00 = £.....

Associate Membership .....at £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 Mosssdale road,  
Kingsway,  
Leicester LE3 2UT

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



**The Gild 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,<br>(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:

**“Gild 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](mailto: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)





## Peppermint Billy - Talk

Local author Joanne Vigor-Mungovin gave a very interesting talk about her second book - *"Peppermint Billy" William Brown and the Tollgate Murders of 1856*, which took place in Melton Mowbray. In 1843 when William was found guilty of theft, the judge took into account two previous crimes and sentenced him to ten years transport. This meant that William would be sent to Van Diemen's Land, now known as Tasmania, Australia: a voyage of 10,835 miles, to serve his sentence.

William returned to Leicestershire in 1856. Seven weeks later William was executed in front of an estimated crowd of twenty thousand people outside of the City Gaol for the double murder of a seventy year-old toll gate keeper and his seven-year-old grandson

The talk was well received by those attending and lots of questions were asked.

L A Roffee

## A Freeman Remembered: Norman Staines Catlow:

Norman Staines Catlow was born in Leicester on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1899. He was the first son of Alfred Staines Catlow, a cigar manufacturer, and his wife Henrietta nee Danes was known as Harriett. They were married at Holy Cross Priory, New Walk in 1896 and had three other children, Phyllis May, Kenneth Danes and Theresa Patience.

In the 1901 Census the family were living at "Maythorn" on Stoneygate Road, though in the 1911 Census they had moved to "Kingsthorpe" 3, Westminster Road, Leicester.

Norman joined the Army in the First World War as soon as he was of age having commissioned from an Officer Cadet Unit. He was Gazetted on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1918 as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant 5th London Regiment during the First World War. He entered his first theatre in France and Flanders on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1918. A few days later Norman was seriously wounded and was moved to the Bristol Military Hospital. He was awarded the British War Medal, Victory Medal and the Silver War Badge.

When Norman took his Freedom on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1925, he was still living at the family home and working in the family business; the Leicestershire Cigar Manufacturing Company based in Granby Street, Leicester. Kenneth took his freedom on the same day and he was working as hosiery manager. Whilst Leicester was famous for its hosiery, knitwear and boot manufacturing, the cigar industry thrived in Leicester for many years.

Alfred founded the company in 1883 when "*cigar making was in its heyday*". When he started, he had a foreman and six cigar makers. Shortly afterwards he was joined by his brother-in-law T Allen. At one point the company employed up to 250 people and had branches in Burton and Coventry. Alfred was a past President of the UK Manufacturers Federation. When Alfred died in 1936, Probate Records recorded him living at 4 Westminster Road, Leicester.

By the end of 1950 there were only two cigar manufacturers in the city, one being Catlow and Allen, who were based in 80A Granby Street. In 1958, The Chronicle published an article about Catlow and Allen, noting that the atmosphere in the factory was "*calm*" and "*with five makers, all women sitting around a table*". Norman told the Chronicle that a good cigar maker can make up to 1,000 cigars a day by hand, using only a sharp knife and wooden mould.

When Norman died, on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1981, he was living at Thatched Cottage, South Croxton where he had been living since at least 1958.

L A Roffee

## **Freemen of England & Wales Association (FEW)**

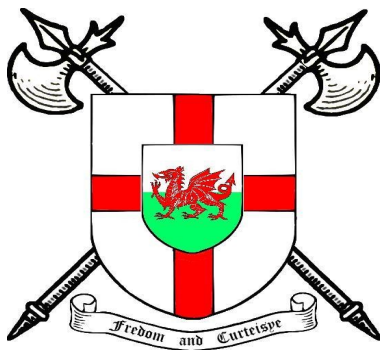
The FEW AGM was held on 1<sup>st</sup> October on the Zoom on-line platform – to save on members travel costs. Possibly due to the clashing date with the Chester Guilds banquet, attendance was low – mainly Executive Officers, Wardens, and several Guild representatives.

My Zoom link froze shortly after the meeting started – and kept asking for a nonexistent password. I eventually resumed attendance. Key news is that the previous Deputy President, whose radical restructuring proposals received a robust response at the previous FEW Court meeting held at the Holt, has now stood down – so we are hopeful of a more harmonious and helpful future. Steve Healy is confirmed as Executive Officer without Portfolio, and will chair a Working Party to update FEW rules and documentation.

I attended a historic Alcester Court Leet AGM and Elections on 6<sup>th</sup> October: for the first time in ~700 years Ladies have become eligible to take the Oath of Frankpledge; pay the Frankpledge 'Penny' – and become Jurors of the Court. Over 20 took the Oath - and subsequently three were elected as Junior Officers. The other Courts Leet in the FEW South Midlands Area have had Lady Members, and indeed Bailiffs, for several years.

Derek Austin

If Leicester Gild Members who hold an individual FEW membership would like to attend, please e-mail Lee on [leehensley@btinternet.com](mailto:leehensley@btinternet.com) and he will send the invite and relevant papers. The 2023 Court meeting is planned for the 18th March at Bedern Hall in York. Details will be advised nearer that date.



GN95FEWdraft

29/06/22

Any freeman reading this article would have to have been an outright republican not to have been affected by the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, for many of her subjects she was the only sovereign they had ever known and the grief expressed by the population was very real. The sadness felt for her passing was universal as was apparent by the number of world leaders attending her funeral. However, our attachment to the reigning sovereign has not always been as it was with Queen Elizabeth, indeed, it has been positively negative at times.

Perhaps the most notable was our relationship with Charles I.

At the outbreak of the Civil War between the Royalists and the Roundheads the town was held by the Parliamentarians but in July and again in August of 1642 King Charles I visited Leicester and was received with great ceremony by the burgesses. He made speeches expressing his belief in the loyalty of the population of Leicester, attended a civic service at St Martin's and then extracted 50 pieces of gold from the Corporation. A month later Prince Rupert entered Leicester with six dragoons and demanded a sum of £2000 from the Corporation for the King's army. He was given £500 but succeeded in doing considerable harm to the King's cause. King Charles did apologise for Prince Rupert's demand but there is no record of the money being returned.

For the next three years Leicester maintained a Parliamentary garrison with occasional skirmishes with the Royalists from Ashby and Belvoir but in 1645 the war came to Leicester in earnest.

In May of 1645 Leicester became a focal point in the Civil War between Oliver Cromwell and Charles I. A large Royalist army was marching to the North of England with the intention of regaining some ground there when news reached them that the Parliamentary Army lead by Sir Thomas Fairfax was besieging the Royalist stronghold of Oxford. At this news the King and Prince Rupert decided to attack the Parliamentary stronghold of Leicester with a view to luring Fairfax away from Oxford. Why Leicester? Well, an attack on Leicester would have great strategic advantages for the King. Leicester lay in the heart of the country with direct links to the Royalist towns of Newark and Ashby. The King also had received intelligence that the Town was poorly defended and that the members of the Corporation lacked any military experience.

So, by the end of May Leicester was in a poor state of readiness for any attack by the Royalists. Only a few houses in the suburbs had been demolished to give a clear field of fire for the defenders; even though an order had been given for the flattening of houses in areas around the town few house owners had obeyed the order. To make matters worse there were only nine pieces of ordnance to provide artillery fire. The Corporation made an appeal to the neighbouring towns of Derby, Nottingham, Northampton and Coventry for assistance but the only reinforcements came from the Scottish Army, dispatching several hundred

of their cavalry soldiers to Leicester. Most of the recruiting came from within the population of Leicester where 900 volunteers came forward ranging from 16 to 60 year olds to supplement the 480 soldiers in the garrison. There was also a small contingent of 150 men from the county who volunteered. With such a small contingent the defence of Leicester didn't stand much of a chance against a Royalist army of over 10,000 well-armed soldiers.

Fortunately, the defending army had the benefit of three experienced soldiers of Cromwell's Model Army commanding the town's defences in the guise of Colonels Pye and Grey along with Major Innes and his 200 horse who came from Newport Pagnell, giving a total of 2000 defenders, mainly consisting of inexperienced civilians.

On the night of May 29th, the Royalists were still travelling towards Leicester, burning down several windmills and one water mill on their journey. The next day at about 8 o'clock, Prince Rupert and his army pitched their tents towards the south side of the town, while the king took up his headquarters in the vicarage of St. Andrew's Church in Aylestone. Six great artillery pieces were located in an area where De Montfort University is presently situated by a strong dry ditch known as the Raw Dyke, an ancient Roman aqueduct, part of which is still in existence today near the football stadium. At 1 o'clock Prince Rupert fired two cannon shots into Leicester before sending a messenger to ask for the surrender of the defenders.

The town council met in the Mayor's Parlour in the Town Hall (now known as the Guildhall) but after two hours could not reach a decision. They sent a messenger to Prince Rupert asking if they could give an answer the following day, and that in the meantime the Prince should not raise anymore batteries. Prince Rupert could clearly see that the town was reinforcing their defences and that the request was a delaying tactic and angrily sent the messenger back warning him that if he returned with further requests he would put him in the stocks. Unfortunately for the messenger the Council did send him back still requesting further time. The messenger was never seen again. Prince Rupert sent a further message demanding an answer within 15 minutes and while the Council members were debating their response cannon balls came crashing down on the area around castle. The siege had begun.

The Royalist battery was set up facing the stone wall of the Newarke and defenders retaliated with cannon and musket fire as fast as they could and had some success putting out of action one Royalist cannon. But by 6 o'clock in the evening a breach had been made in the wall of the Newarke facing Mill Lane. An assault on the town began at midnight with Royalist soldiers storming into Leicester at seven different places. The bulk of the army attacked through the breach in the wall in Mill Lane and the remainder using scaling ladders around the walls of the town. There was fierce fighting with many Royalists dying in the attack and the first two attempts at the Newarke repulsed. The Royalists had more success along the east and north walls of the town, eventually storming into Leicester and tearing down the town gates.

Soldiers and town men fought side by side in fierce hand to hand encounters in the streets of Leicester losing ground until the defenders finally threw down their weapons by St Martin's Churchyard.

After the surrender the nastiness really began. Skirmishes continued throughout the town and the Royalists showed no mercy to the inhabitants. Not just the men folk, but women and children were put to death by the King's soldiers. Leicester became a den of robbery, rape, wanton destruction, murder, pillage and outrage. Royalist soldiers who entered Leicester that day seized the contents of shops, as well as cannons, muskets, horses and gunpowder. Some of the town Committee members were hanged while others were cut to pieces. The King rode through the town and is reputed to have said, "I do not care if they cut them three times more, for they are mine enemies."

As dawn broke on the day following the siege of Leicester, the noise and smoke rising up from the town gave way to appalling sights and sounds. There were the quiet sobs of the raped and the hysterical screams of the widowed, while the wounded lay dying in the streets. However, the cries and groans of the defeated were drowned out by the drunken songs of the victors. It is recorded that 140 cartloads of goods were confiscated from Leicester shops. Nine pieces of ordnance, 1,000 muskets, 50 barrels of gunpowder and 400 horses were also captured. The King stayed the night in Cavendish House (in Abbey Park) and added salt to our wounds by demanding £2000 from Leicester's Mayor as recompense for his losses.

Lord-General Fairfax was ordered by Parliament to abandon his siege of Oxford and march to the Midlands and recapture Leicester. But in the mean-time the Royalist army that remained in Leicester was given the task of refortifying the town and making it safe from reprisals by the Roundheads. The King left Leicester to march south but before he departed he destroyed Cavendish House and left it in the state it is today. On the way south he stopped at Market Harborough to reinforce his army and then proceeded to Daventry. On Friday 13th June the army led by the King and Prince Rupert re-entered Market Harborough and that night heard the news that the Model Army of Fairfax had captured the town of Naseby from the Royalists. King Charles decided to meet Fairfax's army head on and the rest, as they say, is history.

The Royalists were outnumbered 9,000 to 14,000. After fierce combat and hundreds of Royalist losses, the routed King's men began to flee the battlefield. After some ebb and flow of the battle the King and Prince Rupert eventually fled and spent the night at Wistow Hall, but the Royalists still held Leicester.

On Monday 16th June the Parliamentarians surrounded Leicester and Fairfax sent a "surrender" demand to the town. The Royalists would not back down, though: They were armed and waiting. On Tuesday, June 17, Fairfax raised a battery of cannon on the Raw Dykes, just as Prince Rupert had done in the previous month and proceeded to bombard Leicester. Before the morning was out the wall had been breached and the Royalists surrendered, although the formal signing of the surrender took place on June 19th 1645. The siege of Leicester was over.

When Oliver Cromwell died and his son Richard succeeded him as Lord Protector he proved to be no match for his father and became known as 'Tumble down Dick'. General Monk marched down from Scotland in 1660 and very soon the Mayor of Leicester was expressing great joy at the return of King Charles II, and though this show of loyalty may well have been sincere, it was not accepted as such.

The wording 'Allegiance to the Sovereign' was introduced into the freemen's oath by Charles II with the intention of barring anyone from becoming a freeman who was likely to oppose the crown.

### The Freemen's Oath of admission today

"I swear by almighty God that to our Sovereign Lord the King his heirs and successors I will bear faith and true allegiance. I will also be obedient to the Lord Mayor and ministers of this City of Leicester: The franchise, liberties, and lawful customs thereof I will maintain and this city keep harmless so far forth as in me lieth: I will be contributory to all manner of charges within this city as summonses, watches, contributions, taxes, tallages, lot and scot and all other charges, bearing my part as a freeman ought to do, whether I shall dwell within this city or any other place, so long as I claim the freedom of the said city; I will not take any apprentice but according to the law in that case provided, the indentures of which apprentice I will cause to be made by the common clerk and prothonotary of the said city, and will them inroll before the Lord Mayor for the time being, according to the custom of the said city: I will also keep the King's Majesty's peace in my person so far forth as in me is: I will know of no gathering conventicles nor conspiracies against the



peace of our Sovereign Lord the King, but will warn the Lord Mayor or other officers thereof, or else let me to my power: and also the lawful customs, liberties, and franchisees of this city I will to my power keep and maintain so far as in me lieth, and the lawful secrets and councils of the body politic of this city I will not disclose to the hurt or prejudice thereof: all these points and articles I will well and truly keep according to the laws and lawful customs of this city.

Notes:

Lines 1 -2, 'Allegiance to the Sovereign'. Introduced into the oath by Charles II with the intention of barring anyone from becoming a freeman who was likely to oppose the crown.

Line 3, 'franchise and liberties'. The franchise was the area within the town wall and the liberties were the suburbs outside the walls.

Line 5, 'summonses and watches'. All freemen would be liable to serve on the corporation and summonses were notices to serve on the corporation and watches were the various committees formed with different functions.

Line 5, 'contributions, taxes, tallages, lot and scot'. All of them were financial demands and lot and scot were the local rates imposed on the property of the freeman.

Line 9, 'prothonotary'. The principal clerk of the borough court

John Tolton

## ***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:

**Mrs Hazel Lake  
Clerk to the Gild of Freemen of the City of Leicester  
The Malthouse  
6 The Maltings,  
Ashley  
Leicestershire LE16 8HW**

**Telephone 01858 565826**

**Email: [hazel.lake-leicesterfreemen@outlook.com](mailto:hazel.lake-leicesterfreemen@outlook.com)**

*and*

**Leicester Freemen's Deputies  
32 Freemen's Holt  
Old Church Street  
Aylestone  
Leicester LE2 8NH**

**Telephone: 0116 283 4017**

**E-mail: [office@leicesterfreemen.com](mailto:office@leicesterfreemen.com)**

***Copy for the next issue should reach the Editor  
by January 14th 2023***

Write with your suggestions and contributions to:

**Malcolm Ballard  
5 Snowdrop Close  
Narborough  
Leics. LE19 3YB**

**Telephone: 0116 286 1507**

**E-mail: [romalc@btinternet.com](mailto:romalc@btinternet.com)**

**Facebook: search for "Leicester Gild"**



Chester Banquet



**The Loughborough Bell Foundry July 2022**