



GILD OF FREEMEN
OF THE CITY OF LEICESTER



Gildhall News



India with Punch and Judy



THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL
OF THE
LEICESTER GILD OF FREEMEN



Number 95

August 2022



Garden Party 2022





Banquet Weekend 18/19th June



Invite by The Lord Mayor to the Damask Rose Ceremony to O'Neill's Public House In Lowesby Lane on 24th June 2022

Pictures taken by :-
Brian Roffee

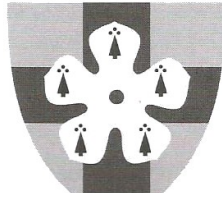


GILDHALL NEWS

February 2022

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THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL
OF THE
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

What a tremendous July we have had albeit a little too hot at times but it is something we all want yet when it does arrive we complain about it, how nice it would be if we could have the sun in the daytime and rain at night to keep the gardens lush and green.

At this time of year we start to look forward to events that have been planned and this is looking quite promising already as several are already booked so look further in the copy for them and lets all attend and enjoy.

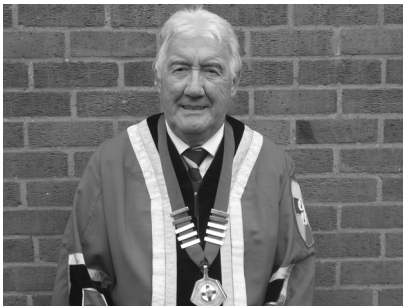
Malcolm Ballard

Deputy Master of The Leicester Gild of Freeman

Report by Jeff Lewitt Master of the gild

Report by Jeff Lewitt, Master of the Gild.

How are you all? A little warm perhaps. Hasn't the weather been lovely, though having an allotment I and the other gardeners could have done with a little rain. Since our last GHN in May we've had a run of events and historical ceremonies to uphold and support the new Lord Mayor.



On the 19th of May I was invited to attend the swearing in of the Leicester Council, and the new Lord Mayor, Councillor George Cole. Councillor Cole is the city's 1st Black African Caribbean Lord Mayor. Born in Kingston Jamaica Councillor Cole came to England in

1964. Councillor Cole represents the Western Ward.

On the 7th of May, myself and Chris along with Michael Ayres and Jean attended the Coventry Banquet at Coombe Abbey. It was nice to see old friends. If any Freeman would like to go to these events please apply. As Platinum Jubilee celebrations started, on the 2nd of June, myself and Malcolm were invited by the Lord Lieutenant and Bishop Martyn to attend the Platinum Jubilee Service at St. Mary de Castro. It was attended by the City and Counties finest, and was a lovely and moving service.

A little later than normal but importantly, despite the rain, the Gild successfully hosted a number of events over the annual Banquet weekend. The different events give a wonderful opportunity to join together and share in each other's company. This year, on the 17th June the pre-banquet fish & chip supper get-together witnessed an informal fun evening at the Freeman's Holt. The food was delicious and plentiful and the bingo and quiz that followed was well received by all attendees. Thanks go to Fiona and Russ for running the Bingo and Quiz.

The following evening the more formal Banquet Dinner was hosted at the Leicestershire County Cricket Club, Charles Palmer Suite. It was wonderful to be able to host this event, especially in light of ongoing logistical nightmares from the knock on effect of Covid still around. Those that were able, took the opportunity to attend in their finery, raise a glass and enjoy their choice of menu and silver-service to the table. The new venue appears to have received a positive response, with a number of guests taking the time to send in their thanks and portray their enjoyment of the evening. Owing to Covid the Lord Lieutenant Michael Kapur OBE helped out by giving a very interesting extended talk. I particularly liked his referencing to the beheading of one of the 35 previous Lord Lieutenants. Makes you think!!! We also had a lovely young lady who entertained us with popular songs. I mention these things as I was able to shorten my speech, much to everybody's delight. Just shows you!!!

The Freeman's Church Service and Parade was held on the following Sunday at St. Andrews Church, Aylestone. The Service was a lovely personal affair, led by Rector, Rowena with Colonel Robert Martin, the Gild Patron reading one of the lessons. The Lord Mayor, as our President during his year of office, read the 2nd reading. Part of the service detailed by Rowena referenced the input of the Freeman in the structure of how Leicester was managed before the introduction of the Council. The Lord Mayor, Councillor George Cole, and indeed his wife and daughter advised that after 50 years of living in Leicester he had learnt something new of its historical background! Refreshments were served in the Holt Community Centre after the Service where people lingered and enjoyed each other's company and took advantage of the nice weather for further photo opportunities.

Following tradition, on Friday 24th June the Lord Mayor invited the Gild of Freeman to process with him from the Town Hall to O'Neills Public House in Loseby Lane for the Damask Rose Ceremony. Myself, Malcolm Ballard, Sue Freeman, Lynn Roffee, and Peter Bates were ably led by Chris Rhodes the Mace Bearer.

Saturday 25 June saw Leicester host the Armed Forces Day parade and service. The Gild were invited to robe and myself, Malcolm Ballard, Sue Freeman and Peter Bates were able to represent the Gild at this important event and show appreciation for the armed forces with a dash of pomp and splendour. The parade was led by the pipes and drums of the Seaforth Highlanders, the 400-strong parade of service personnel, veterans, reservists and cadets started off from Jubilee Square marching along the High Street, Gallowtree Gate and Horsefair Street, in the city centre, before making its way to Green Dragon Square. The whole event was very special to be part of and being in the open air

made it additionally poignant and memorable. The Royal Anglians led the Service by placing their drums and 2 crossed flags to represent the altar as would be on a battlefield before the conflict. I find the Drumhead Service very moving. The Cottesmore Wives Choir sang 2 songs albeit pre-recorded. Altogether a lovely service.

In relation to further dates for the diary, thank you to those investigating and contributing to the programme of events for members to enjoy. There are a couple of interesting upcoming events to finalise and advertise, one being the annual visit to the pantomime at the Little Theatre. This year's performance being Aladdin. 34 tickets have been reserved at discounted prices, valid as long as we meet the ticket reserve. Details have been submitted for inclusion into the August copy of GHN. It is hoped attendance numbers will be back to normal years at this popular event, especially as we can start advertising with plenty of time. Please note also the dates for the upcoming swearing in ceremony. It is not very long now and will be most likely spread over 2 sessions in September.

Finally, I would like to once again thank members of the Gild Court for their continued input and hard work.

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. The bi-annual garden party took place on 12th June; we hope all those who attended had a lovely day. We were lucky to have such beautiful



weather. I would like to thank everyone who organised the event and volunteered to help on the day.

In July we hosted the Deputy Lord Lieutenant and the Deputy Lord Mayor of Leicester for Afternoon tea, this is an annual event. A cheque for £200 was presented to the Deputy Lord Mayor for the Sickle Cell Society, which is the Lord Mayors chosen charity.

Deputies (trustees). I'm very pleased to report that four Freemen have put themselves forward to become Deputies, I would like to thank them on behalf of all Freemen of the City of Leicester.

We also asked for suggestions for ideas or changes. I would like to thank everyone who took the time to get in touch with us; all of the responses were collated and given to the Board for discussion. The Board will be considering the suggestions over the coming months and we will keep you updated with any changes or improvements. You are very welcome to get in touch anytime with any more suggestions.

We recently welcome two new residents onto the estate into 'standard' bungalows. We wish them many happy years here at Freemen's Holt.

The project to extend No.24 was due to start in April, but unfortunately, for reasons out of our control, the project will need to be delayed. A planning permission request to extend No's 4, 9 & 10 is currently with Leicester City Council, these bungalows are currently vacant.

The other bungalow vacant is No.8, which is a 'standard bungalow'. This bungalow will be extensively renovated before it is allocated. If you would like to apply for No.8 please get in touch with the office.

From June, the monthly maintenance contributions will be:

Standard Bungalow - £158.44 Extended Bungalow - £221.78

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

The next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday 7th September at 19:30. All Freemen 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.

In the last edition of the Gildhall News, we sent a list of Freemen we had lost contact with. Thank you to everyone who contacted the office with updates. Take care and stay safe, Barry Danniell.

Chamberlains Report

We are now in near normality and hopefully the pandemic will slowly become a thing of the past but we are now having to continue facing the terrible war in the Ukraine and soaring inflation. Shall we ever be truly back to normal whatever that is?

In the October GHN, I proudly announced that I had audited the Gild's accounts and that the result was shown elsewhere in the issue. Stop searching, so much space was required for other matters that the audit result was omitted. Don't worry it is included in this issue.

Another change I mentioned in my last report was concessions for Gild members starting with a trial of 10% reduction for the banquet i.e., £40 reduced to £36. At time of writing, I'm still awaiting the final figures but it would appear the result was very promising.

We are still continuing to work to finalise possible events for this year.

May I remind you that any suggestions of possible events that you might like to suggest will all be welcomed and investigated, especially something new.

Future Events Arranged To-date

Tuesday 16th August 1.00pm Visit to Loughborough Bell Foundry

Step back in time with us as we take you into the ancient craft of bell-founding that has been practised by John Taylor and Company since 1859. Visits can take place only on Tuesday and Thursday and the last visit this year will be on Tuesday 30th August because the visiting area will then be closed for major refurbishment work to start

Tours start at 1.00pm and last approx. 2hrs. The tour programme is basically: -

- 1** A short introductory talk and film in the old laboratory
- 2** A tour of the main works hall where bells from across the world arrive for repairs
- 3** A visit to the woodworking shop to see how bell wheels are crafted into their unique shape
- 4** A visit to the tuning shop to learn about how the magical Taylor's sound is created
- 5** Access to the viewing platform overlooking the spectacular Victorian casting hall
- 6** The chance to touch and ting bells from across the centuries in the museum

See enclosed booking form for more details Do book asap spaces limited to 15 persons!

Friday 23rd September 7.00pm Talk “Crime and Punishment” by Caroline Roberts

A Victorian Judge described Leicester as “One of the most depraved towns” due to the amount of crime. Hear how criminals were dealt with in the past, tales of gibbets, body snatching and historic local murders as well as life in our prisons. Why pay for seats at the Turk’s Head and what’s Daniel Lambert got to do with it? See enclosed booking form for more details.

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 15th December 7.00pm Visit to Pantomime “Aladdin” at Little Theatre

Booking form enclosed, don’t delay in booking our seat allocation always sells out very quickly

Maurice Hill

Talk: “Crime and Punishment”
By Caroline Roberts
Friday 23rd September 2022 at 7.00pm
In the Community Centre, Freeman’s Holt
Tea & Coffee included: Bring your own drinks and nibbles

Please reserve for me places at £3.50 each

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
Applicants are dealt with on a first- come, first- served basis

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

Peppermint Billy
Talk to be held on Saturday, 8th October 2022
Community Centre, The Holt at 7.00pm
£4.00 per person

Come and listen to local author, Jo Vigor-Mungovin, tell you the tale of William Brown known as 'Peppermint Billy' who was a returned convict from Van Dieman's Land (now Tasmania) where he had been incarcerated for 10 years,

Peppermint Billy was executed on the gallows after being convicted of a double murder of a 70-year-old tollgate keeper and his nine-year-old grandson at Thorpe Road, Melton Mowbray. His was the last public hanging outside of Leicester Prison which was held on 25 July 1856.

Bring your own drinks and nibbles – tea and coffee will be available. Book now to avoid disappointment.

L A Roffee

Talk: "Peppermint Billy"
By Joanne Vigor-Mungovin
Saturday, 8th October 2022 at 7.00pm
In the Community Centre, Freeman's Holt

Please reserve places at £4.00 per person

Please print clearly:-

Name.....

Address.....

Post code.....

Mobile/Telephone No.....

Email:.....

I enclose a cheque for £.....

Please make cheque payable to **"Gild of Leicester Freeman"**

Please send completed form and cheque to:

Mrs L A Roffe, 39 Thorpe Field Drive, Thurmaston, Leicester LE4 8GU

Tea and Coffee included.

Requests for tickets dealt with on 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 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

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 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,
(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

*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)

The Gild of Freemen of the City of Leicester

The income and expenditure account for the year ending 31st March

	2022		2021	
Income	£	£	£	£
Entrance Fees		2		0
Annual subscriptions				
Mem- bers	(119)		(125)	
	1071		1125	
Associ- ate mem- Mem- bers bers	(32)	192	(25)	150
		1263		1275
Donations		3		10
Sales of Gild insignia				
Gowns, Ties, Badges etc.		40		0
Less cost		0		0
Bank interest		2		2
	Total	<u>1310</u>		<u>1287</u>
Expenditure				
Functions and events				
Expens- es	895			0
Income	1036	-141		0

Printing postage and stationary	417	90
Donation/subscriptions		
FEW subscription	0	0
Lord Mayor's appeal donation	200	0
Stock devaluation	0	0
Miscell. Expenses inc. Insignia purchases	16	0
Total	<u>492</u>	<u>90</u>
Excess (deficit) of income over expenditure	823	1197
Add balance from previous year	8649	6896
Total	<u>9472</u>	<u>8093</u>

Represented by

Cash at bank	9061	8359
Cheques awaiting paying into bank	75	69
Petty cash	117	1
Stock of Gild insignia	0	0
Plus - Debtors, cash paid in advance	208	460
Trivia	11	0
Total	<u>9472</u>	<u>8888</u>
Less - Creditors, cash received in advance	80	239
Total	<u>9392</u>	<u>8649</u>

The above is a true and fair statement of the financial accounts of the Gild of freeman of the City of Leicester taken from the books and records of income and expenditure maintained by the Gild Chamberlain for the Current year. 31st March 2022. *Maurice Hill Gild Chamberlain*

The 2022 Garden Party

The prime objective of the Party is for it to be a social event for all Leicester Freemen and their families and secondary to raise money for a nominated charity.

Well, I feel that both were more than achieved with so many people enjoying themselves, meeting friends they had not been able to meet since before the pandemic, basking in the sunshine and raising a final total of £860 for the nominated charity which this year was "Against Breast Cancer".

I feel very grateful and proud of my quite small team who worked very hard to organise and stage the event overcoming many trials and tribulations along the way.

We introduced two major organisation changes this year, the one-way system for entry and exit of the main parking area which was self-controlled negating the use of having people with stop/go boards and the new ticket system, meaning applications for tickets were received by telephone or Email and tickets were given on arrival at the event. This latter change saved both money and effort for the applicants and the office.

Of general interest some 350 persons attended and we parked approximately 100 cars.

We can report that on the day no complaints were received, no one sustained any injuries necessitating the use of the first aiders, no children were lost and no one or car, ended up in the river.

The Punch and Judy show was very well received with at times quite a senior audience. The Flea Circus was also a great success despite most youngsters being unaware of what is a flea. I'd been assured in the morning that the performers had all been fed but personally they came up to scratch.

To organise the event the team had to work through a twenty-two item "To do list", and will now meet for the last time this year to work through a "Done list", this will prepare the way for the next Garden Party in 2024.

So, my thanks to the team, and as they used to say in music hall days, "and mainly yourselves" for making the Garden Party a success.

Maurice Hill

A Freeman Remembered

Thomas Bottoms, a Freeman, was born in Leicester in 1878 and worked as a shoe clicker. He was married to Mary Ann and they had three children, Thomas Harold who was the eldest, James William and Albert Roland who was the youngest. The 1901 and 1911 Census show the family residing at 144 Surrey Street, Leicester.

Thomas Harold, whom I shall refer to as Tommy, was born in 1898 and enlisted as Private 1985, 1/4th Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment on 22 April 1914. He stated on his enlistment papers that he was 17 years and 8 months old. However, he would not turn 16 until the summer that year. When Tommy enlisted, he was working as a foundry hand at Richards Iron Foundry in Martin Street, Leicester.

Tommy's first theatre of war was in France and he arrived there on 2nd March 1915 aged 16. Sadly, Tommy was killed on the 13th October that year at the Hohenzollern Redoubt in France. He was only 17 years old.

Captain John Milne (who later after the war became Field Marshall Lord Milne), also in the same Regiment, wrote a book that recounted "*the deeds and actions*" of the 1/4th Leicestershire Regiment. Milne said it was "*written primarily for those who served or whose relatives served in the battalion*". He describes the battalion being in the trenches all morning, and by lunch time smoke and gas had been started by the battalion in the hope that the Germans in the "*trenches opposite would be asphyxiated or fly, and the rum was issued joyfully, lots of it*". At the time of the planned assault by the battalion Milne wrote "*up they come, over they go, forward to their objectives: no one falters, the position must be taken at all costs*". Records show that 1/4th Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment lost 20 officers and 454 other ranks that day. Tommy was one of those other ranks. He has no known grave but is remembered on the Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France.

James doesn't appear to have taken his freedom but Albert did in 1947. Albert appears to be the last person with the surname of Bottoms to take his freedom in the Freeman Registers up until 1996.

Thomas Snr went to live at No.17 Freeman's Holt in November 1968 and was that bungalow's first resident.

A Freeman Remembered



Lynn Roffee

Freemen of England & Wales Association (FEW)

Derek Austin

As the Leicester Gild have not elected a FEW Representative since Mick Ayres retired at the 2016 Common Hall meeting, I have been asked to look after that role for the time being, as an Associate Member of the Gild. I am also the FEW Warden for the South Midlands Area which includes Leicester, Coventry, and Northampton Freemans Guilds, and also the Courts Leet of Alcester, Henley-in Arden, and Warwick.

I should explain that the FEW Representative is the link between the Association and individual Guilds or Courts Leet, and key role is to represent them at FEW Court meetings and AGM's, and vote on their behalf.

For Leicester Freemen not familiar with FEW, a very brief history shows:

Formed in 1966 as the Freemen of England Association, after the Founder President Harry Ward had visited 58 towns to encourage sons of hereditary Freemen to take up their Freedom – and join, or form, a Guild for fellowship and to guard their legal rights and customs.

The Association was critically tested in 1972, when a proposed Local Government Act made no provision for the ongoing rights and continuation of Freemen. FEW action led to this omission being rectified, before the Act was passed into law

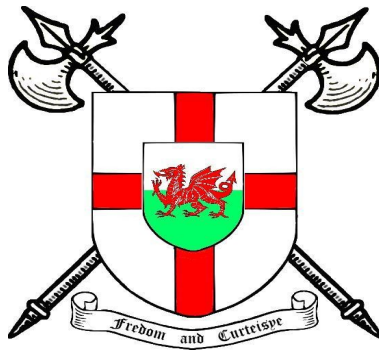
In 1992 the Associations name was changed to include Wales – hence 'FEW' for easy reference.

FEW has no regulatory role, only as a forum for discussion and advice on matters of common interest.

A legal fund is held to help resolve matters where, for example, local councils try to usurp Freemen's rights.

The Association holds a Court meeting, comprising Guild representative, Area Wardens, and the Executive committee, normally in March, followed by the AGM in September or October. Both Court and AGM's are normally held at the invitation of member Guilds. The most recent Court Meeting was held at the Leicester Holt facility on 29th March 2022. Leicester has hosted two AGM's so far, in 1993 and 2007. The FEW Honorary Secretary Lee Hensley has recently advised that the 2022 AGM will be held on-line by means of the 'Zoom' platform on 17th September.

If Leicester Gild Members who hold an individual FEW membership would like to attend, please e-mail Lee on 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

The Birth of the Gild of Freemen of the City of Leicester (Part 2)

In my previous article I described the events that led to the creation of the Gild on the 13th January 1976, but that was not the only significant change to the affairs of the freemen in that year. Legal opinion had been sought about the eligibility of those wishing to take up their freedom which at the time involved the father being a freeman before the applicant son was born. The opinion was that in the present society it was reasonable to expect that the son could be born before the father was 21 (the earliest age that a father could become a freeman) and that the male entitlement should include any direct male descendent. As a result of the City Attorney conceding the opinion to be correct there were over 50 new applications for freemen duly sworn in that year.

At the same time that the legal opinion was accepted by the City Attorney it was agreed that the legal age for becoming a freeman should be reduced to 18 from 21 and that the boundary whereby freemen could receive benefit from the charity or become a member of the Board of Deputies should be extended from the City boundary to include the whole of the county.

The newly formed Gild of Freemen grew from strength to strength in both numbers and in activities. By the time of the next meeting held in May at the Empire Hotel on Fosse Road the membership had increased to 126 and at that meeting the Gild welcomed the founder of the Freemen of England, Mr Harry Ward, who gave a talk about the formation of the Freemen of England and about the reasons behind its conception. The legal opinion leading to freemen being sworn in through the direct male line missing out generations came via the Freemen of England. Of that number of 126 one lived in New Zealand and another in South Africa. Towards the end of the year the first General Meeting was held to formalise the Gild and its rules and to elect a Gild Court to replace the voluntary working committee

At that meeting the following Gildsmen were elected to serve on the Gild Court: -

- Master of the Gild - Mr R L Langton
- Deputy Master - Mr H E Dudgeon
- Clerk - Mr G R Agar
- Chamberlain - Mr M E Ayres
- Warden - Mr M H Ayres
- Warden - Mr A Kellett
- Warden - Mr P H Kellett
- Warden - Mr D J Dalby
- Warden - Mr A Chawner

1977 was the second year in the life of the Gild and changes were taking place. The Lord Mayor of Leicester, Councillor Bert Baker accepted our invitation to become the first President of the Gild during his term of office, an invitation that has continued with all successive Lord Mayors to this day. There were two social dances held that year, both at the Glen Hall on Hillsborough Road, to raise funds for the Gild but the highlight of the year was a visit to Chester at the invitation of the Chester Guild of Freemen. This event proved so popular that two coaches were necessary to take our members and their families. We were made extremely welcome by the Chester Freemen starting the day's programme with a reception in the Town Hall at the invitation of the Lord Mayor and her consort followed by lunch at the Guildhall just a short walk from the Town Hall. After lunch we had a choice of a guided walk around the city, a visit to Chester races, or just do as we please. By the time that we returned to Leicester late in the evening we were all well and truly tired out but full of memories of the day and looking forward to a return invitation to the Chester freemen to visit the Holt.

The following year, 1978, also proved to be an eventful year. Common Hall was held in January in the council chamber at the Town Hall presided over by the Lord Mayor, Councillor Bert Baker

who had kindly offered the council chamber for our use. Common Hall was the term used to describe the meetings of the Merchant Gild in medieval times and was adopted by the Gild of Freemen to describe our annual general meeting. Over 60 Gild members attended that very first Common Hall held at the Town Hall. At that meeting a sample of the proposed armorial bearings was presented to the Gild members for approval and was adopted which led to the production of ties, car badges and other items for sale.

The whole of the year was busy a church service at the Cathedral attended by nearly 80 freemen and their families, another dance and social evening, a barbecue with a licenced bar at the Holt in Aylestone and a trip to York at the invitation of the Freemen of York. Finally, a Christmas party for the children and grandchildren of the Gild members including a visit from Father Christmas with a present for every child, providing that they were well behaved. The last event was perhaps the most tiring of the year, but one that really brought members together.

Until this year prospective freemen have always attended as individuals before the Lord Mayor to be sworn in as a Freeman of Leicester, but because of the number of those wishing to take up the freedom the City Council suggested a more formal ceremony take place with a group of new freemen. On the 3rd November the first enrolment ceremony took place for 26 new freemen presided over by the Lord Mayor, Councillor Albert Watson, who some of you may remember was the Lord Mayor whose chosen charity was the purchase of a scanner for the Royal Infirmary. An appeal that caught the imagination of the whole population of Leicester and the county.

By the end of the decade, just four years after the Gilds conception, we had a thriving organisation providing a means by which freemen could meet each other socially and we had exceeded our expectations with regard to our association with the City Council. Without the hard work and effort of the members of the Gild Court none of this would have succeeded and it is gratifying to look back and see as a team what we achieved, but it was not just the Court, the success also depended on the support of the members. Let's and see as a team what we achieved, but it was not just the Court, the success also depended on the support of the members. Let's not lose it.

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:

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***Copy for the next issue should reach the Editor
by October 14th 2022***

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Facebook: search for "Leicester Gild"

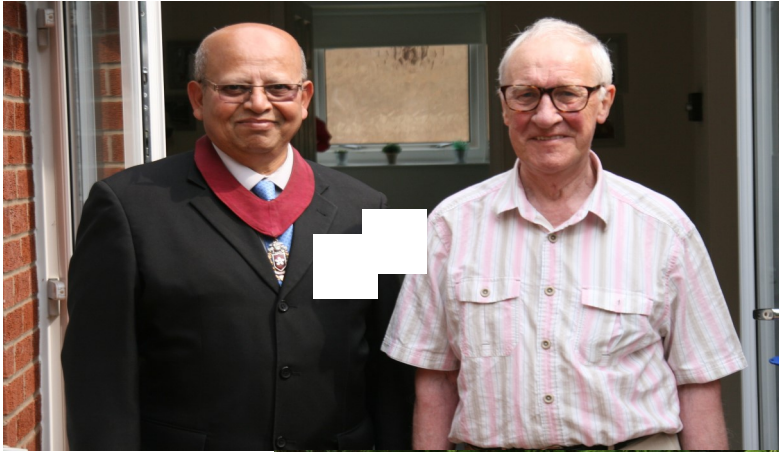


Further Damask Rose Ceremony Pictures



**Armed Forces Day
Parade 25th June 2022
And Drumhead Service**





Afternoon Tea
With the Deputy
Lord Mayor
20th July 2022

Pictures By:-
Brian Roffee





Further Afternoon Tea Pictures

