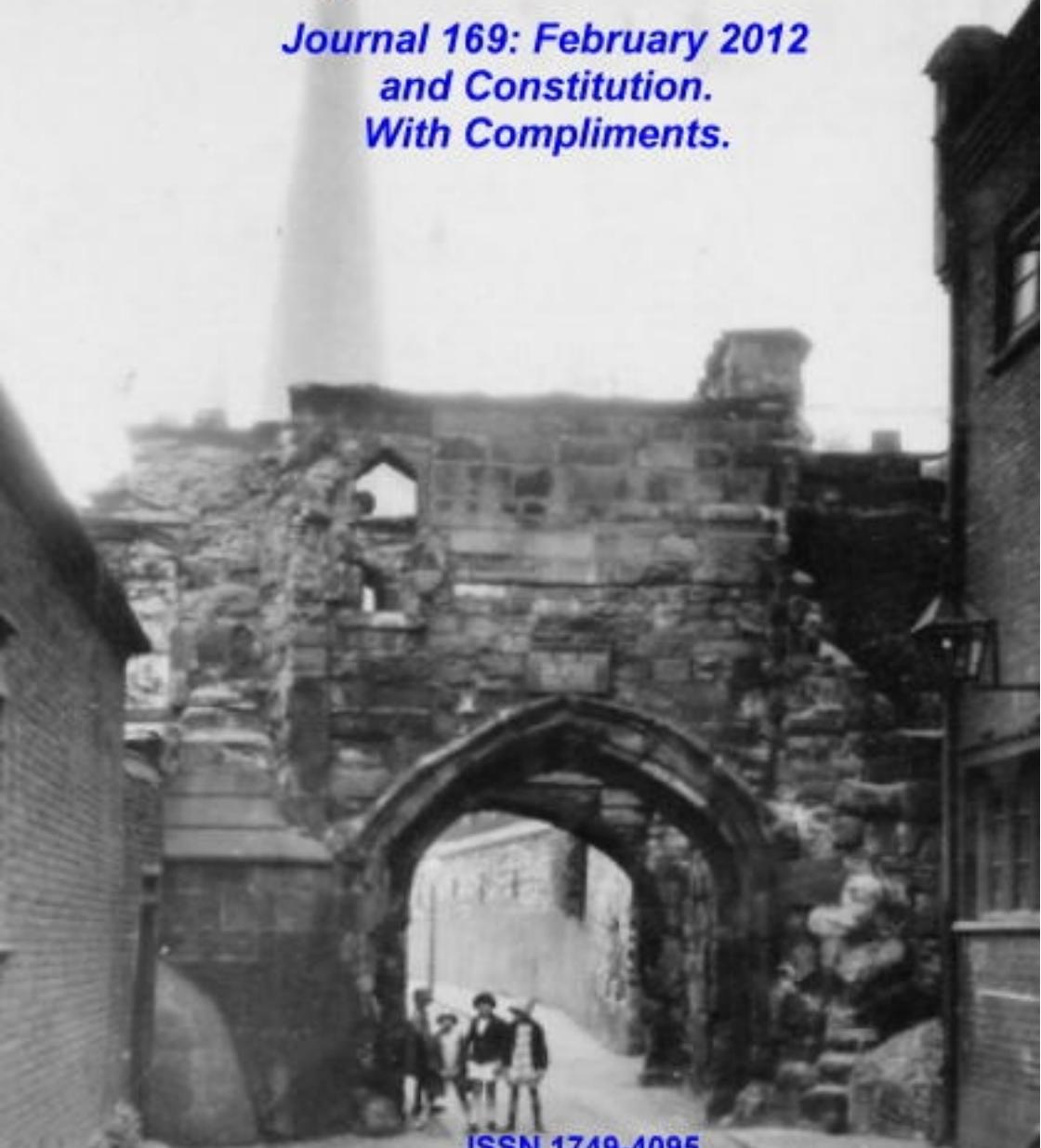


# *Freemen of England and Wales*

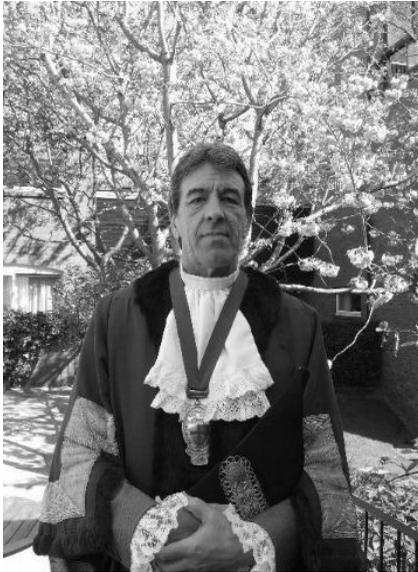
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and Constitution.  
With Compliments.**



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# Presidents Letter.



Dear Members,

Happy new year to you all. I trust that the festive season has not left you too jaded or out of pocket as we look forward to another year of austerity.

As I prepare for the first Executive Meeting of the year I reflect upon the progress we made in 2011 and I must admit that I am satisfied that in most of what we strove to achieve we succeeded.

The major achievement was adoption of the revised constitution by a virtual unanimity at the Pembroke AGM (there were a small number of abstentions) with 5316 votes cast in favour and none against. The charity commission have been contacted and after careful consideration, and recommendation of a division of one paragraph into two, are happy to accept the new constitution. This secures the Association for the future and protects the rights of all the Gilds of Freeman, large and small, to decide the direction that FEW shall follow.

As we venture into 2012 our main task is still that of Freemens Rights over their lands and property. Even at this early stage one city Council has, yet again, reneged on a previous agreement and registered title to the "Borough Commons". I must reiterate my prior warnings on the subject that we should all be pro-active in securing these registrations by any means possible. I still do not consider that these lands are really

Commons, but if their registration under the blanket of the Commons Registration Act is the only way to protect them, do it. If you have any doubts please refer to Alan Shelleys papers on the FEW Website and if further guidance is required contact Alan or myself direct.

With reference to the subject of lands, you may recall that I re-established a Legal Panel within FEW last year which now has several Gild legal representative members and I hope to engage their minds to consider this question in the very near future. We must remember that 2013 is the deadline for any and all registrations under the Land Registration Act and it creeps ever closer.

I mentioned the FEW Website. This is now fully operational and contains a wealth of information on all matters of the Freedom. Could I remind all Gild Representatives to notify their wardens of any forthcoming events so they can be added to the website and journal to enable any members of FEW living in their locality to apply to support them.

Another item that many Freemen have mentioned should be promoted is the modernisation of access to the Freedom through apprenticeship. To this aim we will set up a sub-committee to examine the possibility of adopting a “national framework” of criteria to assist any Gilds in developing the matter locally. We will process this further through contact with your Gild Representatives, but should any member have any immediate comments, suggestions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Enough from me at this stage, but a note to all the Gild Representatives: if we have your e-mails we will be in regular contact and would welcome your input too.

## *Legal Panel*

Dear Members,

You may recall that we launched a Legal Panel last year to facilitate collaboration and exchange of ideas concerning legal matters concerning the Freedom. To date we have five members participating in the panel but the more spread we can get the better so we are looking for additional members with legal experience to participate especially from the Midlands, South and Wales to bolster the excellent response we have received from some northern Gilds.

I look forward to hearing from any interested parties.

Sincerely,  
Alan Fallows.

# Harry Ward 2.

The up-date to Harry Wards book "Freemen of England" will not be published in the foreseeable future. This is due to the changes.. effected to virtually all Gilds by the introduction of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. Until all Gilds have settled their criteria for enrolment to the Freedom by both hereditary and apprenticeship means we will not be able to provide an accurate account of their function and status at which point we may be able to review the situation.

## News from the Guilds.

### Leicester:

The Freemen of Leicester wish to commence our report by sending our congratulations to the Master of the Leicester Gild, Mr Brian Mudford on the occasion of his marriage to Mrs Gill Pitts, on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July at the Fieldhead Hotel, Markfield.

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June.** Was the start of a very busy weekend for the Leicester Gild. In the morning at 11am, the Master and three freemen represented the Leicester Gild at the Damask Rose ceremony. The tradition dates back hundreds of years and was revived this year by the Lord Mayor, Councillor Robert Wann. The custom involved receiving the symbolic peppercorn rent of a Damask Rose and four old pennies from the landlord of O'Neils (formally the Crown and Thistle Inn) in Loseby Lane. In keeping with tradition, the ceremony is held on the 24<sup>th</sup> June to coincide with the Feast of St John the Baptist. Later that day in the evening our Banquet weekend began with a get-together in the Community Centre at Freeman's Holt, starting at 7 30pm with a fish and chip or chicken and chip supper, with various drinks served during the evening. After the supper the evening entertainment continued with a quiz which had a few people scratching their heads.

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June** continued the busy weekend, at 11am the Master and two freemen represented the Gild at the service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving on Armed Forces Day at Leicester Cathedral. The Gild Banquet was held at Devonshire Place on London Road in the evening starting at 7 30pm. 75 persons attended including Freemen from Coventry, Chester, London, Northampton, Shrewsbury, Warwick and York. Everything went according to plan we had good food and efficient service in good company and lovely surroundings. The royal toast to "Her Majesty the Queen" was proposed by John Tolton. The toast to "The City of Leicester" was proposed by the Patron of the Gild, Colonel Robert Martin OBE. This was replied to by the Lord Mayor, Councillor Robert Wann who then proposed a toast to "The Gild of Freemen of Leicester". This was replied to by The Master, Brian Mudford thanking everyone for attending, he then proposed the toast to "Our Guests". This was replied to by Alan Fallows

President of the Freemen of England and Wales.

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June.** The Annual Freemen's service was held at Leicester Cathedral. The Lord Mayor of Leicester Councillor Robert Wann, the President of the Gild, Colonel Robert Martin the Patron of the Gild together with the visiting Freemen and Leicester Freemen met in St Martin's House from 9 50am for robing. Tony Chettle efficiently arranged the procession in order before a gentle stroll was taken around the square before entering the Cathedral by the south door. Lady Gretton, the Lord –Lieutenant of Leicestershire, and the High Sheriff together with his wife, Mrs. Sandu also attended the service. Colonel Martin and the Master of the Gild Brian Mudford read the two lessons of the day and the sermon was given by the Revd. Canon Barry Naylor, after the service refreshments were served in St Martin's House, the Master then thanked everyone for attending the weekend and wished everyone a safe journey home.

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> August.** Our second coach outing this year was to the internationally-renowned Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, between the rain showers during the day we were able to visit and enjoy the glasshouses, including the Temperate House which contains the world's tallest indoor plant. The Princess of Wales Conservatory, with ten climate zones and a huge variety of plants including orchids and cacti and the Palm House containing the rainforest plants.

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> September.** On the invitation of Coventry Freemen sixteen members of the Leicester Gild travelled by car for a games evening at Barnacle village hall. With six teams of ten players in each team we played four different games, which included long alley skittles, table skittles, devil among the tailors, and quoits. Two Coventry teams came first and second, with one of the Leicester teams coming third and the evening concluded with a fish and chip supper and a raffle. We wish to thank the Coventry Freemen for their hospitality on the night and a well organised, games evening.

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September.** Six members of the Leicester Gild attended the annual AGM hosted by the Freemen of Pembroke; we wish to take this opportunity to thank Roy Folland the master of the guild and the freemen of Pembroke for an excellent weekend and their hospitality throughout the weekend.

**Friday 7<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October.** Twelve members of the Leicester Gild attended the Chester freemen's banquet weekend. We wish to thank the Chester freemen for their friendship and hospitality over the weekend.

**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October.** In the Leicester Town Hall council chamber and in the presence of the Lord Mayor Councillor Robert Wann, thirteen ladies and one man took their oath to be admitted to the Freedom of Leicester.

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November.** The Lord Mayor Councillor Robert Wann invited the robed Freemen and their wives to attend the Remembrance Day Service at Victoria Park, before the ceremony began coffee and biscuits were served in the Victoria suite.

**Saturday afternoon 3<sup>rd</sup> December.** St Mary de Castro Church invited the Gild to donate and decorate a Christmas tree in the Gild colours and regalia for their Christmas tree festival and Brass Band concert, the ladies of the gild decorated the tree, during the concert children from local schools joined in with the band to sing carols six members of the Gild were present at the service.

**Saturday evening 3<sup>rd</sup> December.** Forty eight Gild members attended a fish and chip supper at Freeman's Holt. After supper Steve Brooks from Glenfield Travel Agents gave a very interesting talk on his experiences and the funny side of life as a travel agent.

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December.** Once again our block booking of fifty tickets at the Little Theatre for the Pantomime Dick Whittington was a complete sell out. Again the Grandparents enjoyed it more than the Grandchildren.

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December.** Eight members of the Leicester enjoyed a wonderful Christmas Dinner hosted by the Coventry Freeman's Guild in the ancient St Mary's Hall. We take this opportunity to thank the Freeman of Coventry for an excellent evening.

**We would like to take this opportunity to remind you to make a note in your diary that the Leicester Banquet will be held over the weekend of Friday 8<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2012.**

A fish and chip/chicken supper will be held on Friday Night 8<sup>th</sup> June, at Freeman's Holt.

The Banquet on Saturday Evening 9<sup>th</sup> June, will once again be held at Devonshire Place, London Road.

The Freeman's Church Service on Sunday morning 9<sup>th</sup> June is at the Leicester Cathedral.

[For further information on the weekend and booking form please contact Roger Allen. By e-mail rogerallen8@ntlworld.com](mailto:rogerallen8@ntlworld.com)

## **Warwick:**

The 457<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Warwick Court Leet took place at the Lord Leycester Hotel on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011.

Guests of the Court included the new Bailiff of Bromsgrove Court Leet, who had taken office that morning, the High and Low Bailiff of Henley in Arden Court Leet and their ladies and the Low Bailiff of Alcester Court Leet, together with Derek Austin, the FEW Warden for the South Midlands.

After being welcomed by the Mayor, Councillor Mrs Trudy Offer (as Lord of the Leet), the normal business of the Court commenced. During the meeting 4 new Jurors were sworn in, namely: John Fletcher, Maureen Hooper, Alan Lettis and John MacKay. Following this the Past Bailiff of the Court, Michael Honnoraty, was installed as Court Herald.

After reporting on past presentments, the Steward accepted a number of new presentments made by the Jurors, on matters seen as being of benefit to the town or as causing a problem.

After considering dates for future meetings the meeting was closed and supper was served.

Michael Honnoraty.  
Court Herald

## **Bridgnorth:**



On Saturday 2nd July The Gild of Bridgnorth Freemen held thier annual summer outing with a visit to Cadbury World in Bournville, Birmingham, with Freemen, associate members and guests. Everyone had a enjoyable day with plenty of chocolate to sample.

## **York :**

We don't normally give details of the events at York in the F.E.W. Journal, but I thought it might be of some interest to see what has happened at York in the first six months of the gild year.

The A.G.M. Was held on Friday the twenty fourth of June when the right honourable the Lord Mayor was installed as our President for the forthcoming year. The retiring master, Mrs. Maureen Eland gave her valedictory speech, the new master was installed and the officers elected. The following day the new master, his wife, the deputy master, her husband and several other court members go to Leicester for their annual dinner and service which was held on the following day. We spent a very pleasant weekend there, our hotel only being a short distance from the dinner venue. The day after, we had, an interesting tour of York cemetery where some of us found the last resting place of relatives.

The First day of July saw Pauline and I at a charity event held at the home of the Governor of the Merchant Adventures, where we were entertained by a jazzy combo and singers before supper. The gild of Scriveners held their church service on the following Sunday but I was unable to attend having a small accident on the previous day. The fourteenth of July was our monthly court meeting with the first meeting of the new gild year always held robed. The following day saw Pauline and I at St. Peters School annual speech day prize giving and service in the minster. Afterwards we returned to the school for a reception. The day after this I was invited to a conference regarding York Mystery Plays but I afraid I ducked out of this one. There was then a lull until twenty-fourth of July when several members of the court attended a dinner to to celebrate the awarding of the MBE to one of our past masters.

On the first of August I had cry off attending the York Scriveners Yorkshire Day dinner as I had an operation on my hand in the previous Monday. Sunday the seventh the young and young at heart held a model boat regatta in Rowntree Park followed by a barbecue at the home of Tom Gibson your Hon. Editor. The August court was held on the eleventh. The Saturday after, the Scriveners held their annual Assize of Ale and several court members could not be kept away. There was another lull until Saturday the twenty-seventh when the three guilds who inhabit Bedern Hall had their annual Three guilds dinner.

Early September was quiet. Thursday the eight was our court meeting and then on the next Tuesday a party from the gild went to Southburn museum where we saw various artefacts which had been excavated locally from the stone age world war two and also a talk on the Wetwang Chariot burial and viewed a replica of said chariot. Next year it goes to the U.S.A for a tour. After learning the museum we returned to my home for supper. On the fifteenth we set off for Pembroke for the F.E.W A.G.M returning home on the following Tuesday. A fund raising event was held on the Thursday by the gild and friends for the masters charity 'The Smile Train' and this was followed in the evening by another Minster service this time for friends of York Minster, of which the gild is one. The last Thursday in the month was the Merchant Adventures Michaelmas service and dinner held at their hall and hosted by the governor.

The Third of October saw one of the main events of our year when the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor admitted forty-two new freemen both male and female and from seemingly very young to the obviously very old in the presence of the Lady

Mayoress, Sheriff, Sheriff Lady, the Master of the gild and his court, as well as numerous friends and relations. After the Lord Mayor and the civic party had returned, the Master welcomed the new freemen into this ancient order and invited them to take a glass of wine with the gild members. He also gave a speech a copy of which is attached. The following Saturday saw us drive to Chester in the most appalling weather conditions for their annual dinner and Sunday service. The return trip was much better. Court meeting held on the thirteenth of October. On the Eighteenth an honorary member of the gild and ex Lord Mayor gave us an interesting and informative talk on puppets of the world. Pauline and I attended the York Butchers ladies night on Saturday and service on the following day.

The first event in November was a tour of the Cedar Court Hotel which was lately the HQ of N.E Region of British Rail where I once worked. There was a large party for this tour. Court meeting on the following evening. On the Friday Pauline and I attended the Richmond Mercers banquet in the very fine surroundings of the Kings Head Hotel Richmond. On Remembrance Sunday we were invited to the guild hall for drinks before parading to the Cenotaph to lay a wreath on behalf of the gild and all freemen. A new event was the awarding of graduation certificates to Seventy-five apprentices again in the minster. The awards were made by the governor and masters of six York guilds. The guild of building held their annual dinner on the following Thursday to which we were invited and on the Sunday their service was held in the guild church as usual.

To celebrate the Four Hundredth anniversary of the king James had arranged a bible reading competition for scholars of York schools. Prize money was donated by the York guilds and prizes of bibles and vouchers were awarded by Four of the masters of the guilds. Court meeting on the Eighth. We hold a Christmas gild lunch every year for gild members, relatives and friends which was held this year on Sunday the Eleventh December. On the following day we journeyed to London for the annual banquet of the London freemen in the magnificent surrounding of the guild Hall. The proceedings were graced by the presence of various members of the Romanian royal family and over Five Hundred other guests including our friends from Chester and Coventry. We returned home in time for the gild carol service on Wednesday evening which was well attended. This brings us to the last gild event in Twenty Eleven our Christmas dinner held on the Eighteenth December in our gild Hall at Bedern. Again, like the lunch not so well attended as in previous years. I suppose this is a combination of lowering incomes and rising prices, but nevertheless both events were very agreeable. Dress for the dinner was red and black. Men generally wore red ties, cummerbunds or waistcoats but the master (who's idea it all was), took the opportunity to wear his old army mess jacket. We didn't ask the ladies which of their articles was red though.

I hope your gild Christmas was as much fun as York and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Twenty twelve.

Richard Helstrip. Master.

## **Master's Speech to the York Freedom Court, October 2011.**

It is said that the "Price of Freedom is eternal vigilance" but I would like to paraphrase that to read "The price of the Freedom is eternal vigilance". Some, maybe all of you who are sitting here tonight would not be doing so if it were not for the efforts of the Guild of Freemen and an organisation known as the Freemen of England and Wales which is an association of guilds of freemen throughout England and Wales committed to ensuring, among other things, the rights of freemen are not eroded or dismissed. A Parliamentary bill to completely reorganise local authorities in 1972 omitted all mention of freemen, and had the bill been enacted, then freemen may well have ceased to exist as legal bodies. Fortunately, however, the Freemen of England and Wales noted this omission and were able to persuade the government to make the necessary provisions.

From at least the middle of the 19th century, the City authorities here in York did not allow the admission of women as freemen but when the York Guild was able to show that women had been admitted in certain circumstances since the 14th century, they were at last readmitted. But there seems to be no good reason as to why they had been barred in the first place.

My father would dearly have loved to have been a freeman of his City like his ancestors but when he made enquiries, he was told that as his father had been born before his father had taken up the freedom, he could not be admitted even though his grandfather and great grandfather had been freemen, and there the matter rested. When in a spare moment many years later I made enquiries as to whether I might be entitled, I was also told that I could not be admitted. Some years later when I was researching my family tree and looking at the freemen's rolls in the City archive I was asked by the Archivist if I was a freeman. When I told her I was not, and told her the reason why, she said that this was incorrect and that I could be a freeman. And so it proved. I claimed the freedom through my great grandfather. The guild had researched the records and had been able to prove that it was possible to claim through ones grandfather and great grandfather. The point I am making is that if the City authorities had known what they were doing both my father and I, my sons, my sisters children and her grandchildren would have been able to become freemen. And the same must apply to a great many other people. How many people have been denied their rights through incorrect information, it is impossible to know.

And ladies and gentlemen misinformation continues to this day. In 2009 a bill was passed by Parliament that granted women in all places that admitted freemen the right to become freemen in exactly the same way as men. It also stated, and I quote *'The son or daughter of a freeman of a city or town shall be admitted as a freeman whether born before or after the admission as a freeman of his or her parent and wherever he or she was born'*. The city Legal Department flatly refuses to admit that this law refers to York, even though it has been accepted by such places as Leicester, Carlisle, Newcastle upon Tyne, Pembroke and Norwich among many others. Its refusal to accept that the law does refer to York like everyone else, was that the freemen had been set up in York by Royal Charter of 1272 and not by Act of Parliament. Ignoring the fact that an Act of Parliament overrules a Royal Charter, when asked to produce this Charter it was forced to admit that no such Charter existed.

So, to close I would encourage anyone here tonight who has been refused the right to claim because he or she was born before his or her parent became free and could not claim through their grandparent or great grandparent or you know of any such person, to claim their right under the terms of the 2009 Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act.

## **Coventry:**

On 25<sup>th</sup> June the Guild was represented at the Armed Forces Day service at Coventry Cathedral, and the subsequent city centre parade. In the evening, 18 Freemen and partners motored to Leicester to support the Leicester Gild's annual banquet, held again at the Devonshire Place Masonic Hall venue. On the Sunday our Master and other Freemen joined in the robed procession and Eucharist Service at Leicester Cathedral.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> July our Master Raj Bansal led a robed contingent from the Guild Court behind the Guild banner as part of the Godiva Festival procession from Bayley Lane to the War Memorial Park. Here our PRO Peter Wilford had organised the Guild stand, fielding queries on Freemen, Guilds, and their history, from some of the 50,000 visitors during the free weekend event.

On 6<sup>th</sup> July the Guild church of Holy Trinity was full for the funeral of 2009/2010 Lord Mayor & Guild President Councillor Jack Harrison MBE JP. Hopefully the two year screening programme for bowel cancer now being rolled out across the midlands will help to reduce future deaths from this malady.

On 5<sup>th</sup> August we welcomed the Lord Mayor Cllr Keiran Mulhall as President of the Guild during his Mayoral year with a Presidents Dinner in St Mary's Crypt. Sadly his wife died a few weeks before the dinner, our condolences to his family.

On 14<sup>th</sup> August a Master's Garden Party was held in the grounds of his Davenport Road residence. Skittles, a bookstall, several raffles and other attractions all raised charity funds before a tasty buffet of Indian and other delicacies was enjoyed by the Freemen and their families. We were pleased to welcome last years' Lord Mayor and Guild President Brian Kelsey with his wife Brenda, and forward our best wishes for a speedy recovery from his imminent surgery.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> September 72 Freemen and partners from Coventry and Leicester Guilds enjoyed another Skittles Evening at Barnacle Village Hall, followed by a fish & chip supper. Long alley skittles, several varieties of table skittles, and quoits were all tackled with gusto. A raffle raised useful funds for our Master's Charities, the principal recipient this year being Pancreatic & associated cancers. Out thanks to Charity Warden Sarah Daffern for organising the event.

On 10-11<sup>th</sup> September the Guildroom opened to the public view as part of the national Heritage Open Days initiative. Visitors were interested to hear of the Freemen's heritage, which stretches back to our first known charter of 1153 from Ranulf Gernon, the

4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Chester, which was later confirmed by King Henry II in 1182 at a cost of 20 marks.

The first weekend in October was the occasion of the Chester Guilds banquet event. As there was sadly no Friday night dinner event this year, most of the 38 Coventry and Leicester Gild members and partners dined in the Mill Hotel – a new venue for us – and our thanks to PM Duncan Hall for the booking arrangements, and the good prices secured. The evening concluded with an enjoyable Master's reception organised by Raj & Belle Bansal. The Saturday banquet in the Guildhall was the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and perhaps the last, to be organised by Geoff Tilston - as we heard that the Chester Guilds are surrendering the lease back to Chester Council after 40 years. Some of our Coventry guilds men have been attending Chester banquets for over 30 years, so we await future developments with fraternal concern. Sunday saw the usual robed procession to St Peters for the Freemen & Guild service followed by the blessing outside by the Cross. A procession then followed back to the Guildhall for coffee and farewells – and the hope that this was not the last time at this notable venue.

20<sup>th</sup> October was the date for the annual Guild Admission Court, held in the Coventry Council chamber. 18 members and one associate took the oath in front of our President, Master, and Clerk, and received their badge and booklet. Refreshments in the Crypt rounded off an enjoyable evening; we hope to see the new members at our events soon.

Remembrance Sunday saw our Master laying the Guild wreath at the Cenotaph in the War Memorial Park, plus other services on Armistice Day, and representing the Guild at the annual Coventry International Peace Prize presentation, this year held at Coventry University, and awarded to the Birmingham based organisation 'Responding to Conflict'.

A Charity Race Night at the Coundon Social Club on 17<sup>th</sup> November saw Tote Master Charlie Platts computing the odds for a six horse 8 race series – and raised £226 for the Master's charity of pancreatic cancer. Two specialist nurses from the local hospital told us of the low survival rates for this cancer, and hence how funds for research were so necessary. Our thanks to PM Duncan Hall for the buffet, and Charity Warden Sarah Daffern for organising the event. Several of us went home with winnings – an unexpected bonus for a very sociable event.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> November our President, Lord Mayor Keiran Mulhall held a Freemen's Admission Court in the Council Chamber, 26 new Freemen and women took their two part oath and received their scroll and booklet prior to refreshments in the Hospitality Suite. A wide range of ages and trades were represented, and all received a complimentary Guild magazine and details of free membership for a year.

The Guild year was brought to a close on 16<sup>th</sup> December, with the black tie Christmas Dinner event in St Mary's Guildhall. A capacity audience enjoyed a 5 course festive meal; and 'Bollywood' entertainment laid on by our Master Raj Bansal. Our thanks to Deputy Master Charlie Platts for organising the event.

## **Annual weekend of the Gild of Freeman of Haverfordwest.**

Freemen from as far afield as Carlisle, London and Newton Abbott travelled to attend Haverfordwest Gild of Freeman's annual weekend on October 1st and 2nd when the Annual General Meeting was followed by the traditional Banquet at the Wolfscastle Country Hotel and the customary Benefactors' Service at St Martins Church.

Following a welcome by the chairman of Pembrokeshire County Council, Councillor David Pugh, and the Mayor of Haverfordwest, Cllr Mrs Ellen Repton, the new Master of the Gild, Mr Charles Davies told the AGM at County Hall that his election to the Master's role was the greatest honour of his lifetime.

He paid tribute to the retiring Master, Mr Malcom Green, whose 14 year period of office had been highly successful and had included several important innovations. He said he had introduced a Charity Fund to which the Hereditary Freeman had agreed to contribute part of their annual pay-out, a successful summer buffet at which new Burgesses were sworn in and a talk was given by a distinguished guest, and a popular tradition of engaging solo singers and instrumentalists to entertain at the Banquet. He welcomed the new Freeman and Burgesses the newly-appointed Wardens of the Court and, thanking the retiring Master for his support over the years, wished him and Mrs Green all the best for the future.

The Master referred to the Gild's long term project to turn Haroldston House, the ruined Tudor Mansion on the outskirts of Haverfordwest where the town's principal benefactor, Sir John Perrot was born, into a public amenity park. A consultative document had been commissioned and delivered and was available for perusal.

He congratulated the Master of the Pembroke Gild of Freeman, Mr Roy Folland, on the success of the Freeman of England and Wales' recent weekend AGM and Banquet at Pembroke, and also Burgess Warden Colonel Dai Davies on his award of the OBE.

Freeman Warden William Thomas reported on the Haroldston House project which he said had received a 67% grant towards the Consultative Document.

Following a report on the FEW event by Pembroke Gild Master Roy Folland, who thanked the Haverfordwest Gild members for their support, The Chairman of Trustees, Freeman Warden Malcolm Thomas, delivered the Trustees' report and said that of the 12 recently installed Freeman only one was a man, the others admitted under the new legislation allowing ladies to attain Freeman status.

Mr Thomas said it had been agreed to sell a small strip of Freeman's Estate land at Palmerston Farm to the owner of the farmhouse at a price well above market value and the proceeds had been transferred to a long-term investment account. A donation of £480 had been made to the Help the Heroes charity and presented to the CO of the 14th Royal Signals Regiment at Cawdor Barracks.

Mr Malcolm Green gave an interesting history of the Freeman's Gilds and referred to the revival of the Haverfordwest Gild under the leadership of its first Master, the late Colonel J.H.V.Higgon in 1973 in response to a threat by new Government legislation which would have extinguished the Freeman's rights and, which, in many cases lost them their estates. The Haverfordwest Gild had survived an earlier threat to its 600 acre estate on Portfield Common following the 1832 Municipal Reform Act and 250 acres were retained by the Gild, including the wonderful public amenity at the Racecourse.

Mr Green referred to the invaluable work done by FEW in rescuing the Gilds nationwide from possible extinction. The AGM was followed by the annual Pay Out and a buffet kindly provided by Pembrokeshire County Council.

The Banquet was attended by 115 Freeman, Burgesses, Civic dignitaries, guests and friends, the toast to the Gild being proposed by the chairman of Pembrokeshire County Council, Cllr David Pugh, who referred to the Gild's distinguished history. Response was made by the Master, Charles Davies, who said the Gild was recognised as a body prepared to speak on behalf of the town and County and he commented on the value of the County Council Town Improvement Committee's contribution to the improvement of the town centre. The appointment of eleven lady Freeman was important to the future of the Gild.

The toast to the guests was proposed in witty fashion by the Gild Chaplain and Vicar of Haverfordwest, Father Paul Mackness, who made particular reference to the Lord Lieutenant, the High Sheriff and Town Mayor of other guests. Entertaining response was made by the vice-chairman of the British National Parks, Mr Richard Howells, who said the Gild deserved congratulations for bringing to the town a pageantry that was a wonderful reminder of its colourful past. "At a time when I think our future is at a crossroads and the town has lost its commercial vibrancy, it is important that those in authority have the best interests of the town at heart and champion its cause. It is a time when we rely on people like you to represent us and struggle on behalf of Haverfordwest." he said. He recalled a time when the democratic process was closer to the people and Haverfordwest Borough Council provided for most of the needs of the townsfolk. But the blame for the present situation did not lie with those who represented the town, but the system imposed upon them by central government, he added. Singer Miss Gemma Johnson entertained with Mr John Rodge accompanying on guitar.

The Annual Benefactors' Service was held in St Martin's Church when the Vicar, Father Mackness, conducted the proceedings and the preacher was the Dean of St Davids, The Very Rev Jonathan Lean, former Vicar and Gild Chaplain and a Burgess. The Gild Wardens were joined in procession to the church by the Mayors of other towns. The Master and the chairman of Trustees read the lessons and the Dean stressed the importance of carrying on the tradition and maintaining the Gild for the benefit of future generations and he urged younger people to get involved in service to the community. The tensions of modern life were often far more than many people could cope with and they should make the best of every opportunity to serve others in every situation that presented itself.

## *'Freedom & Curteisye'*

The application of the FEW motto depicted above and meaning 'Freedom with Courtesy' is worthy of some consideration. Freemen are justly proud of their inheritance and by representing their home towns and cities they fly the flag of patriotism and uphold their national traditions.

Freemen understandably (and quite rightly) are fervent in protecting their customs and privileges and in so doing, will recognize that exclusivity may lead others, less privileged, to be alienated and can thereby put freedom in an unfavourable light. A freeman's position is one of responsible stewardship, safeguarding historical traditions that form a part of our nation's rich heritage. Secrecy and inward thinking on behalf of freemen, perhaps on an assumption that this will provide better protection, could damage the future of Freedom.

Privileged practices should never be boasted. Any pretence by a freeman seeming to assume exaggerated importance is at all times to be avoided. A freeman's image is recognized as one of integrity, attendance to duty and of civil demeanor. A balanced approach will often achieve amicable results without any detrimental effect on a freeman's rights. In 1891, Lord Justice Bowen, in the case of *Blount v Layard*, said:

*"... nothing worse can happen in a free country than to force people to be churlish about their rights for fear that their indulgence may be abused, and to drive them to prevent the enjoyment of things which, although they are matters of private property, naturally give pleasure to many others, besides the owners, under the fear that their good nature may be misunderstood."*

(Layard was sued for fishing a stretch of the Thames owned by Blount)

It is generally the case that where freemen's rights persist, the local townspeople are granted 'permitted' access, thereby ensuring that the rights are maintained. In such cases a printed notice to that effect should always be applied.

In conclusion, the Freemen's Motto denotes our intentions to be responsible and courteous citizens, distinct in duty and priding ourselves in being a dynamic force for the good of all society.

*Long live the F.E.W. and long may 'Freedom and Courtesy' flourish.*

Alan Shelley, Officer Without Portfolio, 7 September 2011.

### ***Postscript On the matter of courtesy, respect and inclusivity.***

Our Association enthusiastically welcomes the new lady freemen who until recently were prevented in several towns from admission to Freedom.

Survival of the Freedom had been threatened by ever diminishing numbers of freemen

being admitted. Women were being undemocratically excluded and we should rejoice that our movement has positively encouraged their inclusion and will thereby be invigorated by their intake. The democratic inclusion of the ladies will advance and enhance our recognition in modern society.

It is also now time to more seriously consider increasing the admission of suitable young people by the reintroduction of apprenticeships and thereby ensure that the Freedom can truly flourish.

## *Our Patron.*

### **The Right Honourable, the Earl Bathurst**

The Right Honourable Allen Bathurst, formerly Lord Apsley, on the passing of his father 16 October 2011 became the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl Bathurst. The Earl lives with his wife the Countess Sara, Lady Bathurst at Cirencester Park, the Bathurst family seat. The Park is a wonderful example of geometric design and is reputed to be the finest example of forest parkland. Within the estate is the famous polo ground, founded in 1894, the oldest playing ground in the United Kingdom.

Popular among the important members of Gloucestershire and Cotswold society, Earl Bathurst is known for his amiable and forthright personality. Hard working, fair minded, and a man of the people with a clear approach to duty and among other things currently an avid supporter of 'Help the Heroes'.

Locally, lord of Cirencester, serving on several charitable boards, he is a director of the Housing Society and Trustee of the St Lawrence Hospital Trust. As an ambassador of agriculture, his limits are boundless. Undoubtedly his largest commitment is to the efficient running of the large and well organized Bathurst Estate, covering some 15,000 acres of supreme countryside. Earl Bathurst is Director of the Cirencester Housing Society and a governor of the family connected Royal Agricultural College. He is Director of the annual Cotswold Country Fair, past President of the Three Counties Agricultural Society and is President of the Gloucestershire Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, FWAG.

His involvement with the National Farmers Union has had far reaching effect. As a conservationist, Earl Bathurst has campaigned to preserve the rural countryside and various historic buildings. He has done much to encourage sensitive farming methods and has gained awards for his approaches to the improvement and sanctuary of wildlife.

Earl Bathurst is a Patron of the Cotswolds Museum Trust and the Countess Lady Bathurst is Patron of the cancer charity LINC and national Vice President of the Royal British Legion's women's section. The Right Honourable Ninth Earl Bathurst will be following his eminent predecessors who have variously held prominent positions of distinction in government, a Lord Chancellor, Solicitor General, military heroes and

sporting sponsors, nationally and internationally. The Third Earl Bathurst was Secretary of State for War and Colonies during the Napoleonic Wars and was a great supporter of the Duke of Wellington, or indeed vice versa.

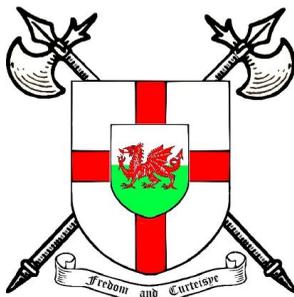
Without doubt, our distinguished Patron is a man of great integrity, probity and responsibility, he has an empathy with all things truly British and is sympathetic with our historical traditions. We can consider ourselves most fortunate to have such an influential and suitable patron in the Right Honourable Earl Bathurst.

Postscript – A very interesting ‘Freedom’ connection exists within the historical background to a club that still exists today, namely the “Cirencester Society in London”. Founded before 1692, the objects of the Society include the apprenticeship of poor Cirencester boys to Freemen of the City of London to take up useful handicraft trades. Of course much has changed, but the Society still continues to give money in support of apprentices going to London from Cirencester. This year they are aiding an apprentice in her training and career as a promising stone mason.

Alan Shelley, 24 October 2011, for the Association of ‘Freemen of England and Wales’.

## **Constitution of the Association of Freemen of England and Wales**

The 2011 AGM saw the introduction of a comprehensive review of the Constitution. In view of the significant changes introduced we are printing the new Constitution below to give all members the opportunity to read it through and familiar yourselves with the details.



The Constitution was written in 1968 at the formation of the Freemen of England. It was re-drawn in 1976, and adopted in 1978.

It was amended in 1983.

It was adopted in 1985 to include amendments proposed and agreed in principle in 1980, 1981, and 1983.

Further amendments were made in 1987 to appoint Officers as Trustees, and again in 1988 to include the Membership Secretary as an Officer.

It was amended in 1992 to incorporate Freemen in Wales, and also to acknowledge the post of Immediate Past President as an Officer.

The office of Vice President was approved and added in 1996.

In 2005 the Presidential term of office was reduced from three to two years.

It was amended in 2008 to clarify the two categories of Officer, to remove a rule contradiction, and to make meaningful a complex sentence.

Following a long term review, overall major amendments were introduced in 2011, to comprehensively qualify the Association's aims, membership criteria, and administration.

### **1) NAME**

The Association is comprised of the Gilds of Freemen throughout England and Wales, and shall be titled "Freemen of England and Wales" or F.E.W.

### **2) OBJECTS**

- i) The objects of the "Freemen of England and Wales" are:- To advance public education in, and promote research into, the history and legal customs of the ancient towns of England and Wales with relation to the legal institution of the Freedom. To publish the useful results of such research.
- ii) And in the furtherance of this object to provide advice and information concerning the legal institution of the Freedom within each of those several places in England and Wales where that institution is to be found.

To take necessary action to protect and maintain the legal institution of the Freedom when threatened by statute or other interventions.

The Association is non-political and non-religious in nature, and is not a lobbying platform for any matters disassociated to the Freedom.

### **3) ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

Alterations to this constitution must receive the assent of a minimum of two-thirds of the members eligible to vote by Poll at an Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting, following approval by the same margin at the preceding Court Meeting. A resolution for the alteration of the constitution must be received by the Secretary of the Association at least 31 days before the meeting at which the resolution is to be brought forward. At least 21 days notice of such a meeting must be given by the Secretary, and must enclose notice of the alteration proposed. No alteration made to clauses 2 (Objects) and 13 (Dissolution) which would have the effect of causing the Association to cease to be a charity at law, shall be implemented until the written approval of the Charity Commissioners has been obtained.

#### 4) MEMBERSHIP

Full Membership of the Association shall consist of:-

- i) Member Gilds.
  - ii) Individual Members.
- i) The term “Member Gild” shall mean the organized body of freemen representing the town or city where those freemen are listed on the Burgess Roll, and/or where such bodies exist, the individual Gild Companies that collectively combine the freemen of the Burgess Roll.
  - ii) The term “Individual Member” shall mean a person who either:-
    - a) Has had his/her claim to be admitted a freeman of their town/city established and his/her name entered on the Roll of Freemen/Burgess Roll in accordance with Section 248(3) of the Local Government Act 1972.or:-
    - b) Is a Freeman admitted according to the law and custom of the City of London.

#### 5) ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Associate membership shall be open to:-

- i) Persons upon whom the Honorary Freedom of a place has been conferred.
- ii) Persons who although not freemen under 4.ii(a) are interested or concerned in freemens’ affairs for professional, legal, social or historical reasons.
- iii) Customary freeholders or tenants of manorial boroughs.
- iv) Non-Freemen bodies, groups, or organizations; ie: comprised of members who are not freemen as under 4.ii(a) whose aims are sympathetic to those of F.E.W., and who fully support the objectives of F.E.W. Such bodies must operate under a recognized constitution that governs their activities.

Associate members may attend, and with the permission of the Chairman, speak, but shall not vote at a general meeting.

## **6) CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP**

Freemen (other than Individual Members), who are members of a subscribing gild, shall be known as Corporate Members. They will not have any of the rights or liabilities of subscribing members of the Association, but will be permitted to purchase and display F.E.W. regalia.

## **7) HONORARY MEMBERSHIP**

The Association may admit as Honorary Members persons who have rendered distinguished service to the Association. They will have the same rights as Associate Members. Admission must be by unanimous agreement of a Court Meeting.

## **8) REGALIA**

All members shall be entitled to purchase and display the regalia of F.E.W.

## **9) CANCELLATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

Member Gilds and Individual Members (including Associates) whose subscriptions remain unpaid for 12 months after falling due shall have their membership cancelled. They may be re-admitted with the full agreement of the Court, on such terms as the Court decides. Any member whose conduct is considered damaging to the reputation or well-being of the Association may be dismissed from the Association by the full agreement of the Court, subject to the right of reply. Any such dismissal to be final and immutable.

## **10) OFFICERS**

- a) There shall be two categories of Officer. i) Executive Officer. ii) Warden.
  - i) Executive Officers. The Executive Officers of the Association shall be the President, the Deputy President, the Vice President, the Immediate Past President, the Honorary Secretary, the Honorary Treasurer, the Honorary Membership Secretary, the Honorary Archivist, the Honorary Editor, and the Officer Without Portfolio. The President, on retiring at the conclusion of his/her term in office, will remain an Officer of the Association with the title of Immediate Past President (which title he/she will retain until replaced by a new Immediate Past President, and at which time he/she will also cease to be an Officer).
  - ii) Wardens. Wardens will be appointed by the Vice President with the approval of the Court or AGM. Their titles and responsibilities shall be fixed by the Court.

- b) With the exception of the President, who following election at an Annual General Meeting, shall serve in office for a term of two years, and also the Immediate Past President, all other Executive Officers shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting, and shall hold office until the next Annual General Meeting after their appointment. In the case of death or resignation of the President or any other Executive Officer, the Court shall have the power to fill the vacancy so caused until the next Annual General Meeting. Officers shall hold office as individuals, and not as representatives of their Gilds, but may also act as such representatives. One person may hold more than one office. The duties of officers shall be as allocated by the Court, which may appoint additional officers if required, following approval at an Annual General Meeting.

Any nominee for executive office must have senior officer experience within their own Gild, and any nominee for the office of Deputy President or Vice President must have served as an Executive Officer of the Association for a minimum of one year within the preceding four years immediately prior to the nomination.

## **11) THE COURT**

The Court shall consist of the representatives of each Member Gild and shall be responsible for the regulation of the affairs of the Association. The Court shall have the power to appoint a sub-committee consisting of two or more Court members to investigate any appropriate matter, provided that its findings are reported back to the next Court, with no unauthorized actions being taken.

## **12) FINANCE**

- a) The property and monies of the Association shall be under the control of the Court, to whom the Executive shall be responsible. Subscriptions shall be payable in advance on such date or individual dates as may from time to time be directed by the Court. The rates of subscriptions shall also be fixed from time to time by the Court. Owing to the great disparity between circumstances and financial resources of members, the Court may authorize variations of subscriptions in particular cases.
- b) The Court alone, may authorize expenditure of the Association's funds upon or in connection with any of the objects of the Association. The Court shall arrange an annual audit of the accounts, books and vouchers of the Association and the Auditor's report shall be submitted at the following Annual General Meeting.

### 13) MEETINGS

- a) Annual General Meetings shall be held in the month of September or October, due notice of which shall be given by mail to each member not less than 60 days before the date fixed for the meeting.
- b) Court Meetings shall be held in March, and (if desired) June, at a time and place to be decided by the Court. A quorum of 10% of Member Gilds must be present to validate any voting.
- c) Executive Meetings shall be held immediately before each Court or Annual General Meeting at a time and place to be decided by the Executive and Court. Additional meetings shall be held as deemed necessary by the Executive. A quorum of five officers is required for any voting to be validated.
- d) Wardens' Meetings shall be held at least twice annually as deemed necessary by the Vice President, at times and venues to be agreed.
- e) The minutes of AGM and Court Meetings shall be reported in the Journal immediately following the date of each meeting. In the event that this time-scale is considered insufficient at any time, such minutes shall be provided by mail to each court member as soon as possible following the meeting.
- e) Special Court or General Meetings may be called under exceptional circumstances by unanimous consent of the Executive.

### 14) VOTING

- a) Court.

Member Gilds may send to Court Meetings what representatives they desire (including professional advisors to speak on their behalf) but only one representative may vote. Only items previously included in a Court Meeting agenda notification shall be subject to voting. Each Member Gild shall have one vote and voting shall be by a show of official voting cards only. Votes by mail are accepted, but proxy votes are not permitted. To be carried, either for or against, decisions must be supported by a simple majority of all Member Gilds, unless for constitutional changes, which require a two thirds majority.

- b) Annual General Meeting.

Individual Members shall have one vote each, validated by showing their official membership card, and the representative of each Member Gild shall have one vote for each full freeman member of his/her Gild subject to a maximum of

1,000, and barring any duplication of members. In the event of uncertainty or dispute as to the number of freemen in a gild, said number is to be determined by such evidence as may be provided and considered fair and just by the invigilator nominated by the meeting. Votes by mail are accepted, but proxy votes are not permitted.

To avoid said duplication, the following will apply:-

- i) Gild Company Members, if also covered by a Member Gild for their town/city, will either (at their discretion) vote through their town/city gild or their company gild. In the event of only some of the individual companies wishing to cast votes for their members, the number of those votes cast will be deducted from the total registered for the town/city gild.
- ii) Individual Members voting shall reduce the total count for their gild by their equivalent numbers.
- c) AGM Vote Counting.

AGM vote counting will be undertaken by three nominees from the host gild under the control of an appointed invigilator. Total results for and against will be published, but all voting material will be held in the archives for a minimum of four years in case of query.

- d) Voting Results.

For a vote to be carried, for or against, a clear two thirds majority of votes cast must be achieved, supported by a simple majority of all Member Gilds.

## 15) DISSOLUTION

**If the Court by a simple majority decides at any time that on the grounds of expense or otherwise it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Association, it shall call a meeting of all members of the Association who have the power to vote of which meeting not less than 21 days notice (stating the terms of the resolution to be proposed) shall be given. If such decision shall be confirmed by a simple (two-thirds) majority of those present and voting at such meeting the Court shall have the power to dispose of any assets held by or on behalf of the Association in manner hereinafter provided. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to the objects of the Association as the Court may determine.**

## Hon Secretary's Notices.

- 1) Following the proposal in March 2010 that the forthcoming updated edition of Harry Ward's book "Freemen in England" would be published on a CD for issue to all members, the computer file containing all the updated information has stubbornly refused to open. Taking this into account, together with the fact that many guilds have still not provided updated entries, and noting also that the information in the unopenable file is itself now way out of date, the Executive Committee has taken the decision to discontinue the project completely.
- 2) Maurice Pickering's paper on the Freedom, which had been proposed as a forward to the above update, is now under consideration for inclusion on the FEW website.
- 3) **Notice is hereby given to all Guild Representatives, Wardens, and Executive Officers, that the next FEW Court Meeting will be held on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2012, at 2.00pm in the Community Room, Freemen's Holt, Old Church Street, Aylestone, Leicester, LE2 8NH**

### AGENDA

- 1) Attendees to sign register and be seated.
  - a) Call to order, Opening of Court, and Welcome.
- 2) Apologies for absence.
- 3) Minutes of the Court Meeting held on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2011, in the Village Institute, Church Eaton, Stafford. These minutes were published in Journal No 167, July 2011.
  - a) Approval of minutes.
- 4) Matters Arising, not forming any other part of this agenda.
- 5) President's Report.
- 6) Deputy President's Report.
- 7) Vice President's Report.
- 8) Wardens' Reports.
- 9) Hon Treasurer's Report.
- 10) Hon Membership Secretary's Report.
- 11) Hon Archivist's Report.
- 12) Hon Editor's Report.
- 13) Officer Without Portfolio's Report.
- 14) Any Other Business.
- 15) Dates and Venues.

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**Please note the closing date for the editor to receive items for the next issue (No. 170) is the 23/3/12.**

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