



President's Blog

Firstly, I certainly have to thank Alan our immediate past President for standing in the extra year and of course his consort, (his wife Val), for keeping him going. We all know that without an understanding Wife or Consort the job could not be given 100%. As you all know Eileen is my Consort and I can assure you that she will keep me in line and on my toes. (She is tenacious when she starts).

I have said all this in my reports before, but at the risk of repeating myself, I will try to say it again in a different way.

My primary concern is the fact that in a lot of circles the Freemen are regarded as elitist and bunch of snobs that can't be mixed with. I have said to these people "What an absolute load of RUBBISH!" I am an ordinary man off the street and every Freeman I have ever met throughout the country has been nothing but friendly, helpful and always ready to give advice.

I find a that there is lack of knowledge among newly made Freemen and why they are being made Freemen somewhat disconcerting. They are given the Freedom then they promptly disappear. Surely there must be a way of the Gild/Guilds trying to keep in touch with these disappearing Freemen.

The other thing I get is "Who are or what are Freemen?", "Is it anything to do with the Freemasons or the Lions?", "What do they do?", "What's it all about?"

The question I would ask of you all is, how do we get away from this nonsense thinking? Publicity in some way shape or form? Maybe! Who knows?

I am always open to ideas from you, the Executive is always open to ideas from you and the Wardens are always open to ideas from you, so you can see that whether or not your ideas are good we will listen to you. We are none of us getting any younger, we have got to look to the future and bring up the generations behind us, so the Freedom continues and does not die out as in so many towns and Cities throughout the land over the years.

It has always been my belief that the Wardens are the most important officers of the Association, they are on the ground. They are the eyes and the ears of the Association. I would go as far as to say they are the bedrock of the Association. For the work they do, they deserve the praise.

I would say to all the Gilds/Guilds and Freemen whether they are members of this Association or not, know the Wardens in your area, talk to them, invite them, keep them informed so that they in turn can keep the Executive informed.

We have two words in our logo "Freedom & Curteisye"; I also believe that in our minds we should also carry the word "Unity". Without unity sooner or later the Freedom will fall, not with this generation not even with the next generation but the Freedom will fade into oblivion in the future if

we do not do something about it "NOW". It is our responsibility to keep it alive.

This is where education and new ideas come in. I have thrown into the pot about starting up junior Freemen, cadets age probably 12 to 18 year old, they could then go on to be senior Freemen, 18 to whatever age they become Freemen. Their knowledge can be given to them by the Freemen or anyone that can give the talks on the Freemen's history, all this can be done on the same lines as the cubs, the scouts, the cadets of forces. They could be taken out on outings to other Gilds/Guilds to see the difference of operations and admissions.

About the disappearing Freemen; I know that I am told "They are young", "They have families and they cannot afford". Can't these issues be addressed?

The first; "They are young" Yes! They have different lifestyles to ourselves, can't we try to get involved in some of their interests and learn something ourselves whilst at the same time showing them our interests.

The second "They have families" Yes! Can't we do something that would involve the family?

The third; "They cannot afford" Slightly more difficult but not unachievable. I can think of garden parties, barbecues, games, outings, the list goes on, as you can see the list incorporates the first and second. so nothing is unachievable.

I am a Freeman of the City of London residing in York and because I am a Freeman of one City living in the City of York, the Gild gave me the status of "Journeyman Freeman of the City of York". You could say that they took me under their wing and over the years I have really enjoyed working with them and I hope too for many years to come.

"Journeyman Freeman!" Now there's a title. I know from my experience as the Membership Secretary of FEW that there are Freemen all over the land not residing in the place where they were made Freemen, would it not be possible to extend to these Freemen the hospitality of your Guild/Gild?

Inter Guild/Guild relationships, garden parties and visits, I am in favour of this and I know that some Gilds/Guilds are doing this and it works, can this idea and or invitations be extended?

These are just ideas that I have thrown into the melting pot, I am sure that you all have your own ideas but at the end of the day, we all have to seriously look to the generations in the future to keep the Freedom alive and strong. It is in our hands and our interest. We are a part of history, let us take history into the future. Will we succeed? Only the future will tell when we have gone.

This is our legacy to the future, we must succeed.

Gordon Varnell, President.

Minutes of the 47th Annual General Meeting

held on Saturday 14th September 2013 in St Catherine's College, Oxford

Although produced as a meaningful record of the proceedings, these minutes in no way constitute a verbatim transcript of the meeting.

List of Attendees: William James Allen – London, Geoffrey Anderson – Alnwick, Peter Archer – Oxford, Terry Aubrey – Gloucester, Derek Austin – Coventry, Michael Ayres – Leicester, Brian Barnes – Oxford, Pat Barnes – Oxford, Hal Buller – Oxford, Lynda Buller – Oxford, Colin Burrows – Oxford, Tony Chettle – Leicester, A.Christison – Berwick, N.Christison – Berwick, Christopher Cox – Oxford, Howard Crapper – Oxford, Shirley Crapper – Oxford, Andrew Croose – Gloucester, John Edwards – Stafford, Capt. Jim Evans – Berwick, Stephen Ewens – Oxford, Alan Fallows – Shrewsbury, Robin Folland – Pembroke, Roy Folland – Pembroke, Eileen Forth – York and London, Hazel Hague – York, Mervyn Hall – Alnwick, Martin Hanks – Oxford, Colin Hardcastle – York, London, and Associate of Alnwick, Stanley Hastings – Oxford, Capt. Stephen Healy – Newcastle upon Tyne, W.F.Healey – Chester and FEW Past President, R.Helstrip – York, Michael Herriott – Berwick, John Heslop – Durham, Nick Johnson – Hale, John Keggins – Northampton, Graeme Knox – Alnwick, Ron Leek – Alcester and London, Janet Leek – London, Carl Mattison – Alnwick, Jimmy Mattison – Alnwick, Tommy Mattison – Alnwick, Leslie Morgan –

London and Hale, Howard Pate – Chester, Anne Pinches – Chester (Guest), Michael Pinches – Chester, Eileen Reynolds – Associate, Alan Shelley – Sudbury, Robert Shepherd – Alnwick, Terry Sibley – Northampton, Alec Stephenson – York, Beryl Stephenson – York, Gordon Varndell – London, Lynda Weatherley – Berwick

With the FEW Mace in position in front of the gathering, the meeting was called to order by the Deputy President, Ron Leek. The President, Alan Fallows, then entered the chamber accompanied by the Lord Mayor of Oxford, Cllr Dee Sinclair. The Chairman of the Freemen of the City of Oxford, Howard Crapper, formally introduced the Lord Mayor to the gathering, following which she gave a very warm welcome to everyone present, wishing them a wonderful time in Oxford. She then declared the AGM open, and in thanking her most warmly, the President presented her with a commemorative plaque. As the Lord Mayor had other mayoral engagements to fulfil, the President then escorted her from the chamber, before returning to conduct the meeting.

Apologies for non-attendance were received from: Vice President, Stephen White; Hon Editor, Tom Gibson; David Appleby, Alnwick; Charles Davies, Haverfordwest; Ray Mason, Newcastle-under-Lyme; Paul Morgan, London; Denis Nixon, Alnwick; Ant Piddock, Stafford; Jimmy Shepherd, Alnwick; Brian Simpson, Newcastle-under-Lyme; Ray Spurwick, Stafford; Ray Stone, Oxford; William Straughan, Alnwick; John Tolley, Altrincham; Dr Mignonne Williams, London; Dr Wyn Williams, London.

The Hon Membership Secretary, Eileen Forth read out the names of five members who had passed away during the preceding twelve months:- A. Berry, Sudbury and London; Mrs D.M. Bowman, Associate; J.W. Mitchell, London; I.C. Parsonson, Sudbury; R. Roberts, London. A minute's silence was observed in their memory.

The minutes of the 46th AGM held on Saturday 15th September 2012 in York were approved by the meeting and signed by the President, following a proposal from John Edwards, Stafford, seconded by Hal Buller, Oxford. There were no matters arising.

Alan Fallows then presented his President's Report. A copy is appended.

In common with several previous Deputy Presidents, Ron Leek had no report to make, the President having competently covered any specific duties which might have been required of him.

In the unfortunate absence of the Vice President, Stephen White, who had telephoned his apology due to his car having broken down en route for Oxford, his report was not available. The President therefore took over the task of introducing each Warden in turn to present their reports as follows:-

Warden for the North, Capt. Stephen Healy. Copy appended.

Warden for the North East, Colin Hardcastle. Copy appended.

Warden for the North West. Position vacant. However, Leslie Morgan, the long standing previous Warden for the North West, noted that he is still attending Carlisle's functions, and that three new Lady Freemen have been enrolled. He stated that he will be attending both Hale and Altrincham's Courts. He reported that a previous regular AGM attendee, Stuart McArthur of Calderdale was still in good health – Stuart will always be remembered for his guide dog Alice. Leslie concluded by saying that he is still in touch with Anna Cockcroft.

Warden for the North Midlands, John Edwards. Copy appended.

Warden for the South Midlands, Derek Austin. Copy appended.

Warden for the East, Norman Offield. No report was available, as Norman was not present, nor had tendered an apology.

Warden for the West, Howard Crapper. Copy appended.

Warden for Wales, Roy Folland. Copy appended.

Warden for the South East, Nick Johnson. Copy appended.

Warden for the South West, Martin Hanks. Copy appended.

In his unforeseen absence, no Hon Treasurer's Report was available from Stephen White, and the President circulated copies of the Income and Expenditure sheet only, which he had managed to get photocopied by St Catherine's College staff. This was accepted by the meeting in lieu of Stephen's formal report, which will now be circulated in the Journal.

Eileen Forth presented her Hon Membership Secretary's Report. Copy appended.

Alan Fallows presented his Hon Archivist's Report. Copy appended.

In his absence, Tom Gibson's Hon Editor's report was read out by the Hon Secretary, Ron Leek. Copy appended.

Alan Shelley presented his Officer Without Portfolio's Report. Copy appended.

The retiring President, Alan Fallows, then installed the President Elect, Gordon Varndell, in office as the new President of FEW. Gordon pronounced the President's Affirmation, following which Alan, in pronouncing the Declaration, presented Gordon with the President's Medallion and formally robed him.

Alan Shelley thanked Alan Fallows for his excellent presidency.

Gordon then gave his Inaugural Address as President, noting that this was a shorter version of what he wished to say, and that the full version would appear as "The President's Blog" in the next Journal. Copy appended.

Colin Hardcastle, the retiring Immediate Past President, then presented Alan Fallows with the Immediate Past President's Medallion and Robe.

The President's Consort's Jewel was presented to Eileen Forth by Valerie Fallows.

Gordon then invited the new Immediate Past President to continue chairing the remainder of the meeting. Alan was happy to do this, firstly proposing a vote of thanks to his Executive Officers for all the help and encouragement which they had given to him over the past three years.

As only one nomination had been received for each of the other Executive Officer positions, no election was necessary, and Ron Leek read out the names for 2013-2014 as follows:-

Deputy President:	Ron Leek
Vice President:	Stephen White
Hon Secretary:	Ron Leek
Hon Treasurer:	Stephen White
Hon Membership Secretary:	Eileen Forth
Hon Archivist:	Alan Fallows
Hon Editor:	Tom Gibson
Officer Without Portfolio:	Alan Shelley

Alan Fallows then stated that Stephen White had confirmed that all current Wardens would continue in office for the next twelve months. In thanking them for their sterling work, he announced them as:-

Warden for the North:	Capt. Stephen Healy
Warden for the North East:	Colin Hardcastle
Warden for the North West:	TBA
Warden for the North Midlands:	John Edwards
Warden for the South Midlands:	Derek Austin
Warden for the East:	Norman Offield

Warden for the West:	Howard Crapper
Warden for Wales:	Roy Folland
Warden for the South East:	Nick Johnson
Warden for the South West:	Martin Hanks

Any Other Business:-

- a) Past President Bill Healey, 1990-1996, addressed the meeting. A copy of his comprehensive address is appended. Alan Fallows responded, by saying that the resurgence of this great organisation is worth its weight in gold.
- b) John Edwards announced that the 2014 AGM, to be hosted by the Freemen of Stafford would be held at the Yarnfield Conference Centre from 19th to 21st September 2014.
- c) Capt. Stephen Healy queried the apparent anomaly in the numbers of Journals circulated as quoted in the Hon Editor's Report. Alan Fallows responded by stating that there were indeed additional mailings, but not to the extent mentioned. He will take up the matter with Tom Gibson.
- d) Alan Fallows noted that the various Land Registration issues were still ongoing. He will email all Wardens and Executive with current details as soon as possible.
- e) There being no further business, the President declared the meeting closed.

Presidents Report

The past year has been difficult for me due to unexpected family and business constraints restricting my time.

The only problem still challenging us is that of the registration of freemens rights under the LRA 2002 which closes next month. I have to report that current legal argument seems to lean toward only recognising rights previously confirmed by statute, whether local or national and to wish to ignore the validity of charter where this is the only basis of claim.

I have mentioned before that accepting alternative payment in lieu of actual pasturage right may be considered to have negated the right itself and Inclosure awards may have reinforced this view.

Legal process and thinking is in constant flux and I am afraid that modern thinking seems bent on alienating hereditary rights such as ours.

If your predecessors were savvy enough to force acceptance of local acts your rights are effectively protected. If they were not I fear that we may not be able to preserve them.

We may need to expend funds in one last attempt to protect these rights so we need to consider two things:

1. To transfer funds from general to legal as required
 2. To appeal to Gilds to prepare to donate to the legal fund if they are able to support such action.
- We are unable to specify a cost at this time but estimate the action of a local solicitor in preparation to Counsel at approx £2,000 with Counsel at between £15,000 to £20,000. Please be assured that no expenditure of this magnitude will be exacted without the authority of Gilds through a special Court meeting.

Vice Presidents Report

Unfortunately, owing to my car breaking down en-route, I did not make it to the AGM but this is the Report which I was due to deliver.

My prime function is to *coordinate* the activities of the Wardens and in this regard I have exchanged communication, by letter, telephone and email, and, in the case of my local warden, had several meetings during the last year.

As with last year it has been difficult to organise a meeting with all Wardens in attendance especially with the cancellation of the June Court. A meeting for those present was held immediately prior to the March Court at York and as a trial the Wardens joined in with the Executive Officers Meeting

yesterday evening.

Following the appointment last year of Nick Johnson to the position of Warden for London and The South East I am very pleased to introduce, and how appropriate, Martin Hanks, a Freeman of Oxford but living in Bude, as Warden for the South West. The North West remains vacant but I am hopeful of finding someone in the not too distant future.

My second role is the continuing development of the website, new material being added as it becomes available and I am grateful to Alan Shelley for his contributions. Since last year a new section has been set up profiling Past Presidents and after a period of limbo email addresses have been added with agreement of those concerned. We are still keen to receive copies of some early editions of Newsletters which are absent from the archive, details of which have been published in the Journal. The most recent covers have a click-through to the content which was published. I would be pleased to receive and amendments/up-dates to the material which was originally collected by Alan Robson some years ago.

I would also be grateful to receive contributions of details of forthcoming events, either directly from Guilds or through the Wardens, so that the Diary page on the web can be kept informative and up-to-date.

Alongside the website we also now have a very active Facebook page and I am assisted by Tom Gibson and Alex Christison in administering this. To date we have had almost 50 "likes" which means that fresh FEW news will be notified immediately to those members which removes the onus of having to check the website on a regular basis. One has to be a Facebook user in order to do this but for anyone with internet access it is a very straight forward process. Tom has been very busy in posting up Guild news which is either of a very urgent nature or simply won't fit into the next Journal owing to space limitations. Facebook provides a very good forum for members to leave questions or comments and I would encourage you all to have a look at it.

Wardens reports

Warden For The North:

Ainwick: The Clerk to the Council of the Common Council and Freeman of the Borough of Ainwick gave his customary reply when approached for information in advance of this meeting: "very quiet, heads down, business as usual". Yet again though, we note their commendable, sizeable and smart representation at this event.

Berwick-upon-Tweed: The Freeman of Berwick upon Tweed had their usual programme of events over recent months, being a mixture of formal and social events, their summer trip being down to the National Railway Museum in York.

Capt Jim Evans reports that, having successfully made and implemented all necessary changes in applicable rules to account for the 2009 Act in terms of access to the Freedom of the Borough, they are now working through the minefield of charity administration to similarly harmonise the equivalent wording to allow for equal rights between the genders. This, he described as "continuing fallout from the Act" and I sense it is proving to be quite a task.

Berwick is already planning for the 900th anniversary of becoming a Royal Borough in 2015 and the Freeman are looking to play a major part in the celebrations.

Durham: In our recent discussions, the Chairman of the Freeman Wardens of the City of Durham, John Heslop, could only refer in general terms to the ongoing issues resulting from the transition from Durham City Council to the unitary Durham County Council. Despite the Freeman's best efforts, the opinion of Counsel and a determination in our favour by an independent adjudicator, the County Council continues to be obdurate about the Freeman's entitlements under agreements originally established with the old City Council.

The Freeman's sponsorship of a young apprentice joiner at the Dean and Chapter is progressing. One original intention of this scheme was that the apprentice, once time-served, would enter the Joiner's Company and become a Freeman of the City. The Chairman concedes that the Freeman,

although well intentioned, may be up against certain 'challenges of youth' with the young man and, although a qualified tradesman is looking a promising outcome, the Freedom may not in the end take his interest. Hopes remain high and all credit to the Durham Freemen for their initiative.

Newcastle upon Tyne: There continues to be no ongoing formal dialogue with the Stewards Committee of the Freemen of Newcastle upon Tyne and events in the City can only be reported for interest.

One thing that did not happen this year was the famous 'Hoppings Fair' on the Town Moor — Europe's largest travelling funfair. On 5th April, the organising Events Group, jointly made up of representatives from the City Council and the Freemen announced that "Prevailing ground conditions are serving to necessitate the cancellation of this event in the current year? It was however public knowledge that negotiations had also become somewhat fraught between the Events Group and the Northern Syndicate of the Showman's Guild, as the Events Group attempted to impose more direct and effective regulation of the fair and the site. The Syndicate's chairman told the press that their "problem..... is the way the Freemen have treated our rules and regulations, which go back 124 years". Following an extra-ordinary meeting of the Showman's Guild, the event was placed 'out of order', meaning none of the Guild's members from anywhere in the country are allowed to bring their rides and stalls to Newcastle Town Moor. This situation looks to continue for the foreseeable future.

On a positive note, the Freemen stepped in when it was announced that the Lord Mayor's 19th century horse-drawn coach was being sold as part of council budget cuts. Local businessman and former Newcastle United Chairman Freddy Shepherd and the Freeman jointly found the necessary funds and secured the antique coach, which will most likely go on display in a vintage car and bus museum owned by the Shepherd family. It will however, continue to be used for state and civic occasions.

Morpeth: I have made some enquiries in the Town of Morpeth regarding their Freelage. The Town originally had seven mediaeval trade guilds, or fraternities, but as elsewhere, their power was severely limited by the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act. Colin Hardcastle tells me that when Harry Ward formed the Freemen of England in the 1960's, Morpeth were initially involved, but withdrew quickly thereafter. The town council today has a keen sense of history and there is a strong Antiquarian Society, so I am hoping that where there is a will, there might yet prove to be a way.

Warden for the North East:

It has been a very quiet period in the North East region with almost no news coming through to me from any of the Gilds in this region.

However, like Mr Simonites' pets, I have continued to ferret around to find something to report. I have continued my researches into the Freedoms of Kingston-upon-Hull, Beverly and Ripon but with no further results. Whilst these places made honorary Freemen in days gone by, there is, nor it seems ever has been, any mechanism for drawing together Freemen in to the Gilds. Beverly do have regular meetings, but they are so insular that they seem intolerant to any contact even though they are FEW members.

I have also made enquiries of other Towns and Cities in this area with the same general outcome: they are happy to make honorary Freemen- more recently military groups both naval and land forces- but do not keep contact with the recipients of those Freedoms. Sometimes the only way we find out is via the television news.

Following information from the doyen of Halifax antiquarianism, our former warden Leslie Morgan, I learned that Hannah Cockcroft a double paralympic gold medallist had been made a Member of the most Noble Order of the British Empire and also honorary Freeman of the Borough of Calderdale. I wrote to her with details of FEW but I have had not had a reply. Sorry Leslie, your good work has not borne fruit.

The City of York Guild held its annual general meeting in June and installed Cllr. Julie Gunnell (the incoming Lord Mayor) as their President. Mr Alec Stephenson was elected as Master in place of his

predecessor Mrs Hazel Hague who has 'moved on' to become Consort to the Master of the Leicester Freemen as well as remaining Deputy Master of York. Mrs Beryl Stephenson (surprisingly?) was installed as Masters Consort of York and all other outgoing officers were re-elected nem con, with our own Editor, Tom Gibson, becoming Clerk.

I am sure that the Freemen of Great Grimsby are alive and well, but I have not had any formal contact with them albeit that my personal friendship with our Vice President does provide some gleanings of information. I presume we all know that Stephen is now not only Vice President, but also granddad to his first grandson Logan?

Finally, an apology from me. My continued health problems have caused me to reduce visits to other Gilds for their lavish dinners but more so for their warmth, friendship and fellowship—I hope to try and do better next year if Stephen re-appoints me Warden!!!

Addenda: The City of York are to hold two Freedom Courts on the 21st and 30th October 2013 when it is expected that some 80+ new Freemen will be admitted.

The town of Great Grimsby held, on 10th September, a Freedom Court but due to my enforced inability to travel, I was unable to attend.

Since my earlier mention of Beverley, I made a personal visit to that City, whilst on holiday, and discovered [as anyone else could] that in Medieval days, there were no less than 39 trade guilds including some 'unusual' ones — for example, The Walkers guild. Walkers were people who walked across woollen cloth to shrink and thicken it — strange but true. The City has highlighted the locations of the guilds in 4 described walks [pardon the pun!] and their maps are worth obtaining and following for anyone interested.

Finally, and sadly, I report to those who have not heard that Mrs Margaret Bowman, widow of former President. Philip, died in August. Her funeral was held on 23rd August in York. I was unable to attend due to my being on holiday. Mrs Bowman was an ebullient and vociferous person who, though not a freeman, attended many events both locally in York and Nationally. Her presence at future events will be missed by us all.

Warden for the North Midlands:

I often wonder what I should do to tell guilds that I exist and find out what they want from me, but it seems that they do not want very much. It is very pleasant to be invited to ceremonial or social events to show the flag on behalf of FEW. It is even useful when contacting civic groups or historians to find out if freemen existed in their areas and whether they may be revived. However, the only times I have been contacted are when things have gone wrong.

I hope that I have not made matters worse by offering advice in a dispute between a Shrewsbury freeman and his local gild. What was gratifying was that he felt it worthwhile contacting me as the FEW area warden. It did not enter my head that an individual member would even know of my existence, despite the fact that I wrote to all of them when I got the job. It's rather like when you produce web sites or newspaper articles and you assume that nobody is reading them. Then you make a spelling or grammatical mistake and four people phone or send e-mails.

The case in point was just one where freemen's groups are threatened with litigation for relatively simple matters that should be resolved otherwise. At Stafford, a gentleman whose qualifications as a freeman were questionable wanted to stand as a trustee, despite a history which dictated otherwise, so he was excluded. Straight-down to the court, albeit with little evidence, but this has caused the Freemen Trustees lots of stress they could well do without. Another gent, who has caused strife with lots of people, is threatening to sue the same Freemen Trustees for victimisation. Yet more stress and aggravation!

It does lead me to wonder if some FEW resources should be channelled into advice or support for such cases, which will probably become more frequent in our litigious society.

Anyway to more important matters: Stafford Guild has completed the ballot to change the rules of admission. The Mayor is primed to make the formal statement to the next full Borough Council

meeting, when we hope the freemen will be in evidence. Since we have had a significant number of freemen, (or Burgesses as we as now referring to ourselves), wearing robes on civic occasions, our profile in the town has definitely improved. Even our participation in the "Save Stafford Hospital" march did not go unnoticed by the media.

We hope to use the rule changes to get more publicity and, with luck, give a boost to knowledge of FEW. Even "Why has that man got a different robe?" can spark a useful conversation. We may be amongst the most ancient fraternity, (if I can still use that word), in the land, but in most places we are unknown. I feel that as a Warden, I should be doing something about that in my area, but as I began, it is difficult to know just what!

Warden for the South Midlands:

Coventry Freemen's Guild has been fortunate to recruit two new Court members – who have filled the vacant Charity and Junior Warden roles. Half the Court still comprises Past Masters, so we are hopeful of further recruits, as our events are fairly predictable. Clive Nelson, the new Junior Warden, has already led a return visit to the Morgan Cars factory in Malvern – which I can thoroughly recommend to other Guilds as an interesting day out.

Leicester Freemen's Gild is concerned about the increasing costs of their quarterly magazine the 'Gildhall News'. Certainly the 39% increase last year in second class postage was something only a monopoly like the Royal Mail could get away with. Coventry cut its magazine print costs significantly two years ago by the efforts of our ex Print Industry Chronicler seeking best value quotations, so I would suggest other Guilds also get quotes from alternative Printers. Also, as most Councils have direct mail departments sending out Council Tax bills etc, using franked mail, it would be worth approaching them to use that facility - as a typical franked A5 size magazine is only 31p compared with a 50p second class stamp. I would respectfully suggest these comments could also apply to the FEW Journal – as the FEW was founded in York, and York is still the venue for a lot of our meetings and production of the FEW Journal.

Northampton Freemen's Guild are expanding their Annual Dinner to a two day event on the 11th & 12th April 2014, based at Moulton College. Tours of the Guildhall and a Rennie Mackintosh historic house will also be available. Invitations to other Guilds are in progress. Their President, Phil Ager, has recently gained the honour of carrying the civic sword in Mayoral processions.

Turning now to the South Midlands Court Leets:

Alcester & Henley-in-Arden Court Leets have active programmes of events in their towns. Their AGM's I have attended fill their Guildhalls, so the residents clearly value the Court Leet roles in safeguarding the local heritage.

Warwick Court Leet's usual venue of the 18th century Courthouse is still undergoing a Heritage Lottery funded restoration, but new activities such as a Court Leet information leaflet, Games evening, and next month the first Bailiff's Dinner are progressing.

Warden for the West:

I am delighted to welcome the Chartered Freemen of Gloucester to the FEW AGM for the first time in my memory. Their President, Terry Aubrey and Hon Secretary, Andrew Croose, have made great strides in recent years to make the Freemen more visible and relevant in this historic city. The increased numbers of their Freemen are testament to their endeavours. Please make them very welcome.

It was with sincere regret that I had to miss the Gloucester Civic Admission Ceremony in April. I do however intend to attend the Annual Dinner of the Chartered Freemen of Gloucester next month, when held in the Mercers Hall on the 5th October. I encourage all members to apply for tickets. The Warden and Freemen of Malmesbury have recently been shown on television. The Countryfile programme focussed on the West country and cameras were allowed to follow events when the Freemans Court was held earlier this year. The senior and long standing Freeman, Mr Oliver Pike was interviewed and viewers were given an outline of this, the oldest Borough in the country.

The BBC are returning later next month with their History Magazine show and will set up. In the Town Hall. The weekend will feature a lecture from Michael Wood, who will speak on King Athelston, the king who gave the Town their freedoms.

Oxford have been busy preparing for this weekend. My Vice Chairman, Mr Christopher Butterfield is here today and he has been an officer member of the Committee for over forty years. We are indebted to his long service, good council and also for having standby transport ready for tomorrow in case the weather dares impinge on our parade. It was Chris Butterfield who in 2005, teased away at our 400 year old Rules of Admission and enabled a change of the law which eventually allowed Women Freemen to be admitted. We now have over 40 women freemen, some of whom are here today. The Oxford Freemen Apprentice Awards continue to gather gain momentum.

The famous view from our Port Meadow has been compromised, (some would say ruined), by the construction of eight adjacent student accommodation blocks. They are far too high and of ghastly "but of place" design. The Council for the Preservation of Rural England is challenging the planning decision of the City Council in court. You can support this action and also vote on line, in a national architecture planning competition for Carbuncle Cup Award.

I have reported previously upon the rail expansion and electrification alongside the eastern boundary of Oxfor's Port Meadow. This will allow a huge increase in freight transport between Southampton Docks and Birmingham and also provide, in conjunction with other work, an alternative route for passenger trains to London from Oxford. The Rail Contractors are having to work entirely within the boundaries of the railway land and not tramp over the meadow as was their want initially.

My work as Warden for the West has seen correspondence with the Freemen of the Forest of Dean, but letters to the Freemen of Chippenham have recently gone unanswered and a visit is now due.

May I take this opportunity to welcome our new Warden for the South West. Martin is a Freemen of the City of Oxford, but lives in the beautiful area around Bude. I wish him well and the lesson for us all is, that all Freemen, no matter where you live In this area of our Association, you can take an active part in our affairs.

Finally, I would like to thank Terry Sibley of Northampton Guild for his kind invitation to Oxford Freemen for us visit them next April.

Warden for Wales:

The Gild of Freemen of Pembroke: The Gild received an invitation to attend the Remembrance Service which was held at Fresh Water West on 25th April, and was represented by members of the Gild; the Master laid a wreath on their behalf.

On Saturday the 11th May, the Master represented the Gild at the Mayor Making Ceremony of Councillor Keith Nicholas which was held in the Chamber of Pembroke Town Council and was followed by the Mayoral luncheon. The Master and members of the Gild were also in attendance at the Civic Service the following day which was held at St. Mary's Church, Pembroke.

On the 25th July a Court Meeting was held in the Chamber of Pembroke Town Council at which Councillor Aden Arthur Brinn J.P. Former Mayor of the town, was enrolled as a Burgess of the Gild of Freemen of Pembroke, in recognition of the service he has given over the years to the town and community of Pembroke. The Master also presented a cheque of £250.00 to the lady representatives for the Pembroke Charity, Keep it Local 09. This charity was set up to help cancer patients and their families, such as in transport and toll bridge costs.

The Gild's AGM takes place on Thursday 24th October at Pembroke Town Hall. The Annual Service will be held on the Sunday November 17th at St. Mary's Church Pembroke; the guest preacher will be the Very Revd. Jonathan Lean, Dean of St. David's. This will be followed by the Annual Luncheon at the Cleddau Bridge Hotel.

The Gild was represented by the Master to a dedication of an especially commissioned artwork by Chevron to pay tribute to the workforce of the energy industry in Pembrokeshire, at the Mill Pond, Pembroke, following which lunch was provided at the Pembroke Town Hall.

We received the sad news that Bryant Skyrme had passed away at Withybush General Hospital on the 21st August aged 81 years. Bryant was a former Dept. Master of the Gild and had to resign that position because of ill health. The funeral took place on the 29th August at Parc Gwyn Crematorium. The Master and members of the Gild were present at the funeral service.

The Gild of Freemen of Llantrisant: The Annual Court Leet was held on Friday 10th May 2013 where applications for the enrolment unto the Freeman's Roll were considered. There were 11 new Freemen enrolled, one of which was Australian. The Annual Court Leet Dinner was held at the Llantrisant Rugby Club, which was attended by 100 plus members.

Innovative plans to transform Llantrisant's historic Guild Hall into a state-of-the-art visitor's centre and education facility for the hilltop town have received an initial £58,800 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The development grant will assist Llantrisant Town Trust, which manages the 18th century building on behalf of the Freemen of the town, to progress their proposals for a second round lottery bid that will hopefully see their aspirations become a reality. The Trust's ambitious £750,000 project will restore the building close to its original appearance and become the unique heritage of the town, welcoming more visitors to the locality which ultimately will help boost the local economy. The Grade II listed Guild Hall, which was rebuilt in 1773 on medieval foundations has been used as a court room, cells and school in its lifetime, will house exhibition space, research and IT suite for genealogy studies, historic artefacts, documentation and photographs celebrating Llantrisant's glorious past.

The Haverfordwest Gild of Freemen: The Gild Master opens Church History Week and runs 10k. The Master of the Gild of Freemen, Mr. Charles Davies, officially opened the Annual History Week at St. Mary's Church in the town with a speech in praise of the work put in by members not only to organise the popular event but also the effort they put in to looking after the church fabric. The Master said the History Week attracted many visitors and townsfolk to view the wide range of exhibits on display and to hear the talks by local historians and the organ recital which ended the week. He himself, with his wife Marion, worked to set up the exhibits and to steward the event. But he took a day off to run a 10k charity race in Cardiff which he completed in good time despite his 80 years. A former County rugby wing, Charles Davies must be the fittest Gild Master in the land, having maintained top shape all his life through regular running. Indeed, he played a game of rugby when he was 63. His son Nicholas playing in the same match. The Clerk to the Gild, Mr. Paul Lucas, who had arranged a display of Gild documents, regalia and photographs, gave an interesting talk during the week outlining the Gild's history and activities.

Five new Burgesses were sworn in at Haverfordwest Gild of Freemen's Annual Summer Ceremony at the Cricket Club after being welcomed and introduced by the Master. The following were sworn in by the Clerk Mr. Paul Lucas: The Chairman of Pembrokeshire County Council, Cllr. Arwyn Williams, the C.O. of the 14th Signals Regiment. Lt. Colonel Mark Purves, Mr. Glan Phillips, Mrs. Joyce Wonnacott and Mr. Richard Stephens. The Master paid tribute to each one's important contribution to the life of the town. The guest speaker Mr. Roger Mathias of Camrose gave an interesting address on farming and biodiversity, on which subject he is an acknowledged authority.

Warden of the South East:

The Admiralty Court of the Rochester Oyster and Floating Fishery was held on Saturday the 22nd of June, and was presided over by the Mayor of Medway as Admiral of the River Medway, together with the Chief Executive of the Council, who sat as Clerk of the Court, and also a number of councillors.

The title of "Admiral of the Waters of the Medway from Sherenese to Hawkewode" was first conferred by a Charter granted to the City of Rochester by Henry M in 1446.

In 1728, in the reign of King George 1, an Act of Parliament was passed for "regulating, well ordering, governing and improving the Oyster Fishery in the River Medway and waters thereof, under the authority of the Mayor and Citizens of the City of Rochester, in the County of Kent." This act was followed by another, passed in the 28th year of the reign of Queen Victoria, entitled "An Act

for Better Regulating the Rochester Oyster Fishery and for other Purposes".

By these and subsequent Acts of Parliament, the Mayor of the City, of Rochester as Admiral of the waters of the Medway and his or her Aldermen were given jurisdiction over the waters of the Medway and its creeks and tributaries between Garrison Point, Sheerness and Hawkwood Stone. The Oyster Fishery was free and common to all oyster fishermen and dredgers who had served seven years' apprenticeship with any free fisherman or free dredger of the fishery. Upon application by the Fishery, the Mayor summoned an Admiralty Court for regulating and ordering the Fishery. The, fishermen and dredgers were summoned by the Mayor's Water Bailiff to attend the Court when a Jury was elected.

There is much documentary evidence that bears witness to the history and purposes of the floating and oyster fisheries and the Admiralty Court is still held usually in July, with the Admiral of the River (The Mayor of Medway, as the successor to the Mayor of Rochester), the Chief Executive of Medway (as successor to the Town Clerk of Rochester) as Registrar of the Fishery and other Dignitaries in attendance. The Jury is sworn and appointed, the list of Free Dredgers is called, the Water Bailiffs are sworn in and appointed and the Jury, through the Chamberlain, presents its report on the previous year's fishing in the River Medway, which is then approved by the Court.

Admiral's Cruise. Held the same weekend as the Admiral's Court, the Admirals Cruise enables the Mayor to beat the bounds of the River Medway.

Throughout its history, Rochester Cruising Club has maintained close links with the local community and council and in the past many members of the club were also members of the council. It was in 1960 that the then Mayor of Rochester and Admiral of the River, Councillor Jack Phillips, sought the assistance of Alderman Maurice Cole, a club member, in reinstating the old custom of the beating of the Admiral's bounds, from the Hawkwood Stone to Sheerness, a distance of twenty miles (Sheerness to Rochester bridge is thirteen miles, and Rochester bridge to Hawkwood Stone is seven miles).

On the Saturday, members of Rochester Oyster and Floating Fisheries (ROFF) hosted the Mayor and members of the court and sailed up-river as far as Hawkwood Stone. Thirty seven boats took part and this was followed by a buffet at Rochester Cruising Club, with various seafood supplied by ROFF. Finally the day ended with a party at the Cruising Club.

Then on the Sunday, Rochester Cruising Club hosted the down-river cruise, when members hosted the Mayor, as Admiral of the River, and selected civic guests. The whole weekend was then wrapped up with a farewell buffet and Sunset Ceremony.

As part of the Admiral's Cruise, there was also a memorial service held in honour of HMS Bulwark In 1914, the Bulwark was destroyed by an explosion wide moored at Kethole Reach, with the loss of 727 souls.

With permission of the Chamberlain Mr Shane Hales, the events of Saturday; that is the court proceedings and the up-river cruise, were videoed by myself and are available for public view on YouTube.

Warden for the South West:

As a new boy to the Freeman of England and Wales and as Warden for the South West, I have little to report in the way of activities as I have spent my time researching the "old" boroughs and Gilds of the South West.

Cornwall: Surprisingly, I have come across few town councils (from the old boroughs) that have any recent history of Freeman admissions. I visited Falmouth in June. The Town Clerk, Mark Williams, was only aware of honorary Freeman in recent years. I spoke to the Deputy Mayor of Penzance in May. He told me that Penzance have a maximum of nine Freeman at any one time. Four new Freeman were admitted about three years ago, which brought their living members up to the maximum number.

A complete list of applicable Cornish towns and Boroughs, together with research results to date, are available by email (3 pages). If anyone would like a copy of the list, please let me know.

Devonshire: The first recorded admission to the Freedom was Richard de Paris on the 8th September 1266 (Exeter). Freemen had privileges of franchise and could be the sole retailers of candles, ale, spices, land, salt, wool, silk and linen.

From 1266 an almost continuous record of admissions has survived and by 1300 annual enrolments averaged 15, indicating a total membership of several hundred. Between 1266 and 2003 over 12,000 names of Freemen of Exeter have been recorded.

Entry by succession or apprenticeship was normally only possible if the fathers or masters were themselves freemen. In Exeter, unlike other towns, it was possible to enter by succession to an uncle, brother or other relative as well as to a father. It is believed there are seven hereditary Exeter Freemen alive today.

At Holsworthy's Annual Town's Meeting, held in the Market Hall on Thursday, April 18th 2013, the Mayor, Cllr Pauline Ede announced that the civic honour, Freeman of Holsworthy, voted for by the public, had been awarded to Mary Barfett for her service to the local community. I spoke to the Town Clerk of Holsworthy in August and she confirmed that the Holsworthy (annual) admissions were for Honorary Freemen only.

As with Cornwall, research results for Devon are available upon request.

Somerset: No action yet. This county is split between myself and the Warden for the West, Howard Crapper.

As you can see, so far my research has mostly produced results of a historical nature. In the coming year, I hope to meet or speak to many Mayors and Town Clerks throughout the region. I would welcome comments and advice from my fellow wardens.

Hon. Treasurers Report.

Significant Information: The Association was established under a Constitution adopted on 28th September 1985 and amended on 23rd September 1989, 19th September 1992, 21st September 1996, 17th September 2005, 17th September 2011 and 15th September 2012. The Association was registered as a Charity, with Registration Number 293536, on 29th January 1986.

Association Executive Officers – 2012/2013 (Trustees):

President	- Mr A G Fallows
Deputy President	- Mr R E Leek
Vice President	- Mr S P White
Immediate Past President	- Mr C Hardcastle
Honorary Archivist	- Mr A G Fallows
Honorary Journal Editor	- Mr T Gibson
Honorary Membership Secretary	- Mrs E Forth
Honorary Secretary	- Mr R E Leek
Honorary Treasurer	- Mr S P White
Officer without Portfolio	- Mr A Shelley
Custodian Trustees	- Capt J Evans (Chairman) - Mr A Robson - Mr G A Varndell (also Data Control Manager) - Mr S P White (as Hon Treasurer)

Bankers: - NatWest Bank Plc
39 Grimsby Road,
Cleethorpes
North East Lincolnshire
DN35 7GB

Auditors: - Forrester Boyd Chartered Accountants.
26 South Saint Mary's Gate,
Great Grimsby.
North East Lincolnshire.
DN31 1LW

Principal Office:

The Association does not have a Registered Office. All enquiries should be addressed to the Honorary Secretary:

Mr R E Leek.
Richmond House,
3 Beech Close,
Oversley Green
Alcester.
Warwickshire.
B49 6PP

Trustees' Responsibility For The Accounts:

Charities law requires the Trustees of the Association to prepare an Account of Receipts and Payments and a Statement of Assets and Liabilities for each financial year. In addition, the Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charity's transactions and to disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the Association. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity, and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Trustees' Report:

The Trustees present their report and the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2013.

Objects Of The Association:

The objects of the Freeman of England and Wales Association are to advance public education in the freedom and to promote research into the history and legal customs of ancient towns of England and Wales and the legal institution of the freedom, to publish the useful results of such research and, in 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, being former boroughs or other places where that institution is to be found.

Activities And Achievements During The Year:

During the year the Association has continued to consolidate the position of the admission of daughters to the Freedom, providing guidance and support to its members.

We continue to attempt to establish the registration, under the 2002 Land Registration Act; of various Gilds interests over lands and properties although this meets with much local authority opposition.

The Association also provided a medium for the modernisation of admission by apprenticeship. This will be brought to fruition at the 2013 AGM with the publication of a guidance paper by the President.

In line with its Objects regarding education and publication the Association has continued to enlarge its website and Facebook page thus providing a greater facility for information to be readily available to the general public and its members alike.

The Officers of the Association continue to attend local events and functions to provide advice on all matters appertaining to the Freedom

Financial Activities And Affairs:

The attached accounts show the transactions for the year and state of affairs, which the Trustees consider to be sound.

Approved by the Trustees on the 13th September 2013 and signed on their behalf by:

Alan G Fallows
FEW President

Stephen P. White
FEW Honorary Treasurer

Capt James Evans
Chairman of Trustees

Notes To The Accounts:

1. Subscriptions:

Subscriptions are as they are received in the year; arrears may occur one year and made up the next. Many members are still only paying the £8 subscription rate rather than £10. The Membership Secretary will report further on this subject.

2. Donations to Funds:

Any payment received over £10 is applied to the Legal or Regalia Fund as directed.

3. Sales:

The total income has increased, compared to 2011/12, with ties, books and cufflinks doing well. Income from other items have varied, as indicated by the figures.

4. Interest Received:

Interest on our COIF Account has reduced from 0.841% to 0.671% which is low, reflecting the Bank of England base rate, but may be regarded as secure.

5. Income Tax Recovered:

Gift Aid is claimed on all payments received under the Scheme, including the basic subscription. More members are paying at least £10, one made a £100 donation.

6. Administrative Expenses:

This includes postage, stationery, printing and on-going website hosting costs.

7. Purchases:

This is in regard to purchases for stock items for sale as noted.

8. Journal:

Four Journals were produced each period (total 100 pages in 2012, 84 pages in 2013). Economies have been made in terms of number distributed, but we are stuck with the significantly higher postage costs.

9. Annual General Meetings:

Costs include those directly incurred by FEW and those reimbursed to Hosts. Those shown for previous AGM's are the final costs; total costs for 2013 are not yet known, in fact, no costs had been incurred at all at the end of March.

10. Legal & Regalia Expenses:

There were no legal expenses in the year; Medallions were purchased for future presentations to Past Presidents.

11. Court and Officers Meetings:

Costs have been broadly in line with those incurred in 2011/12.

INCOME

April to March

EXPENDITURE

<u>2011/12</u>		<u>2012/13</u>	<u>2011/12</u>		<u>2012/13</u>
£		£	£		£
Note 1	<u>SUBSCRIPTIONS</u>		Note 6	<u>ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES</u>	
3,100.00	Individual	3,427.00	53.54	Postage	30.41
1,265.00	Guilds	1,495.00	-	Telephone	-
4,365.00		4,922.00	-	Insurance (provision only made)	-
			-	Archives	-
	Annual Subscriptions are taken at £10.00 for each individual and the set level for Guilds. Any donation above this amount is, in the absence of any other instructions split equally between the Legal and Regalia Funds		167.62	Stationery	52.73
			78.94	Printing/photocopying	88.31
			240.00	Website	240.00
			110.90	Other	214.00
			651.00		625.45
Note 2	<u>DONATIONS TO:-</u>		Note 7	<u>PURCHASES</u>	
145.00	General Fund	261.20	179.67	Robes	-
204.00	Legal Fund	172.00	-	Ties	-
205.20	Regalia Fund	157.80	-	Members Medallions	-
554.20		591.00	-	Robe Badges	208.00
			-	Blazer badges	-
Note 3	<u>SALES</u>		-	Lapel badges	-
50.00	Robes	-	-	Wall Plaques	-
27.60	Ties	179.40	-	Pens	-
68.00	Members Medallions	68.00	-	Cufflinks	578.84
43.80	Robe badges	109.50	-	Membership Wallets	-
-	Blazer badges	-	179.67		786.84
38.80	Lapel badges	39.80	Note 8	<u>JOURNAL (4 editions in period)</u>	
57.00	Wall plaques	-	2,225.00	Production	2,015.00
5.10	Stickers	2.20	1,161.92	Postage/distribution	1,195.92
26.40	Headsquares	19.80	3,386.92		3,210.92
-	Books	32.50	Note 9	<u>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS</u>	
8.00	Christmas Cards	-	44.88	2008 ~ Hale	-
10.50	Pens	14.00	-	2010 ~ Berwick	-
-	Cuff Links	80.00	162.67	2011 ~ Pembroke	-
-	Membership Wallets	-	-	2012 ~ York	132.05
22.00	"The Guilds" - M E Pickering	42.00	207.55		132.05
1.75	Aspects of the Freedom	22.00	Note 10	<u>LEGAL & REGALIA EXPENSES</u>	
-	Membership Certificates	8.40	-	Freemen's Rights	-
358.95		617.60	-	Past-President Medallions	942.48
			Note 11	<u>COURT & OFFICERS' MEETINGS</u>	
Note 4	<u>INTEREST RECEIVED</u>		75.00	Court Meeting Room Hire	36.40
377.73	COIF Deposit A/c	416.79	195.59	Catering - Nett	117.15
0.78	NatWest Reserve A/c	1.06	1.20	Officers' Meeting Expenses	318.14
0.20	Gift Aid Tax Refund	0.26	-	President's Expenses	-
-	Compensation from NatWest	-	271.79		471.69
378.71		418.11	4,696.93	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	6,169.43
Note 5	<u>INCOME TAX RECOVERED</u>		1,414.27	SURPLUS FOR YEAR	892.71
454.34	Re: Gift Aid Declarations 2010/2012	-	1,128.70	Less transfer to Designated Funds	129.32
0.00	Re: Gift Aid Declarations 2012/2013	513.43	285.57	AVAILABLE SURPLUS	763.39
454.34		513.43			
6,111.20	TOTAL RECEIPTS	7,062.14			

STATEMENT OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES AS AT THE FINANCIAL YEAR END

	31.3.2012	31.3.2013
Monetary Assets		
GENERAL PURPOSE FUND		
National Westminster Bank - Current A/C	32.59	1,006.58
National Westminster Bank - Reserve A/C	101.34	59.92
COIF Charity Deposit Fund	46,000.00	46,000.00
	<u>46,133.93</u>	<u>47,066.50</u>
DESIGNATED FUNDS		
National Westminster Bank - Current A/C	81.22	110.54
National Westminster Bank - Reserve A/C	2,600.00	2,700.00
COIF Charity Deposit Fund	4,000.00	4,000.00
	<u>6,681.22</u>	<u>6,810.54</u>
DEBTORS / CREDITORS		
Amounts owed to FEW at 31st March	728.37	643.47
LESS: Amounts owed by FEW at 31st March	-56.61	-140.89
TOTAL	<u>53,486.91</u>	<u>54,379.62</u>
Other Assets		
Stocks of resale items (cost, not realisable value)	1,692.19	2,129.87
Officers' regalia (insured value)	13,300.00	14,201.00
Other Assets	1,055.00	1,098.00
TOTAL	<u>16,047.19</u>	<u>17,428.87</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>69,534.10</u>	<u>71,808.49</u>

Liabilities

Short Term

At 31st March 2013, the only short term commitments were in connection with usual ongoing transactions such as unrepresented cheques and purchase of Regalia.

Long Term

At 31st March 2013, the Officers of the Association have not made any long term commitments.

MOVEMENT OF DESIGNATED FUNDS - 2011/12 to 2012/13

	2011/12	2012/13
Legal Fund		
Balance brought forward, 1st April	1,955.44	2,185.94
Donations received	204.00	172.00
Tax recovered	26.50	18.75
Addnl Tax recovered	-	-
LESS: Costs Incurred	-	-
Balance at 31st March	<u>2,185.94</u>	<u>2,376.69</u>
Regalia Fund		
Balance brought forward, 1st April	869.08	1,102.28
Donations received	205.20	157.80
Tax recovered	28.00	13.25
Addnl Tax recovered	-	-
LESS: Purchases made	-	-942.48
Balance at 31st March	<u>1,102.28</u>	<u>330.85</u>
Regalia Self-Insurance Fund		
Balance brought forward, 1st April	2,728.00	3,393.00
Amount Provided	665.00	710.00
Balance at 31st March	<u>3,393.00</u>	<u>4,103.00</u>
TOTAL DESIGNATED FUNDS	<u>6,681.22</u>	<u>6,810.54</u>

Hon. Membership Secretary's Report.

Guilds: Currently we have 38 Guilds on the books with six Guilds in Arrears.

Individual Membership: The current membership stands at 368. This has dropped slightly since the last report.

Since September 2012:

- 1 Member was reinstated
- 11 New full individual Members
- 1 New Associate Member
- 5 Have been deleted under rule 9 of the Constitution
- 1 Member has resigned due to ill health
- 5 Members have died.

Current payments: Late payments, again I have to say reminders are being sent out constantly. Currently 28 members are in arrears. Some of these paid by Standing order All have been reminded and as yet there has been no response from them.

The Breakdown of members payments: In total there are 21 members in arrears. Some of these were paying by standing order. There are 5 in arrears for September 2012 and 21 in arrears for April 2013. No reminder letters have yet been answered

Hon. Archivist's Report.

Calls upon the archives have been less than frantic, but items continue to trickle in from wardens and members, and I add them as appropriate. To my wifes delight it appears that I will be continuing as Archivist so I will be happy to provide any information requested.

Hon. Editors Report.

The last issue was well received although I heard from a dozen members (of 500 mailings)(*Editors note: My apologies, I typed this figure in error; it should read 400.*) that their issue had fallen out of the envelopes. Replacements were sent and I informed the printers of the problem.

The next issue is traditionally filled with AGM news, any other items I receive will be held over to the next issue if there is again no room for them in this issue. Could I ask that a copy of the group photograph be sent to me ASAP (preferably in JPG format) please, so I can create the cover.

The next issue also usually contains the Gazette and Directory, could any amendments please be sent to me by the copy date published in the last Journal.

I understand that the proposal to reduce the number of issues of the journal from 4 per year, to 3 per year is to be considered at this meeting. Could I ask that if passed, the maximum number of pages allowed be increased from 24 plus cover, to 28 plus cover when necessary (which it will not often be on past experience).

As I say each year I am happy to once again be Hon. Editor of the journal on the continued understanding that I am unable to attend many meetings. May I also offer my thanks to all those who have contributed to the Journals over the last year, I look forward to seeing what is sent in for publication in the next twelve months also.

Officer Without Portfolio's Report.

My role as officer without portfolio has been to support the FEW Executive in matters particularly concerning freemen's property, rights and status. To this end I have posted several articles on the FEW Website to provide some guidance on land registration and associated information.

I have also maintained a watching brief on national legislation where new government regulations may affect the interests of freemen in general.

Owing to some ongoing health problems, I have been under regular hospital treatment and this has at times prevented me from attending meetings including some associated with FEW. For this I apologise. However, my health is greatly improving and the prognosis is good and such that I anticipate closer involvement in the near future.

We currently have three major projects under consideration. Firstly, to encourage increases into freedom through servitude by modernising apprenticeships. Also to enhance the freemen's image and their relationship with modern society, particularly with Councils and Local Authorities. And thirdly, of great import to those towns and cities with pastoral lands, to ensure proper recognition and a more positive registration of the freemen's 'exclusive' rights.

Incoming President's Inaugural Speech.

I did prepare an opening speech but it became too long and I decided to shorten it. The longer version. I will have Tom put it in the journal in the section that Alan has now called; "The Presidents Blog" This my opening speech, I think should be kept short and sweet.

Firstly I wish to thank Alan our Immediate Past President for staying on for the extra year. I also thank his Consort, his wife Val for her understanding and for her support, she has kept him going through some strenuous times, we all know that without an understanding wife or Consort the job could not be given 100%.

As you probably know Eileen is my Consort and I can Assure you that she will keep me on my toes. I was Eileen's Consort when she was Master of York and she certainly kept me on my toes then.

I should introduce myself. For those of you that have never met me, my name is Gordon Varndell and if you are like me you will forget names anyway. I have been on the Executive committee for a number of years. I am a Guild Freeman of the City of London residing in the City of York, a City and a Guild of Freeman I am proud to be associated with.

Eileen and I have attended a lot of functions throughout the land over the years and we certainly hope that we will be invited to attend a lot more on behalf of FEW.

I thank the Executive for their continued support and their faith in me as your President.

I thank the Wardens for the excellent work that they do. Most of all I thank you all for your support. May we continue to move forward and thrive.

Address by Past President Mr. Bill Healey.

Thank you Mr. President I am grateful for the opportunity to say a few words, which I believe are relevant to the association.

I am Bill Healey, a President of this association from 1990 to 1996. I became a freeman of Chester in 1950, at the age of 21.

Since I have had extensive experience, not only of my own city, and its freemen, but also many places throughout England and Wales.

I have always believed that one took office for what one able to contribute to that organisation, for the betterment of all, and always conscious of the aims and objectives of the constitution.

Since my tenure as President, I encountered some animosity, mainly because individuals could not get their own way, so rather than be involved I walked away. Maybe I should have stayed, I thought my action was in the best interests of the association. Members will not know that even at distance I was fully aware of the various actions and attitudes that prevailed, and not in the best interests of the Association. However, via others I still contributed to the association, but at distance.

Family health, and retirement life style of long holidays abroad, have precluded attendance in recent years, but this year is special and I was determined to be here.

Now for my reason for being here today, Mr President, I hope you will remain seated, and I regret any embarrassment I may cause, by what I have to say.

When I became President, I was quickly aware that we had archives, information was going in, but it was one way traffic, and nothing was coming out! Time for change! was able to retrieve the archives, although was never sure that I had everything, as the situation was difficult. I recruited John Speake as Archivist, who proved very capable. He tidied up a messy lot of papers, and brought organisation out of chaos. The association at last had referral points, and were in good order, and safe. It took him many hours days, and months to achieve. I am sure this association is, as I am, very grateful for all he did. Now we move to a very live wire, namely Alan Fallows. Energetic, dedicated, enthusiastic. We were extremely lucky to get this very busy man as Archivist, and who proved to be a great asset to the association. How he assimilated and digested all the information available to him, and the research he carried out, is beyond my comprehension. I am extremely pleased that he continues in this role. He is also to be congratulated on the way he has encouraged Alan Shelley to become involved again. I was always sad that we lost him years ago, his research into freemen affairs, and legislation provides important information. Teamed with Alan, you would be hard pressed to find another pair who would come anywhere near their performance.

Back to your President, a quiet unassuming man of tolerance, a rare commodity today, but do not be misled, nothing of importance gets past this man. It was a long time before two of us were able to persuade him to stand for President, but Ray Mason, and I, were pleased when we succeeded. In our opinion, he has achieved much, and steadied the association towards its original aims, which had appeared to be falling away. He has also re-established a much needed democratic approach, and succeeded in writing a new constitution, in line with the original aims and intentions, a task I was never able to achieve because of the intervention of Charles Sparrow, who insisted I leave well alone. I always wondered why, when it was possible to drive a horse and cart through it, many people tried, but not during my presidency.

Mr. President you have demonstrated, in both your positions as an officer of this association, what "Service not self", is all about, and into the bargain, have ensured a happy atmosphere within the association. As a Past President I am aware of the many hours behind the scenes, which are required to research and satisfy the calls made on you by others. and rarely known or recognised by the membership.

It would be remiss of me, if at this time I did not recognise the very important role played by your wife Valerie, and the patience she has had in accepting the long hours you have put into this Association. They say that behind every good man, is good woman, and this is no exception. Without the support of Valerie, who has contributed, and supported your successful term as President, much of what you have achieved would not have been possible. I am sure the membership, without exception, join me in thanking her for very important contribution.

Mr. Immediate Past President rest assured your tenure as President, will long be remembered as successful, you should be proud of your achievements, and you are to be congratulated. I take this opportunity, particularly on behalf of the longer standing members, who also have long memories, to thank you for your dedication, and efforts, in restoring the atmosphere, and friendliness within this association, which I am experiencing today, you have achieved more than anyone could have expected. Thank you.

The Freemen Of England And Wales (FEW) *Prize For Initiative.*

One of the major aims of FEW is to promote and educate people regarding the Freedom. Over the past few years there have been attempts to promote an essay or article competition through Universities. There has been a complete lack of interest or support from Universities. This is not worth progressing any further.

Edinburgh Merchants' Guild has run a very successful schools competition for the past few years. This has requested schools to submit a project in which the school or individual pupils have been involved. The objective is to judge the project which shows the most initiative. One of the advantages is that it does not involve any interference with the school curriculum.

Three submissions are chosen and these are submitted to the Guild for a final decision. The presentation is made to a selected audience which includes the civic party and invited guests.

The schools in Edinburgh are a mixture of state, private and Merchant Guild schools. This gives a wide variety. It is worth noting that the winners have come from all three groups.

Each Guild is unique. Individual cities and town within FEW cover a range of education. Some tailoring to local circumstances will be required. In other areas schools may not be the optimum organisations for such a competition. It may be that companies or apprenticeships may be more applicable. Some Guilds may already have a competition which could be tailored for this FEW Competition.

It is proposed that FEW agree to promote such a competition. The objective of holding the competition would be to raise the profile of the freedom in individual cities and towns and to promote FEW.

It is suggested that individual guilds initiate this in their own area in the coming year. If there are sufficient quality entrants FEW could consider bringing the individual winner together for a national final and consider holding this as an annual event. Sample information form and entry form are attached.

Jim Evans
Chairman Trustees.

**THE FREEMEN OF ENGLAND AND WALES (FEW)
PRIZE FOR INITIATIVE
PUPIL INFORMATION FORM**

Are you a secondary school pupil? Have you had an original idea in the last 12 months that demonstrates exceptional initiative? The Guild of Freemen of would like to invite you to apply to win this year's FEW Prize for Initiative.

You may be wondering what constitutes 'initiative'. The judges will be looking for initiative in the broadest sense of the word. You must have started with an **original** idea that **you** have had in the last 12 months. The initiative may be your own commercial venture, or charity work, a community project, the environmental sphere, the arts... the sky is the limit!

You may enter as an individual or as a small group. You or your group should be nominated by a teacher or other representative from your school.

Details of how to enter by are provided on the attached "How to Enter" form together with the closing date for entries which is

There will be local heats in this area. This may be followed by the National Final in

Once all submissions are received they will go before the judging panel, which is made up of representatives from The Guild of Freemen and the Council. A heat winner will be selected from all of the local entries.

You will be invited toin order to make a 10 minute presentation to the judging panel. You will be able to enhance your presentation with the use of visual aids or multimedia, such as PowerPoint. Your presentation will be followed by a question and answer session with the judges.

After the presentations, finalists will be selected by the judging panel and will be invited to the final, which takes place in on If you are selected as a finalist you will be able to invite friends and family to come and support you. All of the finalists will make a short presentation. The judging panel will then select the prize winner(s) who will in the view of the judges, have demonstrated *exceptional* initiative and the greatest overall success*.

The President of the Freemen of England and Wales will present the FEW Prize for Initiative. The winner will be presented with a Certificate from FEW together with a cheque for £1,000. The winner will also be interviewed by the President and given the opportunity to talk about their idea.

****The decision of the judging panel will be final and it will be under no obligation to award the prize if, in its view, none of the applicants meets the requirements of having demonstrated exceptional initiative. If additional applications are of a sufficiently high standard, runner-up prize(s) may be awarded.***

**FREEMEN OF ENGLAND AND WALES (FEW)
PRIZE FOR INITIATIVE
HOW TO ENTER**

If you are interested in having your initiative recognised and rewarded there are three easy steps to entering the competition:

1. **Register your interest by email** on An entry cover sheet will be sent to you and your contact details will be stored by The Guild of Freemen of..... If you know your idea or topic at this stage you can provide details but you don't have to.

2. **Prepare a Written Submission**. This should be a description of how you (or your group) have demonstrated initiative over the last 12 months. It must be between 500 and 1000 words and should be in Word format. Your submission should include the following information:
 - ◆ How is your activity/project/business innovative, creative or enterprising?
 - ◆ What was your goal, aim or reason?
 - ◆ Who is involved in the activity – both in delivering it and, if appropriate, those who have benefited?
 - ◆ How have you managed the activity?
 - ◆ What benefit has the activity had on you, or the participants or beneficiaries?
 - ◆ How has it been successful?

Your submission and the cover sheet should be emailed to on

3. **Get support from two people**. One of your supporters should be from your school, for example a teacher, guidance teacher or head teacher. The other supporter can be anyone else who knows about your initiative and supports your entry such as a parent or friend. You will have to discuss your initiative with both of your supporters and ask them to write a letter of recommendation to **attach to your submission**.

The closing date for submissions is

You will receive an acknowledgement to prove that your submission has been received before the deadline and is being considered by the judging panel in the local round. If you have not received an acknowledgement within 5 days contact.....

If your submission makes it onto the shortlist you will be contacted by the Guild of Freemen and required to make a 10 minute presentation at A finalist will then be selected to the grand final at, which takes place on

If you have any questions about the entry process please contact Good luck!

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