



A BEAUCEANT!!

NO 24

A little Knight Templar news does you good

Dear Brother Knights

Communication has been one of the most valued and important themes of the past year as we have struggled with the pandemic.

It has worked very effectively on many levels - not just in helping direct and co-ordinate medical and government responses to the treatment of the crisis but also on the more humble (but no less essential) need that all of us have to stay in touch with each other and the wider world - while we have been tucked away in the relative safety of our own homes.

A friendly voice and a snippet of news have been a delicious tonic for so many of us and it should not be under-rated whether it is a voice across the garden fence or a phone call or something more high-tech like an email, or a Virtual Business Meeting or a conference call.

During January, many times I have had cause to thank those clever and imaginative people who have developed and provided the world recently with so many online solutions to the business of staying in touch.

Thanks largely to them, January has already proved to be a very busy month for the Knights Templar of Monmouth and South Wales.

It began with a well-attended Church Service and it was followed later by an online Rehearsal of a KT Installation ceremony.

Reports about both of these very enjoyable events are contained in this issue of the newsletter – as well as some interesting responses from readers to articles that appeared in *A Beauceant* last month.

In wishing you and your family well for what must be a much brighter year ahead, can I again underline the importance of staying in touch with each other and those around you. It is a great source of strength for both sides.

Yours in the bonds of the Order R E Kt Paul Calderwood



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To start the year

On 6 January (Twelfth Night or the Feast of the Epiphany) the Knights of the Province with members of their families and friends were united at a special KT Church service via Zoom.

It was a very happy occasion attended by almost as many people as would have been at Margam Abbey last year if we had been able to hold our traditional service there in April.

It was led by the Great Prelate, RE Kt Revd Malcolm Lane KCT and the evening began with the Hymn "As with Gladness, men of Old".

The Readings were given by The Most Eminent and Supreme Grand Master, Paul Raymond Clement, the Provincial Prior and Provincial Sub-Prior, E Kt David Court.

The Provincial Chancellor, E Kt John Everett led us in a series of prayers of intercession and all the Knights recited a Prayer re-dedicating themselves to the United Orders.

A special moment was the enthusiastic rendering of the Templars' Hymn, led by the Grand Master's Virtual Home Choir with the Grand Master at the keyboard.

The evening was brought to a close by a recording of Vera Lynn singing, most appropriately "We'll meet again".

Particular thanks were expressed to Kt Tony Charles (who is pictured on the right) for masterminding the electronics that brought us all together that night so successfully.

In his Sermon the Great Prelate said: *Several days after Christmas – the day which marks the birth of Christ – comes the Epiphany signifying the arrival of the three wise men at the stable. Known to us as the 'Twelfth Night'*

Up until the 19th century, Twelfth Night was as magical if not more so than Christmas Day itself. But given that the reference to the three kings is a passing paragraph in the gospel of Matthew, how did it come to have such a powerful hold on medieval minds?

Well, like many biblical stories, it underwent a certain amount of embroidering at later hands that most Christians today are unaware of and had nothing to do with the original gospel account.

The casting of the three men as kings is largely the work of two early Christian scholars – Tertullian and Origen – whose writings were regarded as a bit suspect by the early church though they were hugely influential.

Tertullian was keen to prove that the Jews were no longer God's chosen people and the act of obeisance by the kings to Jesus fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy thereby proving he was the Messiah.

The naming of the three kings is not recorded in any document prior to the sixth century AD and first crops up in Alexandria. The kings were called: Melchior – King of Arabia – who brought gold, an old man; Balthasar – King of Ethiopia – who brought frankincense, a middle aged man; and Caspar (or Jasper in England) – King of Tarsus – who brought myrrh – a young man.

Somehow in the Middle Ages, the story of the Magi became bound up with Saint Helena – the mother of the Roman emperor Constantine who converted to Christianity at the start of the fourth century – starting a process that would take the empire from paganism to a new religion.

Helena, in real life, was from Bithynia in modern Turkey and after her son took control of the empire, she bolstered his new-found faith by miraculously discovering the true cross, the nails used in the crucifixion and the robe worn by Christ just before being put to death.

But in England, Helena's story changed dramatically in the Middle Ages. She became the daughter of Coel the Old or 'King Cole' – first king of the British. He held court in Colchester where, the legend went, Helena was born....not in Bithynia.



Furthermore, not only did she discover the afore-mentioned relics, but this British born saint went all the way to India and dug up the bones of the three kings bringing them back to the royal court in Constantinople. From there they went to Milan and eventually ended up in Cologne cathedral.

So convinced were the medieval English that Helena was a daughter of Colchester that she was venerated in the city with something of a cult developing around her. The city townsfolk said she was the most beautiful woman who had ever lived and in a well, she found three 'golden heads' of the Magi and they told her to look after them. In return they ensured that she was married to the greatest of kings.

The Templar connection is even more interesting. According to some people, the Templars are descendants of priests of the first Temple in Jerusalem built by King Solomon. They are part of the brotherhood of Melchizedek. The Three Kings – the Magi – were also descendants.

Western churches generally celebrate the Visit of the Magi as the revelation of the Incarnation of the infant Christ and commemorate the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6.

Traditionally, Eastern churches, following the Julian rather than the Gregorian calendar, have celebrated Epiphany (or Theophany) in conjunction with Christ's baptism by John the Baptist and celebrated it on January 19; however, other Eastern churches adopted the Western Calendar and celebrate it on January 6.

Many churches celebrate Epiphany as a season, extending from the last day of Christmas until either Ash Wednesday, or the Feast of the Presentation on February 2nd.

The story is out! Jesus Christ, Light of the World has been born to dispel the darkness that covers its people. God's glory appears in human form. Life on earth will never be the same again!

Father God, the star that led the Magi to the stable announced to the world that its Saviour was born. Today we live in a world that is still covered by darkness, and still needing to make that journey to the stable door. May our lives reflect your light day by day, as we seek to serve where you have placed us. That we might be the means through which others can encounter Jesus Christ. Amen

Rehearsing ceremonies online

A number of Knights from the Province were privileged to attend one of the first ever online demonstrations of our ritual in January—minus passwords and signs of course.

A rehearsal of the ceremony in which a candidate is admitted to the Order of the Temple was staged by the King Edward VII Preceptory of Improvement via Zoom on 12 January.

It was organised by two members of our own Province, E Kt Harry Randell, the Registrar, and E Kt Terry Jones, who are both Preceptors of the Preceptory of Improvement.

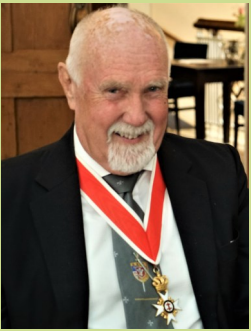
For such a ceremony to be demonstrated online was most unusual and it attracted the largest ever attendance for a meeting of the Preceptory of Improvement – with ninety-six Knights in attendance, representing 17 Provinces.

A similar online event is being planned for 16 March, when a Malta ceremony will be demonstrated. Well done Harry and Terry.

If you would like to book a place to watch next time please contact the Registrar of the Preceptory, E Kt Harry Randell and (if you have taken your Malta Degree) he will give you the online key to the door. His email address is harryrandell@btinternet.com



Templars and The Gower—more insights



A number of Knights from within the province have praised the fine article that was written by Kt Henry Barnes (pictured on the right) and published in *A Beauceant* a month ago.



Among them was E Kt Barry Stubbings (pictured on the left) who has contributed the following valuable article:

I would like to thank E. Kt. Henry Barnes for his excellent article on the churches of Gower and their connection to the Templar and Hospitaller Knights. Many of us living in Gower are aware of the unique concentration of churches here which were gifted to the Knights. I was disappointed with Simon Brighton's book 'In Search of the Knights Templar – a Guide to the Sites of Britain' on account of his making sole reference to St Madoc's Church in Llanmadoc, when there was clearly a far more extensive story to be told. Local historians however have never established a direct connection between Gower and the crusading Knights, whereas Simon Brighton's book has dealt more with sites where there was a physical presence of Knights.

As E. Kt. Henry observes the 'vil' or income from these local churches was gifted presumably for the donor to gain credit either in the community or on 'their day of reckoning'. St Cadoc's Church in Cheriton though could be viewed differently. The church here is relatively modern and is generally thought to have been built as a replacement for an earlier church dedicated to St Cadoc and existing in the nearby village of Landimore. According to Geoffrey Orrin's 'The Gower Churches' Landimore church was dedicated to the Hospitallers circa 1167. Landimore is a low lying village on the edge of the Loughor estuary and the earlier church is thought to have been abandoned on account of encroachment of the estuary in the 13th century. The 'new' church did not then exist until the late 13th or 14th century, a little after the conventional period of dedications to the Knights Templar but, the associated living presumably transferred from old to new. What has always intrigued me however, as well as the present church wardens, is that the interior roof trusses are each decorated with the motif of the Templar Knights, and not the Hospitallers. The wardens tell me that the motif has been faithfully repainted in successive interior decoration works for at least the last century.

Returning to a lack of a physical presence of Templar Knights in Gower, there is in St. Cenydd's church at Llangennith a splendid full size effigy of a Knight. Unfortunately, it is missing the lower half of the legs so it will never be known if the effigy was originally carved in the commonly adopted posture of a crusading Knight. There is no firm record as to whom the effigy represents or commemorates.



Again, Geoffrey Orrin postulates that as the effigy is referred locally as the 'Dolly Mare' it is that of the De la Mare family formerly Lords of the Manor of West Town including Llangennith. In another of my conversations with a recent church warden it was put to me that the effigy which originally stood upright in a niche in the South wall, was deliberately mutilated to remove its representation of a crusading knight, who knows? Llangennith was not granted to the Hospitallers or Templars as with the other Gower churches but, was granted in the 12th century by Henry Beaumont, Earl of Warwick, to the Norman Abbey of St Taurin at Evreux.

THE CHRISTMAS QUIZ

I am delighted to announce that the winner of the Quiz that was published in the most recent issue of this newsletter was Kt Jonathan Morgan of Lord Swansea Preceptory.

Congratulations Jonathan and great credit to you at the end of year filled with health problems for you and your family.

The Questions were set by E Kt Chris Mugford who also generously offered a Book prize to the winner as well. Thank you very much Chris.

If the answer to any of the questions is still puzzling readers, here are the answers supplied by E Kt Chris:

Knights of Malta – Questions and Answers

In what year was the “Hospital of St John” formed in Jerusalem and the Hospitallers come into being? 1099

When were the Hospitallers granted Papal Recognition? 1113

When were the Military wing of the Hospitallers (the Knights Hospitaller) given Papal Recognition? 1120

When were the Military wing of the Hospitallers (the Knights Hospitaller) given Recognition under the “Rule of Troyes”? 1153

Who was the “Master” the Knights Hospitaller in 1179? Roger de Moulins

In what year were the Knights Templar coffers in England transferred from Edward II to the Knights Hospitaller? 1324

On which island were the Knights Hospitaller based from the 1200’s until the 1500’s? Rhodes

In which year did Charles II of Spain award the Knights Hospitaller a new base on Malta? 1530

What is the name of the modern Catholic Order of the Knights Hospitaller? The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta.

In which year did Queen Victoria grant a Royal Charter to the Protestant Hospitaller movement in Britain – the Order of St John of Jerusalem? 1888

