

## 50th Anniversary of Provincial Priory of Middlesex, 1970 – 2020 History

Heritage can be described as anything that is or may be inherited. In our case that is the history, traditions, practices, etc. of Preceptories that exist from the past and continue to be important. These attributes can help each Preceptory's recruitment and marketing strategy by emphasizing the Unit's emergence in its unique cultural heritage.

Middlesex has two tangible links with the Knights Templar and Hospitaller, which are:-

- (i) All Hallows-by-the-Tower (also known as All Hallows Barking), is a church in Byward Street, London and is the oldest church in the City of London. In the Undercroft Chapel of that church is an altar that is formed of massive stone slabs brought back to England from Castle Athlit (or Atlit, sometimes called Chateau Pelerin), from what is reputed to have been the Chapel of King Richard I (Richard the Lion-heart). This altar was brought to England in 1192 after capturing the Port of Acre in 1191; and
- (ii) The site of Hampton Court Palace was occupied from 1236 by the Knights Hospitaller of Saint John of Jerusalem under the direction of the Clerkenwell Priory, the headquarters of the Order in England. The premises at Hampton included some residential buildings, farm buildings, and a chapel. Hampton Court had been a manor in the possession of Sir Walter de St Valery, according to the entry in the Domesday Book of 1086. He went on the First Crusade (1096-1099), and his grandson Reginald de St Valery (whom presumably inherited the property) donated the estate to the Military Order of the Knights Hospitaller. Eventually, in 1514 Cardinal Wolsey acquired the estate and began its development into the palace that currently exists.

The original four Preceptories in Middlesex were Consecrated as London/Metropolitan Units as follows:-

Staines Preceptory No. 235 was Consecrated in January 1929. It takes the name of the town Staines which straddles the river Thames at the confluence with the river Colne, 6 miles (9.5 km) south-east of Windsor. Thus the town has a Middlesex portion on the north side of the Thames and a Surrey portion on the south side of the Thames.

On the north side, the church of St. Mary's occupies the site of a 7th century church. The Preceptory Banner has an embroidered crest of this church. On the south side – a little higher up - is Runnymede, where the Magna Carta was signed. The Staines Masonic Centre, having suffered financial difficulties for a period was closed in December 2019 and the Staines Preceptory moved to Twickenham

Membership of the Preceptory includes Middlesex and Surrey Masons and more recently some from Berkshire. This Preceptory cultivated two of our Provincial Priors.

Herga Preceptory No. 268 was Consecrated in November 1930. It takes its name from the Anglo-Saxon name for Harrow, where the Preceptory meets. Herga means a Temple. (Interestingly, there just happens to be a small village named Herga in the Udipi district of Karnataka in India and it has a temple of considerable importance on a small hilltop!) The Banner for Herga Preceptory has a picture of an old Church (probably St. Mary's) as its centre-piece. Harrow is 9 miles (14.5 km) north-west of London. The famous school here in Harrow was founded in 1571, when Queen Elizabeth I granted a royal charter to John Lyon. This school was the *alma-mater* of Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill.

The Preceptory was formed for the benefit of Harrow Masons living in the area who desired to progress to Knight Temple Masonry.

Twickenham Preceptory No. 388 was Consecrated in April 1964. It takes its name from the London residential suburb of Twickenham on the river Thames 1.5 miles (2.5 km) from Richmond. Twickenham has had many notable residents including: Alexander Pope - poet and satirist of the Augustan period; and Robert Walpole - English statesman and leading minister of kings George I and George II. Walpole was widely recognised as the first Prime Minister. There were many other celebrities who too chose this area to reside. Twickenham is the 'home of English rugby' and home to the Harlequins rugby team at their stadium 'The Sloop'. Dr. John Vincent Cable (better known as Vince Cable) was the MP for Twickenham from 1997 to 2015 and from 2017 to 2019.

The Preceptory provided access to Knight Templar Masonry for Masons within that area. This Preceptory cultivated two of our Provincial Priors.

Uxbridge Preceptory No. 394 was Consecrated in October 1964. It takes its name from the residential suburb of Uxbridge on the river Colne 15 miles (24.5 km) west of London. Uxbridge is memorable for the futile negotiations between the commissioners of King Charles I and parliament in 1645. Until the 19th century the prosperity of Uxbridge depended on its market. It was the major corn market for west Middlesex and south Buckinghamshire and was a very important flour milling centre,

with about 13 mills along the Colne and Frays rivers. In the 20th century, Brunel University established its home in Uxbridge. Our current Prime Minister - Boris Johnson - is the MP for Uxbridge.

When the old Uxbridge Masonic Hall closed in 1995 the Preceptory moved to the new Masonic Hall in Hillingdon.

The Preceptory was formed for access to Knight Templar Masonry for Masons in that west Middlesex area. One of our Provincial Priors came from this Preceptory.

1970 (i.e. 50 years ago) was the year when Queen Elizabeth II had been on the Throne for 18 years. The year started with Harold Wilson as Prime Minister and it ended with Edward (Ted) Heath as Prime Minister. The Bishop of Rome and Pope was Paul VI. The first Glastonbury Festival was held in this year and 'palm-top' type sophisticated scientific calculators were all the rage! Also, at 11:15am on Friday, 24th July 1970 the Provincial Priory of Middlesex was Constituted at: 10 Duke Street, St. James', London.

Yes, in 1970 the above four sponsoring Preceptories were Constituted into the Provincial Priory of Middlesex after seceding from London/Metropolitan Provincial Priory and the first Provincial Prior of Middlesex, V.Em.Kt. Col. Bernard Stuart Horner (known as Stuart Horner) was Installed by The Most Eminent & Supreme Grand Master, Rt. Hon. The Lord Harris. Stuart Horner was a soldier and served in the First World War; during the Second World War he headed-up Home Guard Units for which he was honoured with an OBE. The heraldic emblem of Middlesex county and which was chosen for the Province's logo, is three white curved seaxes with their golden handles to the left as one looks at them laying horizontally, one above the other, on a red background. The principal aim for this new Provincial Priory was to provide new Preceptories in the areas where hitherto access to Knight Templar Masonry was inconvenient.

Following the Constitution of the Middlesex Provincial Priory, the commencement of expanding the fraternity went forward thus:-

Southgate Preceptory No. 429 was Consecrated in November 1970. This was the first Preceptory to be formed in the Provincial Priory of Middlesex. It takes its name from a suburban area of north London, in the London Borough of Enfield. It is located around 8 miles (13 km) north of Charing Cross. The name is derived from being the 'south gate' entrance to the park estate of Enfield Chase. This fact is symbolised on the Preceptory's Banner which has at the centre of the bottom of it – i.e. in south compass position – a five-bar gate. Enfield Chase is a former royal hunting

ground in the historic county of Middlesex. It became a royal hunting ground when the future King Henry IV acquired the Park. Much of the former area of the Chase has been developed, but a large part survives between Cockfosters in the west and Enfield in the east as Trent Country Park. Southgate thus became known for its elegant mansions and the wealthy London merchants who owned them. This state of affairs persisted well into the 19th century, because of the absence of main roads, the hilly terrain that kept away the early railway builders, and the disinclination of several of the larger estates' owners to sell their land.

The Preceptory was formed for Masons to have access to Knight Templar Masonry in the north-east Middlesex area. Due to its geographical Location, the Membership consists of Middlesex, London, Hertfordshire and Essex Masons; more recently Italians too. This Preceptory also celebrates its 50th year anniversary with the Province.

The annual Provincial Priory Meetings were established to follow a format which was to hold a Provincial Malta Priory Meeting in the morning when a Malta Degree ceremony was conducted to bring in recently Installed Temple Knights. Next was a break for the Luncheon and then a Knights Templar Chapter for Provincial Temple Business and Investiture of the Provincial Officers. These Meetings were whole day affairs.

Gauntlet Preceptory No. 449 was Consecrated in May 1974. Other Masonic Units in Middlesex have the name Gauntlet. This name comes from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award magazine/publication entitled GAUNTLET. These other Units had Members associated with the Scout movement. Although this name was chosen for the Preceptory, the Preceptory does not have a connection with service to the youth. However, it is fairly obvious that the name refers to "... taking up the challenge!"

The Preceptory Banner has a depiction of a gauntlet and the motto: "Juventus, Juste and Juvanda" - Youth, justice and availability/energy; very apt for scouting, the Duke of Edinburgh Award and any youth movement.

The Preceptory Members come mainly from the Harrow and surrounding areas.

All Hallows Preceptory No. 450 was Consecrated in June 1974. It takes its name from two churches: (i) All Hallows-by-the-Tower (also known as All Hallows Barking), is a church in Byward Street, London and is the oldest church in the City of London. In the Undercroft Chapel of that church is an altar that is formed of massive stone slabs brought back to England from Castle Athlit (or Atlit, sometimes called Chateau Pelerin), from what is reputed to have been the Chapel of King Richard I

(Richard the Lion-heart). On 14th and 15th of August 1291 the Knights Templar withdrew from their final stronghold in the Holy Land – i.e. their castle at Athlit - following the capture of Acre. They brought back with them that stone altar from the Castle and it was placed and rebuilt in the Undercroft Chapel of the All Hallows Church in Byward Street. And (ii) All Hallows church Twickenham is a Grade I listed church and parish of the Church of England in Twickenham, London. It incorporates the rebuilt tower of All Hallows formerly of Lombard Street and is sited prominently south of a major road of west London, near Twickenham Stadium, specifically the Chertsey Road (A316). The church took many structures of Sir Christopher Wren's All Hallows Lombard Street in the City of London which was demolished in 1937 — its stone square tower, bells, stone pillared cloister and many interior fittings and furnishings were moved to the Twickenham site.

Also, Halloween is the evening before the Christian holy days of All Hallows' Day (also known as All Saints' or Hallowmas) on 1st November and All Souls' Day on 2nd November, thus giving the holiday on 31st October the full name of All Hallows' Eve (meaning the evening before All Hallows' Day). The motto on the Preceptory Banner is: “Omnes Sancti” – All sacred or All Hallows.

Many of the Founders of this Preceptory were Administrators and Directors of ‘Cole Court’, the Twickenham District Masonic Centre, and the Preceptory continued to recruit from that affiliated source for its first 12 years or so. Present Members come from much more varied sources.

Lanfranc Preceptory No. 485 was Consecrated in October 1977. The name comes from an Italian man called Lanfranc (who was born c. 1005, in Pavia, Lombardy, Italy). He was a celebrated Italian jurist who renounced his career to become a Benedictine monk at Bec in Normandy. He served successively as Prior of Bec Abbey and Abbot of St. Stephen in Normandy (where he became affiliated with William, the Duke of Normandy) and then eventually, although reluctant to do so, as Archbishop of Canterbury in England, following its Conquest by William the Conqueror, who induced Lanfranc to take the office. Lanfranc, as Archbishop of Canterbury (1070–1089) occupied the office with great spiritual benefit to the church and as a trusted counsellor to William the Conqueror, was largely responsible for the excellent church–state relations of William’s reign after the Norman Conquest of England. He is also variously known as Lanfranc of Pavia, Lanfranc of Bec, and Lanfranc of Canterbury; he died on 28th May 1089 in Canterbury, Kent. The Preceptory Banner depicts an Archbishop’s mitre above a Latin Cross and has the motto: “Nisi Dominus frustra” - It is vain without the Lord.

The Members of this Preceptory hail mainly from the surrounds of Harrow which is where it meets.

In 1981, V.Em.Kt. B. Stuart Horner died from an unfortunate road traffic accident whilst stepping off a bus. This led to the Installation of R.Em.Kt. Urban A. Dennis Padmore (known as Dennis Padmore) as the second Provincial Prior of Middlesex. This Provincial Prior was always seen around the Province accompanied by his Sub-Prior V.Em.Kt. Stanley Melville Barker (known as Mel Barker). The concern at that time was that some Preceptories did not work the Malta Degree as they did not have the Membership numbers to fill all the Offices. Hence newly Installed Knights did not have easy access to taking their Malta Degree.

Middelseaxe Preceptory No. 518 was Consecrated in November 1982. The name comes from a portmanteau name made up of Middlesex, the county of course and seax, the old English name for a knife. Seax (also sax, sæx, sex; invariantly in the plural, latinised form) is an Old English word for "knife". In modern archaeology, the term seax is used specifically for a type of small sword, knife or dagger typical of the Germanic peoples of the Migration period and the Early Middle Ages, especially the Saxons, whose name derives from the weapon. These vary considerably in size, but are mostly all-purpose tools and weapons, often carried by women as well as men. The Meeting day of this Preceptory was chosen to be Saturday and it initially met at Uxbridge.

This Preceptory was designed as a Past Preceptors' Preceptory to act as an education platform via Lectures and Talks as well as a forum to discuss matters pertaining to the Province. Whilst some of the preceding Preceptories did undertake to perform the Malta Degree not all of them had enough Members to do so. Middelseaxe Preceptory set aside one of its Meetings each year to carry-out a Malta Degree to provide an opportunity for Bro. Knights to take their Malta Degree on a Saturday if attending the Provincial Priory Meetings proved difficult because these were held on a weekday and proved inconvenient. Later, the Preceptory altered the single venue idea and split their two Meetings, one held at Harrow and the other at Twickenham. The aim was to provide opportunities for Middlesex Members from different parts of the Province to attend a least one of the Meetings each year that was in easy reach for them.

In 1993, R.Em.Kt. U.A. Dennis Padmore retired from the Priorship. This led to the Installation of R.Em.Kt. William John Redpath (known as John Redpath) as the third Provincial Prior of Middlesex. During his tenure he instigated the compilation of the Provincial Priory Year Book and he was the Consecrating Officer of the following three Preceptories.

Mount Lebanon Preceptory No. 573 was Consecrated in January 1992. The prime mover for this Preceptory was V.Em.Kt. Brian F. Tomlin who at the time was the Provincial Vice Chancellor and was the Primus Preceptor of the new Unit. His mother Craft Lodge was the Lebanon Lodge No. 1326 (this Lodge closed and returned its Warrant in May 2004). The name Lebanon did not come directly from the country, it came from an old manor house and estate (or park) in Twickenham established at Riverside near to the ferry circa 1600 called 'Lebanon Park'. In 1851 the manor house's name was changed to 'Mount Lebanon'. So his Lodge was called after the first name and the Preceptory was called after the new name – both from the same manor house and estate. The Arabic word 'lebenah' means brick, and the denominative verb laban means to make bricks. The name Lebanon is the name laban extended with a combination, which localizes or personifies the root. Hence, as laban means White, therefore Lebanon means 'White One'. It is possible that this Twickenham manor house was painted white or clad in a white material? It is clear that the name for the Manor House was most likely taken from the middle-eastern country. The manor house estate has now been developed and it is a large housing estate and is called Lebanon Park.

The Banner of the Preceptory has depictions of a rocky mountain and a cedar of Lebanon tree. Members of this Preceptory are made up from Middlesex and Surrey Masons.

Arch of Steel Preceptory No. 591 was consecrated in July 1994. This Preceptory was consecrated as an exclusive Unit for Members of the Provincial Bodyguard. There was a remit to: perfect the Bodyguard's marching and arch of steel duties; and give support to any Preceptory in the Province with any assistance they required with ritual and ceremonies. They also aided the setting-up and taking-down of the Provincial Priory layouts and furniture. Later, the Preceptory dedicated one of its Meetings a year to performing the Malta Degree providing another opening for Candidates to take their Malta Degree on a weekday. This Preceptory was very successful in that the camaraderie of the Body Guard grew so strong that it was very hard for the Members, when having reached the Chair of their Preceptories, to give-up their Body Guard role – as the accepted rule was that once the Chair was obtained, they step down from the Body Guard itself.

Members of this Preceptory are made-up from Members of every other Preceptory within Province.

Thomas Dunckerley Preceptory No. 627 was Consecrated in September 2001. This Preceptory was named after that man born in 1724, who was widely acknowledged to be the illegitimate son of the Prince of Wales, afterwards King

George II. Dunckerley had ‘Grace and Favour’ accommodation in Hampton Court and received a royal annuity. Thomas Dunckerley was a prominent Freemason: having been appointed Provincial Grand Master of several Provinces; having promoted Royal Arch Masonry; having introduced Mark Masonry to England; and having instituted a national body for Templar Masonry. This was made possible by an annuity of £100, rising to £800, which he obtained from King George III by claiming to be of illegitimate royal birth. Dunckerley died in 1795.

In Middlesex, most of the Orders have a Unit which is purely for the Heads and executive members of all the Orders that are worked in the Province. R.Em.Kt. John Redpath and aided by Keith R.D. Waters resolved to have a Preceptory with a similar purpose of cementing relationships and communications between all the Orders at a Provincial level. The Banner of this Preceptory is the Dunckerley family Banner with its motto of: “Fato non merito” – By fate not deserved. One of our Provincial Priors was ‘spawned’ from this Preceptory.

In 2003 R.Em.Kt. John Redpath retired and R.Em.Kt. Ernest Russell Gotham (known as Russell Gotham) was Installed as the fourth Provincial Prior. In the same year of his Installation, which was the fiftieth anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II’s Coronation, and in her honour, Russell introduced the singing of two verses of the National Anthem at the end of the Provincial Priory Meetings – i.e. the first and third verses. Also, as the whole day Provincial Meetings were considered too long, he dropped the morning Malta Meetings and had only a Temple Meeting in the morning followed by Luncheon and that concluded it. There now existed many opportunities in the Province for taking one’s Malta Degree and thus it was not necessary for this provision to be supplied at Provincial Priory.

In 2008 R.Em.Kt. Russell Gotham retired and R.Em.Kt. Evan Glyn Hughes was Installed as the fifth Provincial Prior of Middlesex. Glyn Hughes was a very proud Welshman; he was Treasurer of many Units and Provincial (or equivalent) Orders. Being an accountant he had a very keen eye for detail which he utilised to ensure all documentations were accurate and correct.

In 2015 R.Em.Kt. Glyn Hughes retired and the sixth Provincial Prior R.Em.Kt. John Roberts was Installed. John Roberts broke the 45 year record of every Provincial Prior not being known by his first Christian name – mainly because he had only one Christian name! Before becoming Provincial Prior, John had been the Provincial Marshal and in this role he wrote a Marshal’s Handbook. His great knowledge of the

ritual and ceremonials led to good quality work throughout the Province being carried-out on this front.

After fifty years there are circa 290 swords that make up the Province in 2020.

In 2020, the fiftieth anniversary of the Provincial Priory of Middlesex saw Queen Elizabeth II in her 68th year on the throne; and Boris Johnston as our Prime Minister. The Bishop of Rome and Pope was Francis I. We shared our anniversary with: the Middlesex Craft Provincial Grand Lodge which reached their 150th anniversary; the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain; the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE Day); and the 50th anniversary of the Glastonbury Festival. Alas, celebrations for all of these were very much curtailed because in December 2019 to January 2020 a world-wide outbreak of Covid-19 coronavirus jeopardised large groups of people congregating and government imposed lock-downs due to the virulent nature and high transmissibility of the virus. So, most of these celebrations have been deferred until the 4th quarter of 2021 or even into 2022. One of the most popular mobile phones of the year was the Apple iPhone 12, los, 6.1, 5G, 128GB.

The above brief history is the basis of the character and stealth of the Middlesex Provincial Priory which stands it in good stead for its next 50 years; we wish it well!

Silverio Ostrowski - June 2020