

The Commemorative Order of St. Thomas of Acon

Province of South Wales

The Commemorative Order of St. Thomas of Acon

The Commemorative Order of St. Thomas of Acon is an independent British Christian masonic organisation. Membership is restricted to those who are subscribing members of a Knights Templar Preceptory of the Great Priory of the United Religious, Military and Masonic Order of the Temple of England and Wales and Provinces Overseas (commonly referred to as the Knights Templar.) Membership is by invitation only. Members meet in a unit called a Chapel.

The Third Crusade began in 1189 AD, and on the 8th June 1191 King Richard 1 (Richard Coeur de Lion) arrived with his forces, before the seaport of Acre, and captured the city in 5 weeks. Amongst the force was one, William, the Chaplain to the Dean of St Paul's, who when he saw the corpses of the Christians about the walls of Acre, had compassion on them. With the aid of a few helpers he buried a large number of the dead, and tended the wounded. Seeing that his actions were being appreciated, William formed an Order for the express purpose of burying Christian Knights who fell in battle in the Holy Land. To this first purpose he added a second, the raising of monies to redeem ransomed captives captured by the Saracens. The Order being formed at Acre its name was incorporated in the title (the Anglicised version of Acre being Acon).

The first Masonic Grand Master Sir John of Dorking.



John spent more than twenty years searching the archives of the Guildhall Library for information about the Order of St Thomas of Acon intending initially to write its history. Happily, he discovered the report of the Installation of the

Master in 1510, an account so unusual, that he felt compelled to revive the Order, albeit Masonically.

There is a further historical aspect to the Order that involves St Thomas a Beckett, but more of that when you join the Order

When joining the Order the new Knight chooses a name by which he will be known by within the Order, and it is by this that he is referred to within the meeting and the festive board that follows.

Chapels meeting within the Province
The Province currently consists of 5 Chapels;

Gerald de Barri Chapel No.31
meeting in Penarth

Sir Rice Mansel of Margam Chapel No.32
meeting in Swansea

Sir Rhys ap Thomas Chapel No.40
meeting in Carmarthen

Chapel of King Offa No.41
meeting in Castleton

Chapel of Saint David No.52
meeting in Fishguard

Regalia required

A new member can use his Knights Templar regalia with the addition of bronze shells and a cap wrap around. These additional items are inexpensive and some chapels lend them to a new member in the first year(s) of membership. If however the member wishes to purchase the full regalia of the Order then he is at liberty to do so. However at appointment to Provincial rank the full regalia of the Order would be expected. Provincial Officers wear Silver Shells and Grand Officers wear Gold Shells.

If you would like to find out more about the Order please contact the **Provincial Secretary**
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