



Province of Somerset
Our Lady of Walsingham No.672
Priory of Malta Meeting
A gathering of Brothers-in-Arms



At their regular meeting in June the Knights of the Somerset Bodyguard Preceptory, Our Lady of Walsingham No.672, convened a Priory of Malta to elect and install two Knights who were overdue the honour of becoming Knights of Malta.

An additional objective of this particular gathering was also to develop the relationship between Bodyguard Preceptories of adjacent Provinces to Somerset and fittingly the Bodyguard Knights from Dorset and Wiltshire and Gloucestershire and Herefordshire were invited to attend, together with personal invitations to their respective Provincial Priors and Provincial Sub-Priors.



The meeting was held centrally in Somerset at the magnificent Masonic Hall in Taunton renowned for its beautiful Temple and organ. There were fifty-eight Knights attending and the Priory was especially honoured by the presence of R.E.Kt. Paul Davis the Provincial Prior for Somerset, R.E.Kt. Richard Micklefield the Provincial Prior for Dorset and Wiltshire and R.E.Kt. Peter Burrows the Provincial Prior for Gloucestershire and Herefordshire, who were accompanied by R.E.Kt. Roger Edgar K.C.M., the Past Provincial Prior for Gloucestershire and Herefordshire, and E.Kt. Ray Sheppard P.Gt.Adm. and E.Kt. Maurice Lound P.Gt.B., the respective Sub-Priors of Somerset and Dorset and Wiltshire, together with a number of other visiting Knights.

After the customary welcomes the Eminent Prior E.Kt. Darrel Hinder conducted the proceedings and Bro.Kt. Stephen Warwick and Bro.Kt Richard Thomas were duly elected as Knights of the Order. The Eminent Prior then proceeded to the Guard House, escorted by the Chaplain and a large entourage of Malta Knights, to confer the Degree of Knight of St. Paul.

The new Knights of St. Paul were then admitted to the Chapter House, enthusiastically challenged, and entrusted before taking their obligation and receiving the Accolade which was grandly conferred by R.E.Kt. Paul Davis the Provincial Prior for Somerset.

The resumé of the history of the Order of the Knights of St. John was expounded clearly and concisely by R.E.Kt. Darrell Hinder as was the explanation of the Standards, the approach of the Knight to their final resting-place and the Pentagonal Table by E.Kt. Richard Cooper P.Gt.B. The Eminent Prior concluded with the description of the Emblem of the Order and representation of the Officers at the Pentagonal Table.



The Provincial Prior for Somerset then shared a brief history of Our Lady of Walsingham explaining that it was the late R.E.Kt. Michael Veric Walsingham G.C.M. and former Great Prior of Malta (1992-1996) and Provincial Prior for Somerset (1997-2006) who was the inspiration for a Bodyguard Preceptory in Somerset and for which a Warrant was granted to Our Lady of Walsingham in 2008.

He emphasised that although its home is in Crewkerne in the south of Somerset Our Lady of Walsingham is a nomadic Preceptory and invariably meets at various locations throughout the Province. The Preceptory is open to all members of the Provincial Prior's Bodyguard present and past and maintains that very special Esprit de Corps that is always apparent at every meeting.

He further identified that the Preceptory is continuously seeking to develop, share ideas and inspire its members by fostering lasting friendships with other Bodyguard Preceptories across England and Wales.

It was clear the evenings Malta meeting had paid dividends and had proved a tremendous success in uniting the neighbouring Provinces.

A truly outstanding and memorable event, followed by a superb festive board, which served to reinforce the strength of association and enjoyment of the Malta Degree.

