

# Cumba Preceptory No. 476



## An Open Evening to Remember

**Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023**

The Cumba Preceptory takes its name from Cumba or Combe (now Templecombe) the site of the old Preceptory or Commandery in Somerset of the Knights Templar (1185-1313) and later the Knights Hospitaller (1313-1540).

The current Preceptory of the United and Religious Military and Masonic Order of the Temple was consecrated at Yeovil on the 7th January 1977, the ceremony being performed by the then Provincial Prior for Somerset, Very Eminent Kt. W.B. Clatworthy, assisted by officers of Great Priory and of Provincial Priory.

This evening, however, was somewhat different and probably the first of its kind held at the Preceptory now meeting in Crewkerne.

As required by its warrant the regular meeting of the Preceptory was convened at 6:30 p.m., with 34 Knights present. It was opened in the customary form, the relevant business discharged and the Preceptory closed; before commencing the main event of the evening to introduce Companions from local Chapters to share with them an advancement in Masonic knowledge about our remarkable Order including its disassociated relationship with our Medieval Predecessors and the objective of the Masonic Knights Templars today.



Once the Temples furniture and accoutrements had been stored away the Guests were welcomed into the Preceptory with the attendant Knights dressed in full regalia. The guests were personally and cordially welcomed by E.Kt. Andrew Mackay the Eminent Preceptor and R.E.Kt. Paul Jeffery Davis the Provincial Prior for Somerset.

To clearly illustrate the background to our Order a video, of 25 minutes duration was shown. This inclusive video had been commissioned originally by R.E.Kt. Graham McGowen-Smyth, the Provincial Prior for Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Buckinghamshire but tailored specifically for Somerset needs this evening by E.Kt. Graham Snell P.Gt.A.-de-C. (*a Knight of Ox, Berks & Bucks*).

An explanation of the modern Masonic Knights Templar was then given by R.E.Kt. Paul Davis. This included a talk from E.Kt. Ray Sheppard the Provincial Sub-Prior who, dressed in Malta Regalia, expounded upon the history of the Knights of Malta from the time of leaving Outremer to their final resting place in Malta.

Our newly appointed Development Officer, E.Kt. Ray Beckingham P.Gt.Std.B.(B)., a distinguished Freemason in Somerset and a Knight of our Order for over thirty years, and Bro.Kt. Neil Braginton, a recent newcomer to our Order, explained what Knights Templar Masonry Meant to each of them.

A short demonstration of Sword Drill by the Provincial Priors Bodyguard then followed before an Arch of Steel was formed whilst the Provincial Prior and Provincial Sub-Prior retired.



All the Knights and their Guests then decamped to the dining room where a splendid three course dinner was enjoyed. The pudding was appropriately accompanied by “St John Commandaria” dessert wine with an explanation of its significance given by E.Kt. Clive Sanders.



The Preceptory tradition of taking Port after the pudding was also observed whilst the snuff box was passed around. Bro. Kt. Steve Beach explained the custom of the snuff box which is engraved with the name Sir Lionel Brett the Primus Eminent Preceptor in the year 1976. Sir Lionel was subsequently appointed 2<sup>nd</sup> Great Constable and from 1984 until his death in 1990 he held the office of Great Chancellor. In 1985 he became only the second member of the Province of Somerset to be appointed ‘Knight Grand Cross of the United Orders’.

Traditional Toasts were then given but because of the presence of non-members salutations could not be given.



R.E.Kt. Paul Davis, the Provincial Prior concluded by thanking all the Knights that had been involved with planning this event and said he hoped everyone had enjoyed the evening, particularly the Companions present.

He also mentioned the ‘Swift’ which was on display, which was presented to Somerset by the Jerusalem Eye Hospital, the main Charity supported by the Order, for the contributions made to the Hospital in celebration of the Provinces 175th Anniversary.



In keeping with the Preceptories traditions, the last toast taken seated was to the memory of Serlo Fitz Odo who in 1185 founded the first Preceptory in Somerset at Templecombe.

“To the Pious memory of Serlo Fitz Odo”

†††††