

The KT in Essex 2020 – 2021

“Anniversary Celebration”

The Knight Templar Province of Essex came into existence on the 30th September 1930 and in September 2020 the Knights of Essex will be celebrating the 90th Anniversary Year since its inception.

In a ceremony at Mark Masons’ Hall (then in Gt. Queen Street) in London in 1930 V.E.Kt. The Reverend Felix Eustace Crate, M.A.. was installed as the first Provincial Prior of the newly consecrated and constituted Knight Templar Province of Essex by the Most Excellent and Supreme Grand Master, Maj. Gen. T. C. P. Calley, CB, GCT.

There had been KT activity in Essex during the late 1790’s and early 1800’s following the appointment of R.W.Bro. Thomas Fitzgeorge Dunckerley – the then Provincial Grand Master and Grand Superintendent (1776 – 1795) – and from 1791 on his appointment as the first Grand Master of the Religious and Military Order of Masonic Knights Templar of St. John of Jerusalem in England. By the 1850’s it appears that Colchester Masons were being made Knights in Ipswich, so as such the Degree had not survived within the county boundaries of Essex.

From 1857 there was a revival of a Provincial Grand Conclave overseen by a Grand Commander with the founding of Temple Cressing Preceptory but this lapsed in 1867 when that Preceptory removed from the Province. Thus for the next six decades there is no record of KT Masonry as such within Essex although it seems that the Degree might have been worked in some Craft Lodges and Royal Arch Chapters when they met around the Colchester area.

The Rev. Felix Crate was the Rector of Maldon and had been installed a Knight Templar in Prudence Preceptory, No. 16 in Ipswich on 11th February 1902. He was an enthusiastic KT Mason, being also a Joining Member of Connaught Army and Navy Preceptory, No. 172 and had received the Great Priory rank of Past Great Prelate. The Rev. Crate had acted as Founding Registrar or Eminent Preceptor of the first three Preceptories of the new era, which were strategically placed in Colchester (in the north-east) and on the borders of Essex with East London in the west of the Province. When the Province was inaugurated in 1930, largely by his own efforts, it seemed only right that he should become the first Provincial Prior.

In his inaugural address he spoke of *“the resuscitation of the Provincial Priory of Essex”* and *“The Modern Provincial Priory”* to show that the Degree was now once again worked in the County of Essex and had become a vibrant and integral part of Masonry within the Province. For the next eighteen years he was the guiding light as the number of Preceptories increased to seven, by the time of his death in 1948. In the present era the Province now has 24 Preceptories.

E.Kt. Paul Swinge has created a logo (see attached illustration) to celebrate the Anniversary which incorporates the Provincial Coat of Arms surmounted by a Crusader's Cross and the legend "90 YEARS" whilst underneath in a banner ensign scroll - the years of "1930 - 2020" are depicted. This logo will be used throughout the forthcoming year to promote not only the anniversary itself but any events linked to functions which the Provincial KT Entertainments Committee are arranging as well as being displayed on the Provincial Website which had been updated and substantially extended and improved earlier this year.

The two major events planned are a Dinner in the summer of 2021 where the Knights of the Province will entertain their Ladies with a "Champagne Reception" prior to dining together at a three course dinner at a Banqueting Suite in Essex.

A second gathering will actually be on 30th September 2021 when a "Medieval Banquet" will be held at The Square, the Masonic Centre situated in Upminster. The entertainment that evening will be provided by a "Court Jester" - who throughout the evening will amuse and regale the assembled knights with his lively banter and tricks. The banquet will consist of a medieval "bill of fare", with different themed courses associated with a more "rustic" style of dining suited to a knight's palate. It is envisaged that a raffle will be held on both occasions with the proceeds being donated to the Eye Hospital at Jerusalem as well as various gifts and mementoes presented to those attending to commemorate each occasion.

It is also hoped that circumstances permitting and the resumption of "more" normal Masonic activities, that at our Annual Provincial Priory Meeting in May 2021 that other special events will be unveiled to the assembled Knights of Essex and their guests from other Provinces.

Thus it is hoped that after a turbulent period during much of this current year the dawning of a new day on 30th September will herald the start of the next glorious year, and the commencement of a further decade, in the history of Knight Templar Freemasonry in Essex towards it's centenary celebrations in ten years time in 2030.

John Helliard,
Prov. Prior of Essex
August 2020