

Grand Priory of Germany Celebrates Northumberland's Golden Jubilee in Ancient Abbey



Saturday 20th September will be remembered for many years as a remarkable day for two major reasons. The first being to celebrate 50 years of Northumberland being an independent Province under the Banner of the Great Priory of England and Wales, and the other, for the astonishing generosity displayed by its Knights.

Planning for the meeting started 8 months ago with E Kt Scotty Hunter and a number of the Provincial Body Guard members

being central to the planning. Execution on the day was meticulous, with all detail, no matter how small, covered incredibly well. Great calm and peace being the measure of success of the organisation, even though frenetic activity being conducted hidden from view.



Following on the great success of previous Provincial



meetings, Knights initially assembled at the Mart in Hexham. This included VE Kt Mark Stanley, Deputy Grand Secretary (IM) who flew in from Frankfurt the day before to be met by RE Kt Ian Harper.

With perfect admin skill, all Knights, guests, wives and partners were conveyed by coach a short distance to the historic Abbey of Hexham greatly in anticipation of a spiritually inspiring Service of thanksgiving. With pews steadily filling the colour, pageantry and splendour of so many Knights

adorned in white mantles contrasting with the ancient walls of the Abbey adding simplicity and spectacle to the moment. In the case of VE Kt Mark, his distinctive regalia contrasted him a Knight from a different Constitution to England. Befitting his senior status, RE Kt Mark took his place very near the front in the company of visiting Provincial Priors and holder of the KCT.



In usual form, short rehearsals were practiced under the watchful eye of the Great Marshal, RE Kt Tim Wheeler GCT. Of distinction, the Province were honoured by two of its Knights being selected to accompany the Grand Master as his personal Banner Bearer (E Kt Geoff



Morrison) and Sword Bearer (E Kt Ian Harper, also the Grand Chancellor of the GPvD). Both Knights serving on the Grand Master's Body Guard, with E Kt Geoff having just stood down and promoted to active Grand rank.

At 11:00 am sharp, the trumpet tones of the Abbey's organ, expertly played, proclaimed the start of the Service and the processions of senior attending Knights to take their seats. With a very warm welcome by the Rector of Hexham Abbey, Reverend David Glover, ably assisted by the Provincial



Prelate, Reverend Leslie Dinning, led what was to be a richly uplifting and inspiring Golden Jubilee Service. During the Service, the congregation were treated to an outstanding recital by the Abbey's choir. In part, they sang specially prepared 14th century compositions which were befitting the historical nature of the Order. For the first time in the Province's history, the Service was streamed live on YouTube enabling others to share in the special event even though unable to be present.



Passages from the scriptures were read with heart and soul by the Provincial Prior and the Grand Master, followed shortly after with the taking of Alms.

With great pomp and ceremony the Grand Master followed by senior Provincial processions then retired. With a short trip, all reconvened in the executive suite of the Hexham Mart to share excellent company over a sumptuous three course meal with beef topping the list. With plates cleared, the Provincial Prior stood and commented that it is the custom for all Knights Templars in the UK to toast the

Grand Master. Very seldom is there an occasion where he is present, and on this one, it was a total delight of all Knights assembled to toast the good health of the head of the Order.



Perhaps the crowning glory and best kept secret was the “*pièce de résistance*” delivered with immaculate timing where the Provincial Prior stunned everyone, Grand Master included, concerned the cheque presentation. Preparing the moment with great presence and eloquence, RE Kt Kevn Stannard, a recently retired eye surgeon said,



“The planning for today began many years ago and one of the questions that I and my Executive first addressed was *“how do we best mark an event such as a Golden Jubilee of a Provincial Priory – what can we do to make it truly meaningful?”* and went to say, *“We would like to mark the Jubilee of the Provincial Priory with a donation to the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem. We spent a long time contemplating what a meaningful, but realistic, amount might be. Fifty thousand pounds, to mark fifty years of the Provincial Priory, seemed to have a nice “ring” to it, but we knew that we only have 400 members in our Province Priory, so it was a huge “ask” ... Many of my Brother Provincial Heads of our Companion Orders have also given unwavering support”.*

It was when the Provincial Prior announced the amount to be donated to the Jerusalem Eye Hospital that astonished everyone, not £50,000 but a staggering £120,000, which is the largest given in the Province’s history and likely to remain unsurpassed for the next fifty years ... truly a golden moment.

The following day members of the Body Guard assisted in taking VE Kt Mark to Newcastle Airport to aide easing his journey. Many hours later, using planes, trains and automobiles, he arrived home safely in Kaiserslautern.





The Service can be viewed by following the link below:

[Knight's Templar Anniversary Service](#)
[11am 20th September 2025](#)