

## Grand Master's Trip to Scotland and England

In October 2017 the Grand Master of Vermont was invited to be a guest and participant at the celebration of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE). The Grand Master and his Lady accepted the invitation and, as well, made arrangements to join a Masonic and Cultural tour of Scotland and England in the several days preceding the official program.

The trip began in Boston where we joined forces with the Grand Masters of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Quebec and about twenty other Brothers from around the country. The first stop on the tour was Edinborough, Scotland. There we visited the famous Edinborough Castle, The Royal Mile, and Freemason Hall. The Masonic highlight was a visit to Edinborough Lodge #1 for a Fellow Craft degree and Festive Board.

While in Scotland we visited Rosslyn Chapel, of DaVinci Code fame, Rosslynn-St. Clair Lodge # 606, the William Wallace Memorial, Loch Lomand, and the Glengoyne Scotch Distillery.

Our next stop was in Bath, England where we visited Freemason Hall and Museum, Bath Abbey, and the ancient Roman natural hot springs bath complex. Upon leaving Bath we ventured to Stonehenge and Salisbury Cathedral. While at the Cathedral we saw the best preserved original copy of the Magna Charta and a 633 year old-still operating-mechanical clock.

Our final destination was London. There we visited Freemason Hall; a dazzling structure with an impressive Masonic museum and beautiful architecture. We toured the historic sites of down town old London which included St. Paul's Cathedral, a sojourn out to Buckingham Palace, and a long visit to the Tower of London. We also attended a Festive Board in a Lodge room within the historic Andaz Hotel.

At this point in the trip the Grand Masters and their Ladies disengaged from the tour group to join the official tercentenary celebration of the UGLE. This was a truly spectacular set of events that began with a welcome reception and dinner in a facility abutting Freemason Hall (Grand Connaught Hotel). Our hosts arranged to have the GMs of Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut sitting with each other. The next morning we attended a reception for distinguished guests hosted by the Grand Master of the UGLE, HRH Prince Edward, Duke of Kent. According to our hosts this was the single largest gathering of Grand Masters in the history of Freemasonry. That evening we attended a reception hosted by the Lord Mayor of London.

The final day of the celebration featured a meeting of over 4000 Masons at Royal Albert Hall to witness a program depicting the history, philosophy, contributions, and impact of Freemasonry on the development of Western Civilization. This was a first class production that featured the talents of famous stage and screen luminaries, opera stars, London Philharmonic musicians, and all the technical and production infrastructure of a major Broadway style presentation. At the conclusion of the program we were transported to Battersea International for a 2000 plate Festive Board.

This trip was an once-in-a-lifetime experience for all who attended. It was the highest quality Masonic event I have ever attended. I learned a lot about our fraternity as an organization and met many of the movers and shakers that make the Craft what it is today. I will be forever grateful to the Brothers of Vermont for allowing me the honor to represent them at this unique, auspicious, milestone occasion.