

DIARY DATES

Investitures

23rd—26th October 2026
Christchurch Priory,
Dorset

18th—20th June 2027 *
Venue to be confirmed

15th—18th October 2027
Venue to be confirmed

23rd-25th June 2028 *
Venue to be confirmed

13th—15th October 2028
Venue to be confirmed

*** DATE CHANGE to coincide
with the Feast of John the
Baptist!**

Other Events

4th June 2027—Visit to the
Museum of the Order of St John
in Clerkenwell, London—see last
month's Chronicles for more
details

**From 2027, we will preserve the
following dates as
commemorations of the OSMTH
festivals.**

18th March 2027
(or nearest weekend)
Martyrdom of Jacques de Molay,
Paris

24th June 2027
Feast of St John the Baptist
(See date changes above)

20th August 2027
Feast of St Bernard,
Abbot of Clairvaux (TBC)

27th December 2027
Feast of St John the Evangelist
(TBC)

Visit to Ypres and Menin Gate 12-14 June 2026

(Chev. Troy Close—Grand Marshal)

After seven months of planning and preparation, on the 12th June, the time came for five members of OSMTH of England to travel by road, sea and rail to Ypres in Belgium to come together and lay wreaths at Menin Gate and to visit some very prominent locations in and around Ypres and Passchendaele to understand events in WWI, allowing all to reflect on the realities of war and to pay our respects.



We all rendezvoused early Friday evening at a café where I handed each person a Passchendaele RBL pin and copy of the intended programme. After eating, we then made our way to the Menin Gate just five minutes' walk away, to be in time to view the Last Post Association ceremony at the Gate as part of the many spectators. This solemn and respectful event takes place at the Menin Gate in Ypres to play the Last Post and carry out the act of remembrance commencing at 8pm. This has taken place the same time every night, every day and every year since 1927, apart from a few years missed due to WWII. This gave me a chance to explain to all, the

procedures and what would be expected of us the next day on Saturday 13th June when four of us would form up in the correct regalia, with highly polished shoes, to lay wreaths on behalf of OSMTH of England and with Chev Nancy Close being the photographer. All found it very enlightening and allowed us to reflect and pay our respects in silence.

On completion and after a few photo opportunities, we met up with a few of my fellow RBL committee members from Antwerp and Ypres Branches and introduced them to everyone. I then gave a tour around Menin Gate to allow all to study the monument and view the many thousands of names inscribed on every wall in and on the outside. Every panel listed them by Regiment/Corp then rank in alphabetical order. This being my fifth visit to Ypres, I still felt a sense of pride and also sadness, and it affects me deeply every time I visit to see all the names listed, with five names listed as family name "Close", I recommended the group to view, if they wished, the family names listed in official books in a specific location and to see where a known family name is inscribed. This followed a short visit to a few shops and café to sample local brews, then back to the hotel for a good rest before the next day's full programme.

Investiture Date Changes

The decision has been made to move the May investiture to June to coincide with the Feast of St John the Baptist, so the dates of the May Investiture have changed. See the Diary Dates on this page, or consult the website.

Visit to Ypres and Menin Gate (continued)

Saturday morning 13th June, we all had breakfast, climbed in cars and headed out at 9.30 am to the first location on the programme of Tyne Cot Commonwealth Graves Commission cemetery: <https://www.cwgc.org/visit-us/find-cemeteries-memorials/cemetery-details/53300/tyne-cot-cemetery/>

There are now 11,967 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in Tyne Cot Cemetery. 8,373 of the burials are unidentified, even after extensive investigation and searching for any form of identification, noting that all Allied Forces used stiff thick card as an individual's Dog Tags but of course, they just rotted away, whereas the German forces used metal. After looking round the visitor's centre, I gave time for all to walk among the thousands of grave headstone, and the two WWI German captured bunkers and memorials. We did pay a moment to visit the latest six graves of individuals found over a year ago, but all laid to rest together two days prior to our visit. A very solemn moment with all in deep thought reflecting on the scale of numbers of those fallen and done in near silence all the time there. One poignant figure to take in was the names on the panels listed as 35,000 souls whose bodies have not been found.

Next was on to Passchendaele Museum just 6 minutes' drive away. This museum covered the events from the start of WWI, in and around Passchendaele to the very end of WWI, with plenty of interesting artefacts, stories and personal items from that time. This included a warren of mock WWI tunnels with accommodation reflecting on how life was in these bunkers then finally leading to the authentic reconstruction of both British and German trenches. I think that all found it fascinating and learnt a lot from this. After two hours at this location we then headed back to the hotel to get dressed and ready for the main purpose of the visit of laying our wreaths at the 8pm Last Post Ceremony.

After some refreshments in the hotel, we smartened up and got dressed in the correct attire carrying our mantles, gloves and wreaths, then headed to a café restaurant in the centre for dinner, then on to the Menin Gate to prepare and form up with everyone, to carry out the full ceremony. Present were the Standards of the Belgium Para Commandos, Belgium local Officials, the RBL standards of Antwerp & Ypres branches, the Belgium and the Union flags. A band of bagpipes and drums from Belgium was also in attendance playing a selection of tunes as wreaths were laid. As we stepped off in twos to march forward and lay our wreaths the pipes and drums played Amazing Grace which all added to the solemn moment as we carried out our duty as proud members of our Order. The whole ceremony went very well with all present remaining silent on the commencement of the Last Post.



I would like to give my personal thanks to Chev Paul Grant, Chev Albin Wallace and Chev Martin Richards for attending and carrying out the ceremony with dignity and grace. As an ex-military man (Sargent Major) I very was proud of you all; and of course a special thanks to my wonderful wife Chev Nancy Close as our video and photographer, who took many great photos over the whole weekend.

We finished with a few refreshments that evening reflecting on all that happened and what we had done and achieved, but remembering specifically all those who gave their lives for our freedom; Lest We Forget.

The following morning, we said our goodbyes to each other but not before a last walk in the centre and a quick visit to the Ypres cathedral and of course purchased some Belgium chocolates.

Nancy and I with Chev Paul Grant had a safe crossing in the ferry which brought back memories with me and Paul. Got home in good time then it was a quick cuppa for Paul before jumping in his car and heading home. Once again, I thank you all for attending and recommend all to visit Ypres but note that the intention is to possibly do this again with greater numbers carrying standards. Watch this Space.

Thanks—from Chev^{re} Siobhan Wheatley—Preceptor of the Helm and Medicus

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Grand Priory for the confidence placed in me through my appointment as Preceptor of the Helm and Medicus for the Order.

It is both an honour and a privilege to accept these roles, and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve our members in a new and practical way. The wellbeing of our brethren and companions is something that touches every aspect of our activities, whether at rehearsals, ceremonies, meetings, banquets, or other gatherings. By helping to promote greater awareness of first aid, personal health, and physical wellbeing, I hope to contribute to a safer and more supportive environment for everyone.

As Preceptor of the Helm, I look forward to helping guide and support members in navigating the challenges and opportunities that arise within our Order. A helm provides direction, stability, and purpose, and I see this role as one of encouragement, mentorship, and service. By working together, sharing experience, and supporting one another, we can continue to strengthen the bonds that unite us and uphold the values we hold dear.

The title of Medicus, meaning “healer,” carries with it a responsibility that I take seriously. While none of us can predict when a health-related incident may occur, we can all benefit from being better prepared and more confident in responding when assistance is needed. My aim is to provide practical guidance, useful information, and encouragement that will help members feel equipped to look after themselves and one another.

I am also pleased to share that I have recently gained my Certificate in Teaching First Aid. This qualification will enable me to pass on valuable knowledge and practical skills that could one day make a significant difference in an emergency situation. As part of my role as Medicus, I intend to organise a first aid training session in the future, providing members with an opportunity to learn essential lifesaving techniques in a supportive and engaging environment.


In addition, I would be delighted to hear from any existing members who have first aid qualifications, medical experience, healthcare backgrounds, or related expertise. Our Order is fortunate to have a wide range of skills and knowledge amongst its members, and I firmly believe that we can achieve far more by working together. If you would be interested in collaborating, assisting with future training sessions, sharing your expertise, or contributing ideas for health and wellbeing initiatives, I would be very pleased to hear from you.

I would also like to thank those who have already offered their support and encouragement since the announcement of this appointment. Your kind words and confidence are greatly appreciated, and I look forward to working with members across the Grand Priory in the months and years ahead.

Service to others lies at the heart of what we do, and I am proud to be able to contribute to that tradition through these new responsibilities. Together, I hope we can continue to build a stronger, safer, and more prepared community for all our members.

Chaplaincy

The Knights Templar are both a military and a spiritual Order, and under the thoughtful guidance of Chev. Les Fraser, we will continue to celebrate the religious aspect of OSMTH. Keep an eye for further news as we move forward with not only our investiture ceremonies, but also our vigils and our postulant ceremonies.



44 years on... Army Training to Now!

Chev Troy Close, KGCTJ, Grand Marshal

Many already know, but if not, I first met Paul Grant (not in a polite way), then Sargent Grant on 12th June 1982 when I commenced my basic training in Blackdown Barracks at Deepcut, Camberley (look out for Paul's book that mentions this place in detail), and Oh Boy, what an introduction that was to army life by Sgt Grant. It was a poignant date coinciding with the Ypres visit as it was precisely 44 years



ago to the date that I took him and Nancy over the channel to France and on to Belgium on Friday 12th June. It was a great time being on the ferry as he told us that it was getting on for 40 years since he was on a ferry across the channel.

It was not until 13 years ago that I located Paul on Facebook through some of my fellow army friends from basic training days who informed me of his location, and so we became friends on Facebook. It was a couple of years later when based in Army Training centre (ATC) Pirbright (near

Aldershot) I invited Paul along to the camp for a private tour which he was delighted to do, bearing in mind that Paul started his army career at Pirbright as a Guardsman. The tour round brought memories flooding back for Paul and I was so pleased to see and hear about his time; even the original accommodation huts and guardroom were still in place on the camp. After a photo or two in the Sargent and Warrant officers Mess, we exchanged details and it was then Paul introduced to me OSMTH of England and proceeded to invite Nancy and myself as his guests at an Investiture in Kent. Our Investitures at Rochester followed that same year.



To finish, I have photos of us together. The first was on a ferry to Calais as our Platoon's end of Training celebration. Paul had been posted 5 weeks before our passing out parade, but we invited him on our booze cruise to France, September 1982. The first photo is of me on the left and

Paul in the middle (he used to smile a lot then). Second is our reunion 10 years ago at ATC Pirbright and then a photo of us on the Ferry on Sunday 14th June as a reminder of our trip on a ferry 44 years later.

IMPORTANT! Regalia Update

Last year, the Grand Master and the governing body of OSMTH International made it clear that they wish to see a unified and dignified appearance across the entire Order, particularly in the style of cross worn on our mantles. Following a careful period of consultation, the Grand Master has now taken an important decision that strengthens both our identity and our link with our historic roots.

The guidance we have received is that all members will need to adopt the new regalia within roughly the next year. Therefore, now is an excellent opportunity to embrace the new standard in a way that is both cost-effective and respectful of the Order's directive.

OSMTH England has proactively negotiated with our manufacturers to secure a one-time bulk order of mantles, surcoats and gloves at significantly reduced prices. This arrangement has been made specifically to enable members to comply with the new requirements while keeping costs as low as possible.

For a single bulk order, to be manufactured over the summer and ready for the International Investiture in Christchurch this October, where the Grand Master and visiting Grand Priors will be present, the prices are as follows:

- ◆ Mantle: £112.50 (42% discount over standard)
- ◆ Surcoat: £97.50 (30% discount over standard)
- ◆ Gloves: £19.50 (12% discount over standard)



Crucially, these discounts are available only for this one-off bulk order and are made possible by our manufacturer employing economies of scale. After this, prices will revert to normal supply rates.

To benefit from these substantial savings and to ensure you are correctly attired in time for the October Investiture, you must submit your order by Tuesday, 30th June 2026, using the special-offer order form available by clicking the link below.

There will also be a new neck cross in due course; however, we are currently awaiting final details on its appearance and price. As this will come from a different supplier, we may be able to negotiate a separate special offer when it is announced, but the neck cross is not included in the current offer.

Please be aware that the decision to change our cross and seek uniformity has been made by OSMTH International and is therefore outside the control of the Grand Priory of England. It is, however, designed to present a consistent and recognisable image of the Order worldwide. We fully appreciate that this may be surprising or even unsettling for those who have joined us recently, especially as we ourselves only became aware of the proposed changes last year.

To sum up, this approach offers a practical, timely and cost-effective way to fulfil the Grand Master's wishes, reinforce our shared identity, and project a united and historically authentic image of the Order. Considering these benefits, taking up this offer now is clearly the most reasonable and advantageous choice for every member.

CLICK [HERE](#) FOR THE ORDER FORM

COULD YOU EAT LIKE A KNIGHTS TEMPLAR?

The diet of the Templars is outlined in the *'The Primitive Rules of the Templars'*, a rule book of sorts written by the Knights Templar themselves.

In the Middle Ages, the European continent was almost entirely Catholic.

Meat was not to be eaten on Wednesday, Friday or Saturday, along with the numerous holy days (or holidays as they would later be known) and saint's days, as well as Lent. This meant that the average person in the Middle Ages could eat meat no more than half the year at best, depending on the exact time period. Many ate meat far less than that, with only the nobility indulging in meat-eating regularly.

So, the Knights Templar ate meat about as much as every other Medieval person because of their Catholic faith.

Mortreux of Fisch - Departed Fish

Mortreux was a type of pottage or pâté that contained either fish or meat, mixed with almonds. 'Departed' just means that the dish is 'parted in two' different colours. This fish mortreux would be a good option on 'fysse' days when eating meat was forbidden.

Serves 6 as a starter

Ingredients

- 600g skinned cod fillet
- A pinch of sea salt
- 125g ground almonds
- 2 tsp rice flour or corn flour
- 3 tbsp deep yellow saffron water or food colouring
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 3/4 tsp white sugar

Method

Poach the fish fillet in about 575ml of salted water until cooked through.

Drain off the cooking liquid into a measuring jug.

Pour 275ml of this liquid over the almonds in a bowl.

Press the fish under a cloth or kitchen paper to squeeze out excess moisture, then flake it.

Strain the almond 'milk' into a jug, stirring to separate the free liquid from the almond sludge in the strainer.

Put the liquid into an electric blender, followed by the flaked fish, and process until smooth.

If the mixture is too stiff to process easily, add a little more fish cooking liquid.

Turn the mixture into a bowl. In a small saucepan, cream the rice flour or cornflour with 3 or 4 tbsp of fish cooking liquid, then heat the mixture gently until it thickens.

Stir this 'cream' into the fish mixture and season with salt.

Put half the mixture into a separate bowl and tint it deep gold with the saffron water or food colouring.

Combine the ground ginger and 1/4 tsp of the sugar and mix into the golden fish, reserving a little of the mixture for sprinkling. If you like ginger, increase the quantity.

Serve the mortreux in six small bowls or plates, putting a coloured and a plain spoonful of mixture side by side in each.

Chill until needed. Just before serving, sprinkle the remaining ginger/sugar mix on the gold portions and the remaining 1/2 tsp plain sugar on the white portions.

Did you know...

The original *Star Wars* films were strongly influenced by George Lucas's interest in the Middle Ages.

Apparently, early scripts referred to the Jedi Templars, rather than the Jedi Knights.

St John the Baptist, Clerkenwell

As part of the OSMTH International family, we will be commemorating the Feast of St John the Baptist each year.

This year there will be a visit on Wednesday 4th July to the Museum of the Order of St John in Clerkenwell, London. The Museum galleries and shop are on the ground floor of St John's Gate and are free to visit. We will also visit the cloister gardens, which are also free.

Afterwards, we will have lunch at the Holy Tavern, which is nearby and offers affordable meals.

We will meet at **11:30am** at St John's Gate, St John's Lane, Clerkenwell, London EC1M 4DA

what3words: **///smart.rotate.ankle**

Please let me know ASAP if you can attend:

grandprior.designate@osmth-england.org.uk

NEW BANK ACCOUNTS

The Grand Priory has new bank accounts, effective immediately, under the name **OSMTH England Limited**:

MAIN BANK ACCOUNT

Sort Code: 23-05-80
Account Number: 57836601

CHARITY BANK ACCOUNT

Sort Code: 23-05-80
Account Number: 57836598

THE OLD NATWEST ACCOUNT IS NOW CLOSED SO PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR STANDING ORDER HAS BEEN CHANGED TO THE NEW ACCOUNT, OR YOUR MONEY MAY BE LOST!