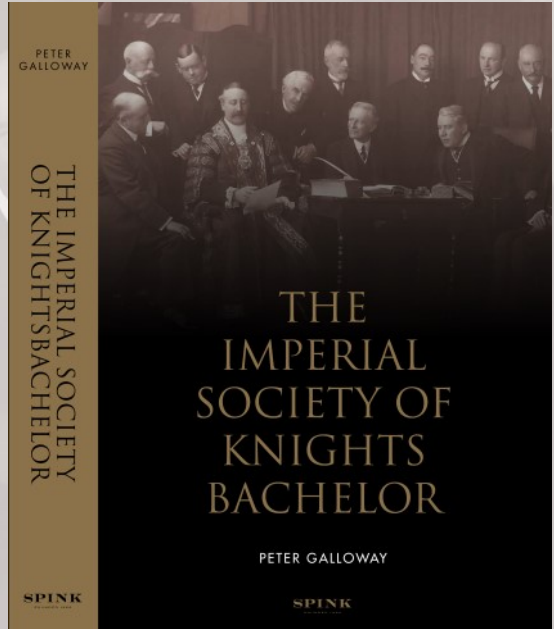


THE IMPERIAL SOCIETY OF KNIGHTS BACHELOR

The History of the Society

By Peter Galloway

In 2008 the Imperial Society of Knights Bachelor celebrated its centenary at a special service in St Paul's Cathedral in the presence of HM The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh. Its history is a fascinating one and the Society is fortunate to have had the services of The Revd Canon Professor Peter Galloway, LVO, OBE, the Society's Provost, to research and write it. An internationally acclaimed authority on honours, he has written the histories of the majority of the statutory Chivalric Orders. This is an exceptional book: 215,000 words in length and fully illustrated with archive photographs. It begins with a Message from HM The Queen, our Patron, and tells the complex and fascinating story of the emergence of knighthood in the medieval age and the fusion of mists, legends, and ideals, that came to embody it in later generations, but focuses on the history of the Society from its foundation to the present day.



The Society was founded in 1908 following a claim by the Walker Trustees, as holders of the ancient office of Heritable Usher of the White Rod, to receive a fee of £3 6s 8d from each newly-created Knight Bachelor. The formation of the Imperial Society was triggered by the claim and was the idea of Sir William Bull, MP (1863-1931) who conceived the creation of an organisation of knights to uphold the status and dignity of Knights Bachelor.

The standing of the Society was affirmed in 1912 when King George V commanded that it should henceforth be styled The 'Imperial' Society of Knights Bachelor, and in 1926, when, by royal warrant, Knights Bachelor were given the right to wear insignia for the first time. The book traces the history of the Society, including the institution of its chapels, first at the church of St Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield and now at St Paul's Cathedral, and its continuing role as a voice for our oldest state honour.

Professor Peter Galloway has based this interesting work on archival sources held in the Society's office, and in the London Metropolitan Archives, the Royal Archives and the National Archives. The book is a testimony to the vision of the group of knights who began the Society in 1908, and to the dedication and commitment of their successors, all honoured for their public service, who have led and directed its life to the present day.

The Imperial Society of Knights Bachelor

By Peter Galloway

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