



# IDAHO KNIGHTLY NEWS

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## Editor's Note

If anyone would like to submit an article for the Idaho Knightly News, please email me your article using Microsoft Word. Keep it between 1 page and 1.5 pages.

## Upcoming 2023 Events:

New Year ..... Jan 1  
Epiphany ..... Jan 6  
94th Annual Easter Sunrise Service... Mar 31  
Grand York Rite of Alaska ..... Mar 7-8  
Grand York Rite of Oregon ..... Apr 4-6  
Grand York Rite of Idaho ..... Apr 18-20

## The Rite of Baldwin

By Barry E. Newell

Outside of the Blue Lodge, the family of concordant and appendant bodies is a complex system of degrees, orders, grades, and rites. This is especially true with the American York Rite and the organizations that stem or are affiliated with it which seems to be a never-ending rabbit hole to explore. It

is even more complex when you start exploring the difference between American Masonry and those corresponding degrees and orders in England. Whether the Scottish Rite, the Royal Arch, or the Knights Templar, there are noticeable differences between the two nations. In studying these differences and researching early Templary in England, I came across an unusual rite located in Bristol called the Rite of Baldwin (also known as the Baldwin Encampment or Camp of Baldwin) which claims to exist from "time immemorial." This expression is important to its future relationship with governing bodies of Templary, the Royal Arch, and the Scottish Rite (known as the Ancient & Accepted Rite in England).

The Rite, or Camp, of Baldwin, takes its name from the early Crusader kings of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. After the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099, the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was established, and Godfrey de Bouillon became the first king (though he used the title of "Defender of the Holy Sepulchre" rather than that of "king"). After his death the following year, the crown was passed to his brother, Baldwin. After his death in 1118, the mantle of the king was placed on a cousin, also named Baldwin, and

it was Baldwin II who played an important role in the formation of the Knights Templar and their residence in the Stables of Solomon.

The Baldwin Rite is an amalgamation of usually separate Masonic bodies and degrees including the Rose Croix, Knights Templar, and Holy Royal Arch. It is described as being 7 degrees, but really, these degrees could also be described as a body of its own as you will see. The I° is Craft Masonry, composed of the degrees of the Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason. The II° is the Holy Royal Arch. The III° to the VII° is referred to as the Camp of Baldwin. The III° is the Knights of the Nine Elected Master. The IV° is the Ancient Order of Scots Knights Grand Architect which is composed of the Order of Scots Knights Grand Architect and the Order of Scots Knights of Kilwinning. The V° is the Knights of the East, the Sword, and Eagle. The VI° is the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes, and Malta which is composed of the two orders of Knights of St John of Jerusalem and Knights Templar. The VII° and final is the Knights of the Rose Croix of Mount Carmel. They operate out of Freemason's Hall in Bristol and it is by invitation only. It is curious to note that Bristol is the only city that is itself a Province within Freemasonry.

Like much of early Freemasonry, it is difficult to study the Baldwin Rite as there is little documentation that properly traces their lineage. The earliest reference to the Baldwin Encampment is in January 1772 when a reference to a meeting of Knights Templar at the Rose and Crown Inn in Bristol is recorded in Felix Farley's Bristol Journal. From such a casual mention of the Knights Templar, it seems that this wasn't anything new or that the readers of this publication

were already familiar with the meetings of that group. One theory is that the records were burned during the Stuart Rebellion (1745-1746).

The most well-known document associated with the Baldwin Encampment is the 1780 Charter of Compact that was established when this Templar group constituted themselves as the "Supreme Grand and Royal Encampment of Knights Templar of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitallers, and Knights of Malta etc." From my research, many believe there was an earlier document that established this Camp and others like Camp of Antiquity in Bath (as well as in London, York, and Salisbury), but none has ever been found or brought to public knowledge. Some legends state this Templar rite stems from the medieval Templars who had a large presence in Bristol:

"A tradition exists that the Baldwin Encampment is the lineal successor of an institution founded in Bristol by the warrior monks whose Order there dwells in name, though its glory has passed away."