

Warden and Freeman of Malmesbury

Court of King Athelstan



*1 Market Lane
Malmesbury
SN6 9BC*

February 2021

Dear Student

Warden & Freeman of Malmesbury Annual Prize

The Warden & Freeman of Malmesbury will be once again offering two prizes of £1000 to Malmesbury School students who will be continuing their studies at university in September.

You will be required to write an essay of 1200 words (word processed) about '**Why you have chosen your university course and what use you intend to make of it when you have graduated**'. Entries should be made once your university placement is confirmed and before the closing date of **Thursday 9th September**. The essays will be judged by a panel made up of school staff and members of The Warden & Freeman of Malmesbury.

Your entry should be attached to the cover sheet that will be provided with your results in August and returned to the office of The Warden & Freeman of Malmesbury at the above address.

The winners will be notified by the end of October.

If you are taking a gap year you will be eligible to enter next year. Details will be available from the school at this time 2022.

Attached is a brief explanation about The Warden & Freeman of Malmesbury, if you are not familiar with the history of the organisation.

If you have any queries about this, please contact the Office of The Warden & Freeman of Malmesbury,

Yours sincerely

Mike Westmacott

(Warden)

E mail: wardenandfreeman@btconnect.com

Tel: 01666 829000 (answerphone service)

THE WARDEN AND FREEMEN OF MALMESBURY.

The origins of The Warden and Freemen of Malmesbury probably lie in the tenth century. Legend has it that Athelstan who reigned between 924 and 939 AD granted the men of Malmesbury a Charter and five hides of land in 929 for their assistance in a battle with the Danes. It is suggested that the 500 acres known today as Kings Heath is that parcel of land. Athelstans Charter does not exist nor does any other Charter before that granted by Charles the First in 1635. Various documents between the reign of Athelstan and Charles the First purport to reaffirm Athelstans Charter, learned opinion is that these are forgeries produced to justify the claim to the land.

The 1635 Charter confirmed thirteen Capital Burgesses including an Alderman, also twenty four Assistant Burgesses and the High Steward. This make up of the higher echelon continued until 1886 and were known as the Alderman and Capital Burgesses. The Alderman and Capital Burgesses were responsible for Municipal affairs in modern terms the Town Council. This changed in 1886 when the newly elected Town Council was brought into being. For the sole purpose of the document issued from Windsor the Alderman and Capital Burgesses were to be known as the Old Corporation and the Malmesbury Borough Council was to be known as the New Corporation. The Alderman and Capital Burgesses became known as the Warden and Capital Burgesses, the entire body of Freemen became known as the Warden and Freemen. The Warden and Freemen lost all their Municipal duties but retained their lands and property.

At that time to gain admission an applicant had to be a son of a Freeman or married to the daughter of a Freeman, be age twenty one and live within the borough boundary. Due to population shifts and the decrease in the size of families numbers of members had by the late 1980s fallen to below 190 the maximum number allowed under the Enclosure Act of 1822 being 280. Between 1990 and the year 2000 the franchise was extended to increase the numbers of members. At the present the only criteria is that an applicant shall have proof of ancestry, live within the borough boundary and be of eighteen years of age. In 2005 the numbers had risen to 260.

Oliver R Pike. May 2006.