

Across the Plain

The magazine of the Masonic Province of Wiltshire



Summer 2019

"We rise to great heights by a winding staircase of small steps."

Solomon

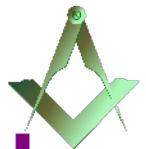
"An investment in KNOWLEDGE always pays the best INTEREST"

Fostering curiosity – developing understanding

wisdom BEAUTY hiram column Province pillar Royal Arch



Lodge book Learning STEPS Level horizontals



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SYMBOLS reading obligation V.S.L. promise ritual obligation Ceremony chapter



perpendicular DEACON Ashlar floor Plumb Rule

CHAIRTY mosaic

The Provincial Grand Master.....



One of the most frequently asked questions I hear from Freemasons, particularly new members is “How do I find out more about Freemasonry?” UGLE undertook a series of surveys that enabled members to express personal views, experience and expectations. Over 80,000 responses were received with the majority of responders stating that understanding our symbolism, moral and philosophical issues was essential or at least very important. Significantly, many expressed interest to learn more of our history and traditions. This interest and expectation to learn was evident across all age groups, particularly amongst newer and younger members which accorded with our own research and understanding. Many reported that they had unmet learning expectations and needs, that too little time, guidance and support was offered to extend learning beyond performing the ritual and ceremonial well. The survey feedback also very strongly suggested that many members have a general lack of understanding and a relative dearth of accessible resources to refer to.

As a result of the survey UGLE launched SOLOMON an online learning and development tool and, of all the many initiatives introduced by UGLE, I believe this new service will provide a very important resource to members wishing to make a meaningful daily advancement in Masonic knowledge. It covers topics relevant to the Craft and the Holy Royal Arch and I commend it to you.

Wiltshire has long recognised the need to delivered in an understandable and engaging it is a skill which can be taught and so we are to be presenters, develop their skills and know that we do recognise the need to move

“Education is not the learning of facts, it’s rather the training of the mind to think”

ensure that material must be presented and way. It is not a skill which everyone has, but actively looking for suitably qualified members promote their use. You will be pleased to away from the stultifyingly boring lecture.

Our Province has provided educational activities for some time through the excellent Preceptor Notes page on our website, so for us, this is not a new topic. However, we are eager to promote and share good examples, and we are delighted that SOLOMON the new online learning and development tool contains items from some of our members. I was also pleased to hear that Lodge of Friendship & Unity No.1271 were able to find time to read a short piece on the Tesselated Border during a recent second degree ceremony. By all accounts it was superbly delivered and genuinely well received. I feel sure other Lodges will follow their example.

I am always pleased to attend events promoting Wiltshire Freemasonry or which support the many worthy charities and good causes in the Province. During the past months I have been able to join the Communication Team when they have taken the Provincial Display Trailer to the Swindon & Cricklade Railway, Downton’s Cuckoo Fair, Stratton St Margaret fete and Salisbury Charter Market. I know that a great deal of planning goes into each event and I am so very grateful to the team and the volunteers who support them; whether it be in manning the stand or towing the trailer, each contribution is vital in making the day a great success. For my part I must confess that having the opportunity at the Swindon & Cricklade Railway to stand on the footplate of a steam locomotive was a very special treat. The communication team is always pleased to welcome Brethren who can spare an hour to join them at the events they cover during the year, if you want to assist please contact Gordon Lindsay or Paul Sharp.

Changes in personnel are a regular feature of the Provincial Team with some officers having longer tenure than others. At Provincial Grand Lodge this year we will be bidding farewell to John King who has been the Provincial Almoner since 2006. During his time in office John has been an outstanding exemplar of what the office means and what it requires; a friend and confidante to so many; a listening ear and an ever present source of strength and comfort. His most well known achievement has been the introduction of teddies for Loving Care, and it is testimony to his energy that the Province continues to donate over 5,000 bears every year to Swindon and Salisbury hospitals. It would be remiss of me to not mention John’s principal helper - his wife Valerie whose support has been vital to the work John has undertaken, especially with the Wiltshire Masonic Widows Association. The Province owes John and Valerie a huge debt of gratitude. John’s successor will be Gary Dolphin, Gooch Lodge No.1295, and I will have the pleasure of appointing and investing Gary at Provincial Grand Lodge on **Thursday 3rd October 2019**.

I continue to enthusiastically promote the role of The Sarsen Club. This team of energetic young Masons forms the nucleus of what is not only our current strength but also our future hope. The demographic status of Freemasonry cannot be disputed and in Wiltshire we must recognise that as we all get older so we need to encourage and welcome younger men into our Fraternity.

Proud to be a Bierschenk.....



Sometimes a story just needs to be told, and that of Wiltshire Freemason Bro Arthur Bierschenk's father Norbert is one such story, especially as it relates to the 75th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings which took place in June 1944. I think everyone would agree that Bierschenk is definitely not a common Marlborough name; indeed Norbert Bierschenk was an American GI - overpaid and over here, as the saying goes, who met Arthur's mother at a local dance in Tilehurst. Norbert was joined by many of his countrymen who were stationed in the UK as they prepared for the invasion of France via the Normandy beaches for what Churchill described as "undoubtedly the most complicated and difficult operation that has ever occurred". Norbert and his 'GI bride' moved to America after the war, but chose to return to Tilehurst where Arthur was born in 1949.



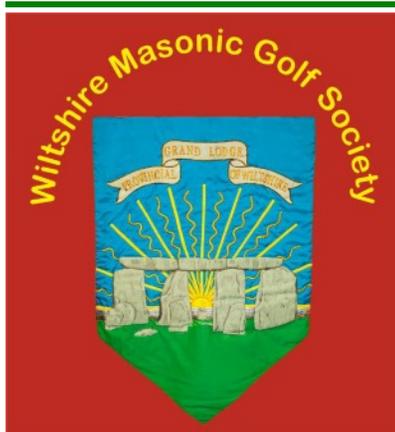
Arthur's father experienced all the Normandy battles considering himself fortunate to have come ashore on Utah and not Omaha beach which was a bloodbath. Having survived D Day he took part in Operation Market-Garden an ambitious scheme to cross the River Rhine and advance deep into northern Germany with the intention of shortening the war. General Montgomery's plan involved the seizure of key bridges in the Netherlands by the 101st and 82nd US Airborne Divisions, and 1st British Airborne Division who would land by parachute and glider, Norbert Bierschenk was part of the American 101st Airborne - The Screaming Eagles.

The plan was for the British 30 Corps to advance over the bridges and cross the Rhine and its tributaries. The bridges were at Eindhoven around 13 miles from the start line, Nijmegen 53 miles, and Arnhem 62 miles away, as well as two smaller bridges at Veghel and Grave that lay between Eindhoven and Nijmegen. If successful, the plan would liberate the Netherlands, outflank Germany's formidable frontier defences, and make possible an armoured drive into the Ruhr, Germany's industrial heartland.

The attempt to cover the tactically important road with airborne troops from Eindhoven to Nijmegen to Arnhem, and get across the Rhine into Germany, failed and Norbert Bierschenk was severely wounded, his war effort ended in Holland and he was repatriated to England. The heroic events of that momentous action were immortalised in the film 'A Bridge too Far'.

In memory of Norbert, who due to his injuries was unable to complete the journey from Nijmegen to Arnhem, Arthur's cousin Kenny Bierschenk (a member of the Ohio Bierschens) travelled to Holland in June to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Operation Overlord Day and undertook an emotional bicycle ride along the route taken by the 101st Airborne covering those last few (but very important) miles from Nijmegen to Arnhem that Norbert wasn't able to complete.

Kenny not only completed the journey, he did it wearing Norbert's 'Screaming Eagle' shoulder patch (top right) which identified the unit to which a soldier belonged, and his Purple Heart medal (top left) given to American service personnel wounded in action.



Fore.....is the shout you might hear if you are playing what many would suggest is the sport of princes (if racing is the sport of Kings). Yes, I mean golf, which in a quote improperly credited to Mark Twain, was described as "a good walk spoiled". Wiltshire's Masonic Golfers would never agree with such a sentiment and they are once again inviting anyone who wants to enjoy the fun of competitive golf (or to just enjoy the walk) to join them at Wrag Barn Golf Club on **Tuesday 13th August 2019** for their ever popular Open Event.

Players of all abilities are welcome. There are great prizes to win, a superb raffle and best of all a terrific carvery lunch, all in the wonderful surroundings of the beautiful Par 72 parkland course. To find out more contact Merv Johns by email merv@chromaticarts.com

Did you know? An Immediate Past Master is a description of fact, not of office. It follows that the last Past Master who had been Installed as Master of the Lodge 'in the lineal descent of authority from King Solomon' is, *de facto* and *de jure*, the Immediate Past Master. (It is not necessarily the Installing Master). It follows therefore that no one else can be so described, invested, nominated or whatever.....



I just loved this piece of Lego work which was Tweeted by the Province of Oxfordshire and shows the typical set up of a Lodge Room. Models used as visual aids can help Brethren to understand and remember, and increase interest,

I'm quite sure the concept of making learning 'fun' is a fundamental part of helping new and relatively inexperienced Freemasons to understand the beauty of our ceremonies and to assist them in making a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge. Learning can and should be engaging, exciting, compelling, stimulating, satisfying, inspiring, and imaginative I would even say it should be pleasurable and if that means it is laced with 'fun' - so be it.

The role of the teacher/mentor is to help Brethren become more competent, confident and curious. Serious stuff which tends to a degree of intensity especially when it involves the need to learn tracts of ritual or remember how to navigate the black and white mosaic pavement of the Lodge Room. What having fun must never ever do is trivialise the serious work related to learning.

I want Brethren to enjoy learning. I believe in the importance of being creative, passionate and enthusiastic about our teachings and doing things which help to make it more effective and enjoyable. After all doesn't our ritual remind us "that education alone renders us fit members of society."

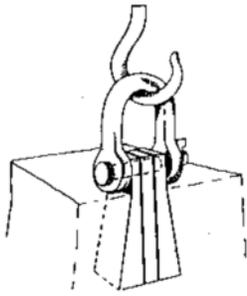
However, we all know that learning is sometimes uncomfortable and difficult, especially as we get older and the grey cells don't seem to want to work as they once did, and that is okay. If a Brother was asked if he would rather learn the Charge to the Initiate or enjoy a pint in the bar, most of them would choose the pint in the bar. But those same Brethren would later be grateful for their newly acquired skill, even if they were complaining or uncomfortable at the time. Everyone knows that learning does not feel like fun when experiencing a mental block, when the word just doesn't come to mind and a movement is made too soon or too late, or worse, not at all.

Obviously, it is important to match a challenge with support. There is no virtue in creating challenge for the sake of challenge. We achieve nothing by watching our new Brethren flounder or flail, whether that be as they deliver a piece of work from the ritual book or when they join in something as prosaic as Masonic Fire.

Ultimately, when it comes to a challenge, Brethren will reflect on their experiences and most will name an accomplishment that was hardly fun in the moment. They may well concede the challenge caused them considerable discomfort, but readily admit that achieving the challenge resulted in personal growth, a feeling of pride and satisfaction in the knowledge of a job well done.

At a recent Learning and Development conference held at Freemasons' Hall in London, it was suggested that Mentors might have a more important part to play in the learning and education process than was first envisaged with their appointment, after all what is a mentor? The Oxford University definition of a mentor surely confirms to all of us that the office of Lodge Mentor is not for the faint hearted or someone who wishes to have an easy life – to remind you of that definition. A "mentor" is an experienced individual who shares knowledge, experience, and advice with a less experienced person, especially in the formative years of a new Freemason's life in the Lodge.

For example when a newly made Brother arrives at the Lodge for his first meeting after being Initiated; a scary moment when he is full of trepidation and in fear of saying or doing the wrong thing. And with little wonder as he has been told very little about the form of our ceremonies and he won't know when to stand or when to sit – a friend to guide him would be a good thing if for no other purpose than to make him a little more comfortable in his new surroundings. Oh, and by the way the buddy principle extends to the Festive Board where the 'newbie' is at a disadvantage as he will possibly not know many of the Brethren dining, and he will certainly have forgotten the etiquette that applies.....especially Masonic Fire!



Have you ever wondered about the miniature tripod with ropes attached to a stone placed close to the Senior Warden's pedestal in many of our Lodges? Let me assure you, you're not the first and you certainly won't be the only Brother to ask that question. The

framework is to support a hoist to lift heavy stones but the significance to the Freemason is the cramp iron which is inserted into a cavity prepared for that purpose in any large stone. That cramp iron is properly referred to as a 'Lewis' - which accords with The Oxford English Dictionary definition of a 'Lewis' as '*an iron contrivance for raising heavy blocks of stone*'.

In the English system of Masonry, while a Lewis is not a formal Masonic symbol, and does not feature in the Emulation ritual, it is found on the First Degree tracing board, albeit within a more elaborate structure, where it is used as a symbol of strength. As by its assistance, the operative mason is enabled to lift the heaviest stones with a comparatively trifling exertion of physical power.

The United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) defines a 'Lewis' as '*the uninitiated son of a Mason*'. The son of a Mason is, in England, called a Lewis, because it is his duty to support and aid the failing strength of his father.

Neither of the two definitions does justice to the real significance of the word, whether used in mediaeval cathedral building or in Speculative Freemasonry. The evolution from one to the other is a revealing story and perhaps repays the telling.

The operative mason's Lewis had three parts – two wedge-shaped side pieces and a central core or shackle which was inserted into a matching socket bored into a heavy stone. As the shackle is lifted by the pulleys against the ratchet of a winch so the wedges widen and are forced against the edges of the socket thus securely gripping the stone. Such a small and simple device enables one man to lift a stone many times his own weight. This is often depicted suspended from a tripod.

The days when the sons of craftsmen automatically followed their father into the same skilled trade are perhaps long gone. We can understand though how the term 'Lewis' came to be used to describe such a son. Let us quote from Browne's nineteenth century Prestonian Lecture:

'What is the duty of a Lewis, the son of a Mason, to his aged parents? To bear the heavy burden in the heat of the day and help them in time of need which, by reason of their great age, they ought to be exempted from so as to render the close of their days happy and comfortable'. [Thus just as that small and simple device can lift a heavy stone so the assistance from his slender but energetic offspring enables a Mason to continue working purposefully even when his own strength is failing.

Browne continues: *What are his privileges for so doing? To be made a Mason before any other person, however dignified by birth, rank or riches...*

It is at this point that guidance was recently provided by UGLE to clarify and unify the privileges which were being widely misinterpreted. Some Lodges assumed that a Lewis could be admitted at the age of 18 rather than at 21. Others that he had precedence over all other Entered Apprentices for Initiation or even preferment in office. There were many variations. And in order to regulate matters UGLE issued a very specific directive: *'A Lewis is the uninitiated son of a Mason. irrespective of the date of his birth, i.e. it matters not whether he was born before or after his father became a Mason. A Lewis has no special privileges other than should there be more than one candidate on the day of his Initiation he can claim to be the senior for the purpose of the ceremony. He cannot claim precedence over candidates proposed previously to himself and must take his place in the usual rotation of any waiting list of applicants that there may be'*.

Stonehenge Lodge, for example, has a happy history of welcoming the sons of current Brethren into our fraternity. In the Lodge today their fathers have introduced Mike and Pete Smith, Nick Humby, Neil Hayward, Alan Cromwell, Sam Wyatt. In a pleasing twist Keith Lawrence was able to Initiate his own father into our Lodge.

What privileges do we offer a Lewis today? UGLE rather restricts our freedom. However it has been accepted practice over many years for the son of a Stonehenge Mason to be accepted on trust by the Lodge Committee and, as a family member of a respected and serving Brother, he is never tested or questioned deeply at his admission interview (beyond the basic requirements). There is little need. His father stands surety for his values. So, there you have it. A Lewis means simply a very valuable addition to a building site both as a man and as an appliance. He is equally valuable within every Lodge family.

May Freemasonry welcome many more!

As an Entered Apprentice we are told that we should follow a course of discipline that will be conducive for our corporeal and mental faculties, to enable us to fully expand our knowledge, energy and talents. We are encouraged to dedicate ourselves to pursuits which enable us to be respectable in life, useful to mankind and an ornament to society.

It is especially important for us to study the Liberal Arts and other such sciences that are within the range of a mason's "compass" and also our own attainment, without interfering with our own daily duties yet still advancing our Masonic knowledge. The Liberal Arts are broken down to seven systems of thought and study. These are: grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.

There is more to being an Entered Apprentice Freemason than just studying these arts. It is knowing and following a path that has been laid out for millennia, the path to the God not only of the Universe but within ourselves.

The journey for some can seem long and arduous, for others it is a part of being a Freemason, yet for some it is important to attain the highest of the three degrees with a passion. They understand that in the past, an Entered Apprentice would seek to show that he is worthy of being a free and accepted mason and also to prove that through his own trials and tribulations he has the duty and honour to uphold the secrets, signs, tokens and truth that every Freemason holds close to his heart.

Upon presentation of that worthy badge of a Freemason, the Entered Apprentices Apron, an ancient and honourable symbol, a badge of innocence, a bond of friendship, a badge never to be disgraced.

Remember those special words of the Charge after your Initiation that in your daily practice "let Prudence direct you, Temperance chasten you, Fortitude support you, and Justice be the guide of all your actions. Be especially careful to maintain in their fullest splendour those truly Masonic ornaments, which have already been amply illustrated; Benevolence and Charity"

As we are placed in the North East corner of the lodge, we are reminded that we are now part of its foundation, we will

form the new structure that continues its strength and stability but also within Freemasonry. Continuing to live a virtuous life and finding within our heart and soul, that which is the true distinguishing mark of a Freemason, Charity. It is said "Mercy, blesses him who gives as well as him who receives" but do not think that this form of Charity is limited to monetary issues as it is more than giving financial aid, charity is giving a part of yourself where and when you can. Aid not only a fellow brother in times of need but also your fellow man. We should stand ready to give help when the need arises, to look upon all with open eyes and not judge or condemn another's failures but show charity in all endeavours.

An Entered Apprentice is likened to the rough Ashlar, but with the help of his brethren and his own investigations he will eventually become a perfect Ashlar and attain the sublime degree of a Master Mason.

Through the metaphysical and spiritual use of the tools of an Entered Apprentice we are able to work on our own minds and life, for although we are not operative but speculative it is still our role as a Freemason to endeavour to work and live our lives by the guidance of these tools, albeit in a spiritual rather than physical manner. The symbolism of the tools and the jewels of the lodge will enable us to move forward with Masonry to become the perfect from the imperfect.

The 24 inch gauge is a symbol of how we as masons should spend our days, yet in this modern world there are so many distractions that can deter us from maintaining the simple duties the gauge represents. It is important to remember that aside from labour and refreshment, it is a simple thing to serve a brother or friend just by being in communication or by holding them in your thoughts, made easier by modern technology.

In the past, it was important to attend a holy place, in order to honour God or spend time in prayer. Again modern times and philosophy have illustrated that this is unnecessary for it has been declared that the spirit of God resides within us all and that by honouring our own self but not the ego we honour the almighty. Step forward into the new life of the light and so the journey has begun, that of a Freemason. Taking that first regular step and being welcomed as a Brother on the square.

Did you know : The United Grand Lodge of England does not publish, nor does it give its authorisation to any specific form of ritual. According to Rule 155 of the Book of Constitution the type and formula of ritual used in a Lodge is determined by a majority of its members. It is a purely domestic matter and not governed by Grand Lodge or Provincial Grand Lodge.



The Grand Superintendent



Clearly the buzz word of the moment is SOLOMON, not as in King Solomon but rather the recently launched UGLE initiative by which Companions can discover **more about** the Holy Royal Arch rather than just participate in ceremonies, as important as that is rightly deemed to be. SOLOMON provides an opportunity for presentations and demonstrations with a supporting explanation of interesting and accessible material that, if suitably chosen and well delivered, will complement or replace a ceremony. Ideally, learning activities will become an appreciated and regular feature of lodge and chapter meetings, and I am confident that they will be favourably received, encourage attendance and interest. While I wish to encourage the free flow of relevant material, I would just add a word of caution. It would be sad and not a little unfair if Chapters were to deliver presentations which deal with matters beyond the stage of an individual Companion's Masonic journey which might possibly spoil any future revelations: to do so would be a shame. Equally, I would like to see Chapters exploit the high level of expertise and talent we have in Wiltshire; we are fortunate to have Companions who are gifted presenters and have that wisdom gained from having experience, knowledge, and good judgement; qualities which we often associate with age. But that should not blind us to the gifts of the younger Companions in our Chapters.

Confucious wrote "By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest." As I get older I hope I become a little wiser. Do you?

Speaking about wisdom, I'm always delighted to share an hour or two with my good friend and Past Deputy Grand Superintendent Michael Lee who in April was honoured by the MW Grand Master and promoted to Past Junior Grand Deacon in the Craft.

Michael is a regular contributor to the pages of Across the Plain and his views and observations are laced with a deep wisdom which rock musician Jon Bon Jovi described as "A vintage which comes with age and experience". I am pleased that Michael continues to take such a keen interest in writing and commend to you his latest article (on facing page) which is particularly pertinent given The First Principal's comment on the importance of an attachment to the Holy Royal Arch.

The Annual Chapter Officers' Lunch was once again held in Calne and attended by a large number of Active Officers. We also welcomed the Provincial Grand Master and Sally Bullock and other guests. I was particularly pleased to be able to present a cheque for £500 to Companion Ian Lever, who is the Wiltshire organiser for the Masonic Trout and Salmon Fishing Charity. The inspirational work undertaken by Ian and his team of fishermen is quite awesome, and having been updated on what constitutes a typical event I am even more convinced that the support of the Royal Arch is absolutely vital to the well being of the less able young people who participate in the day's fishing experience. I would also like to thank the Companions who attend on the day giving their time and angling expertise.



John Reid presents cheque to Ian Lever

In May I was delighted to meet with many Wiltshire Companions at Melksham when the Province held its Annual Convocation. It is always a time of great joy (who couldn't be impressed with the sights and sounds) and yet there is always that lingering question - 'what could possibly go wrong?' Such thoughts are totally misplaced, as nothing does go wrong, and if it does the team quickly put it right and no one notices. I would once again offer my warmest congratulations to all those Companions who received an appointment or promotion, and take this opportunity to remind them that being the worthy recipient of an honour is not a licence to sit back and rest on your laurels. Companions, there is always much to do and your active participation is always appreciated. I was also able to congratulate Companion Mark Fuller the Province's Communication Officer who has made such a positive incredible impact promoting the Royal Arch through our social media channels. I am sure everyone will have noticed not only the increased activity, but also the quite superbly designed artwork which has been used to such good effect.

Are you interested in joining a local Chapter ?

www.pglwilts.org.uk/royal-arch/royal-arch-news/

Welcomes you to the Holy Royal Arch.



In his address on 19th April 2019 to Supreme Grand Chapter the ME First Grand Principal HRH The Duke of Kent observed that “...no Mason should be joining other Orders without first completing their journey in Pure Antient Masonry by becoming a member of the Holy Royal Arch.” Our own Grand Superintendent notes: “The Order of the Holy Royal Arch, more familiarly known as Chapter, is regarded as the fourth or next step in pure Antient Masonry and our deep relationship with the Craft is something for which I am intensely protective”. These observations inspired the following short article by E.Comp. Michael Lee CBE, PGSwdB

.....Including the Holy Royal Arch

Being Raised to that admirable rank of a Master Mason brings many benefits. The first could well be a surprising rise in your popularity with senior masons jostling to offer you a drink - coupled with a quiet invitation ('because you were such a good candidate') to join their very special 'higher' degree – romantic phrases such as *The Mark; Secret Monitor; Ancient and Accepted; Royal Order of Scotland; Rosicrucian* ...come tumbling out. You feel both honoured as well as spoilt for choice. Good friends however may merely enquire if in fact should you choose *any* at such a time, adding thoughtfully that might it not be preferable to try to understand and enjoy Craft Freemasonry for a few more years more before acquiring any extra commitments or regalia?

United Grand Lodge can never be accused of being evasive about the next step. The Book of Constitutions states unambiguously that *pure Antient Masonry consists of three degrees and no more...including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch*. Simply put, for a Freemason to seek a fully harmonious life there are no other degrees within the world of Speculative Freemasonry that are either available or necessary. These three Degrees, including the Holy Royal Arch, provide all the moral guidance that is required.

So what exactly does the Holy Royal Arch add? Let's turn to our history. Within the 'Antient' Grand Lodge the Third Degree had been divided into two parts. The first reminded us of our spiritual nature and the Divine justice which guided our earthly actions. The second, *The Order of the Holy Royal Arch*, disclosed the source and authority of those laws by which we shall be judged, continuing to use the Abrahamic theme of King Solomon's Temple in explanation.

'Modern' Grand Lodge however was concerned both about remaining true to the old operative Masonic traditions as well as spreading Speculative Freemasonry to other nations where the Abrahamic religions (Jewish, Christian, Moslem) were not recognised. During the reconciliation of the Antient

and Modern rituals in 1813 therefore for Craft Freemasonry to become truly universal the second, Abrahamic, part of the Third Degree had to be made optional.

Does all this make the Royal Arch a religious Degree? Certainly not, no more than any other branch of Freemasonry. As the Pro Grand Master has reminded us, Freemasonry is not a religion but it does respect many religious values. It recognises a Supreme Being and the Grand Lodge Above, i.e. that each Mason has an after-life. However it adopts no *religious* custom, traditions or rites such as Absolution. It could well be said that the beautiful and action filled ritual of the Royal Arch has far fewer religious over tones than, say, the First Degree in which that ritual begins and finishes with a prayer and all Candidates are asked in their Obligation “to pray to God to keep them steadfast”.

May we summarise? Does one have to join the Royal Arch? Well, yes...and well, no. For an enthusiastic Freemason who wishes to develop his knowledge of our Craft then, as the Pro Grand Master recommends, membership of the Royal Arch is a natural and logical complement to the Third Degree, supplying its moral authority. Membership also helps a Freemason understand more fully the principles that originally inspired our Founders to devise the three Degrees of Speculative Freemasonry.

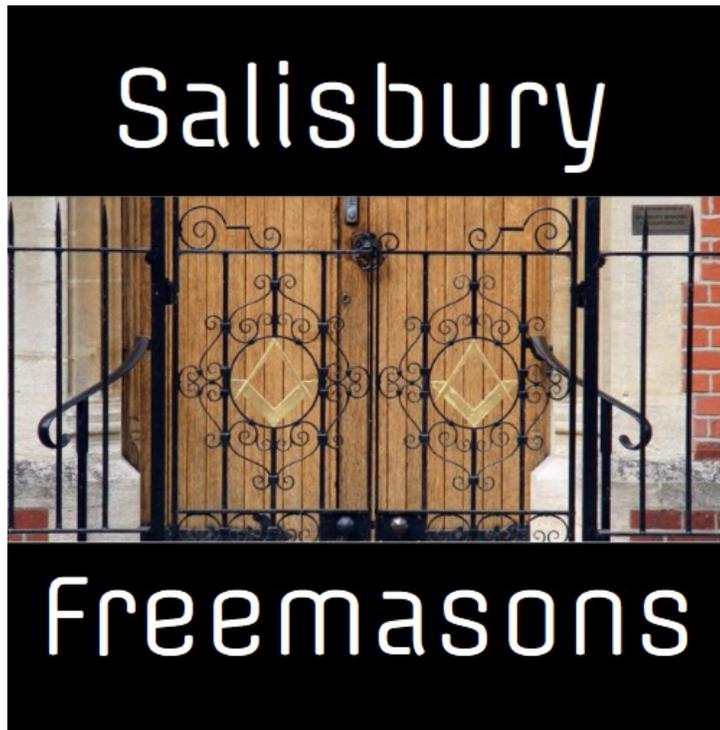
However for those Masons recognising a Great Architect outside the Abrahamic religions United Grand Lodge leaves them perfectly free to choose an alternative source of personal spiritual guidance.

The choice however will always be yours.



Talk to your Lodge Royal Arch Representative

www.pglwilts.org.uk/royal-arch/royal-arch-news/



It's all happening in Salisbury and I'm not referring to Russian agents admiring the ancient Cathedral, or the recent survey which suggested the city is one of the most desirable places in which to live. No, what I'm referring to is the incredible energy being expended on promoting Freemasonry in the South of the Province.

During the last 20 years the number of Freemasons in Salisbury has been in decline, and in order to address the issue the Salisbury Membership Group was formed, with one member taken from each Salisbury Lodge.

The first initiative to help improve our image was held in March when Salisbury Freemasons were delighted to support the Provincial Display Trailer which was sited in the city's famous Charter Market. Despite some good natured heckling, the Brethren were able to promote The Loganberry Trust and Teddies for Loving Care to a very receptive public.

This was such a success that it was repeated in May.

On Thursday 16th May the Salisbury Membership Group hosted a larger event, when friends of masons were invited to Crane Street to discover 'What Lies Behind These Doors'.

Deputy Provincial Grand Master David Davies gave a short presentation on "What is Freemasonry" and this was followed by Charity Steward Derek Gibbens who gave an overview of the work of the Masonic Charitable Foundation and the support given to local charities by the Province and local Lodges. This was well received by an audience of over fifty.

A number of expressions of interest were made and we hope some will result in new members joining a Lodge in Salisbury.

The membership group identified the importance of Military personnel based in Wiltshire and noted that under the Army Basing Programme numbers will increase as troops return from Germany. Colin Cheshire is leading a Province wide initiative to promote Freemasonry to units stationed throughout the county. National Armed Forces Day is being held in Salisbury on Saturday 29th June 2019 and Salisbury Freemasons will have a display stand at the event.

For some time the Lodges meeting in Salisbury have opened the doors of Freemasons' Hall in Crane Street on Saturday mornings, and welcomed visitors with a refreshing cup of tea or coffee and a slice of cake. Visitors clearly enjoy the opportunity to sit and chat, and also to look around the hall.

Freemasons' Hall will be open in support of the National Heritage Open Days event on the 14th and 21st of September. The hall has proved to be a popular venue and we will once again allow visitors to see the beautiful Lodge Room on the first floor.

The hall is also used to host a number of charity events and a Provincial Cheque Presentation evening is being planned. In 2018 we held a PSA testing session with The Loganberry Trust and we are pleased to announce that a booking has been made to hold another PSA testing session during November 2019. The date will be advised on the Salisbury Lodges Facebook page.

Social media has proved to be a successful way to attract Masonic visitors and potential joining members. Several Salisbury Lodges now have thriving Twitter accounts and the Salisbury Freemasons' Facebook account is up and running. Managed by Rob Kimber - the site has a bright new header featuring each of the Lodge logos and is already proving to be popular with members.

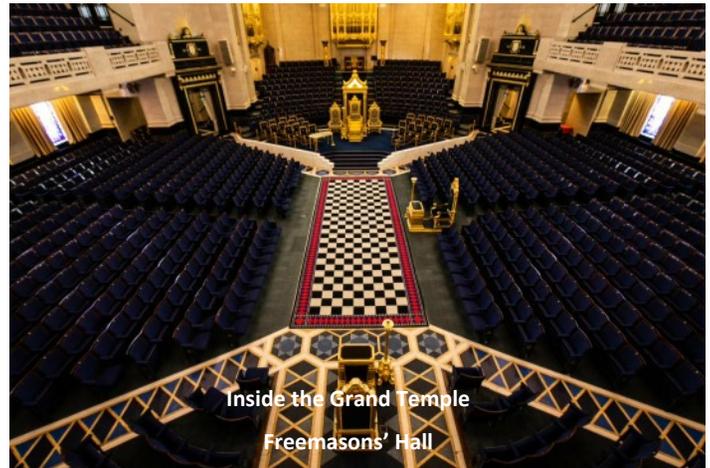


In late April 2019 I was seated in the Great Hall at Great Queen Street together with two thousand other Freemasons. Distinguished visitors present included judges, solicitors, academics, accountants, clergy (in brief men of all professions, trades and businesses alike) and had travelled from as far as the romantically sounding Eastern Archipelago of Malaya and Borneo, Sri Lanka, India, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, the Caribbean and Eastern Canada. Representatives from every Province across England and Wales had also made their way here. Most had come at their own expense.

Gazing around at this very jovial and relaxed assembly of obviously good natured companions one question kept coming to mind – what was it about Freemasonry that made all the effort and expense of the, sometimes considerable, journey here so very worthwhile for them? How did – how does - Freemasonry inspire such commitment?

When asked why, many Freemasons would merely say that fellow members of their lodge – in fact of any lodge they visit around the world offered warm friendship; good humoured conviviality, relaxing company after the rigours of the working day, and a comforting sense of well-being – in essence a feeling of acceptance for simply being who you are, rich or poor, young or old.

Often reference might be made to the considerable sums of money Freemasons raise for good causes around the world - but many organisations do that and do it well - Rotary, Lions, Buffalo, etc. all come to mind. Why then are the Freemasons so different?



Could it be that these other bodies have become largely fund raising social clubs of a benevolent or philanthropic persuasion, where the emphasis is on the club itself and how much money it raises, and not on the members?

Freemasonry however starts and ends with the man. Lodges are merely their location. Our principles are clear, unwavering and all important – brotherly love (agape), natural charity towards others and the courage to remain true to one's own nature. These principles lead to an increase in one's own moral awareness, inspired by stories derived from history and illustrated by symbols drawn from the organisation of the old operative masons. We take great pride in our unbroken 300 and more years of English history.

You may ask if that is all there is to enjoying membership? If so, where do I sign and pay my sub? Well, like all good things in life the more effort you put in as a member of Freemasonry the more you can gain. Sitting on one's hands is rarely a wise option in life. After a period of simply enjoying the company of your new colleagues you will be invited to join a 'team' who act out the morality playlets. This involves a little learning by heart but is rewarded by the close bond that is formed by becoming a member of any successful company in sport or drama. This act of learning encourages a richer understanding of the words and their meaning. Finally we find that members want to share their new insights by a wider practical involvement in the world around them – their family, their colleagues at work, their neighbourhood and the wider community. The more one offers others in practical benevolence the richer can be the rewards.



But where is the fun in this? It all sounds pretty serious. Be assured when our formal meetings are over we relax at the bar or over a good dinner with laughter a common companion. Our wives and partners too can become involved in the social programme of outings, meals together and events that are normally part of all Lodge activities

Thank you for taking this interest in an organisation that, as proud Freemasons, we all cherish and hold very dear.

Did you know? - A Grand Officer who is also an active Provincial Grand Officer does not wear his Provincial Collar and jewel over his Grand Officer's collar unless he is performing official Provincial duties.

“Mustard’s no good without roast beef” (Chico Marx).

As he approaches the mid-term of his time in office, the Provincial Senior Grand Warden W Bro Michael Barratt reflects on his first few months at the job and the role of roast beef



Most of us who are old enough to remember can vividly recall where we were and what we were doing on the evening (yes it was evening in the UK) when President Kennedy was shot. Psychologists call such vivid recollections “flashbulb moments”. As I sit and write this short piece for *Across the Plain*, some five months into my term of office as your Provincial Senior Grand Warden, I can still vividly recall the moment when the Provincial Grand Master telephoned me to ask me if I would be prepared to take the office for the 2018/2019 season. It was just before the end of January 2018 and I was in the middle of moving into our new home in Downton – ironically the most southerly point of the Wiltshire Province – not an ideal situation for an active officer.

I was in my new study surrounded by a variety of boxes containing, in the main, my theology books which I knew I would need to keep handy. After a few pleasantries Philip then asked me whether I would be willing to take on the role of PrSGW from October. It was quite a shock, but a pleasant one. This was certainly something I hadn’t ever expected and, to be honest, I wasn’t entirely sure what it would entail or whether I was really up to the task. I was informed that the Junior Grand Warden was to be Dr. David Reed (Lodge of Remembrance No. 4037) who I had met on, I think, only one previous occasion since which time we have become good friends and colleagues and have shared many laughs. After much careful consideration I was pleased to accept.

Having been Invested as Provincial Senior Grand Warden at the October 2018 Annual Meeting, of Provincial Grand Lodge I had to immediately call upon the previous incumbent, David Little to undertake my first duty as I already had a visit booked to Dar es Salaam where my stepson lives with his wife and, since, twin children. My first official duty then did not occur until after I returned on 22nd October when I accompanied the newly appointed Assistant Provincial Grand Master Simon Leighfield to the Installation Meeting at Marlborough (Lodge of Good Fellowship No.8388). By this time David Reed had already completed three Installation Meetings and was comfortably in the swing of things – as for my part, I had just come back from Africa on the Friday, still feeling a bit jet lagged, had given a presentation on Saturday evening to my church on *Titanic* and led and preached at the Provincial Church Service on the Sunday. Now here I was “singing for my supper” giving the address to the Wardens of Lodge of Good Fellowship! Unsurprisingly, I needed prompting and Colin Davies (the Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies) did so in a lovely, sympathetic and calm manner – but I was resolved to do better next time! Following the meeting we traipsed over to Marlborough Town Hall for the Festive Board – the main course being beef stew. This was to set a precedent; of the twelve Installation Meetings I have so far attended as Senior Warden each and every one has had beef as the main course – beef stew, beef steak, beef and ale pie, roast beef and Yorkshire Pudding and so on; hence my quote from Chico Marx at the head of this article.

Since that first meeting in Marlborough I have grown in confidence in giving the address and I am grateful to my fellow Warden, the presiding officers and Directors of Ceremony for their encouragement and kindness. I now find myself reciting the Address to the Wardens whenever I get in my car and, here a confession, I have been known to “improve” the address with a few words of my own thrown in too. At that first meeting David also reminded me that I had to respond to the salutation for Provincial Officers which I did so with a collective noun “On behalf of a *plethora* of Provincial Officers”. This soon led to a challenge from David and also another active officer to find as many collective nouns as possible and use a different one at each meeting. So far we’ve had *galaxy*, *constellation*, *profusion*, *proliferation*, *murmuration* to name but a few. I’ve noticed that the presiding officer has now joined in too. I can only hope no one knows what the collective noun is for ‘crows’.

I’ve had a great time and I look forward to the rest of the year with such a great Team as we have. Some could say that after an apprehensive start in the role I am now “as keen as mustard”, talking of which is that a pot of the stuff before me. Must be time for the next meeting!

I also had the joy of attending the “cosy” Installation Meeting of the Lodge of Innocence and Morality No.9587 at East Knoyle. My first ever visit there, a great experience, where the smallness of the lodge room makes for a very warm and intimate atmosphere and, to cap it all - at the Festive Board they had lamb. Two firsts!



Let them eat cake....

Especially if it's one of the wondrous creations prepared by Wiltshire's John Hughes, the Province's cake maker supreme and a member of Wyvern Lodge No.8620 and Lodge of Innocence and Morality No. 9587.



John's interest in baking cakes was encouraged by his French born mother whom he describes as an excellent cook. It certainly helped that John, who spent endless hours staring into many a Patisserie window drooling over the delights of the skilled craftsman's handiwork, was encouraged by indulgent aunts and uncles to consume the treats laid out in front of him.

What followed was quite extraordinary with John being the only boy studying Domestic Science at Impington College, Cambridge. He also worked part-time evenings waiting on undergraduates at Corpus Christie College.

John served his apprenticeship at the Garden House Hotel where he gained his professional catering qualifications while developing his intense passion for sauces, puddings and cakes.

His management career saw him mentoring Chefs, advising them on techniques and trialling new trends in the industry. John also encouraged his charges to test themselves against the very best by competing at Hotel Olympia with the aim being to achieve his exacting standards and produce 'Eat Me' food.

One of John's most difficult assignments was when his granddaughter asked for a Choccywoccydoodah cake for her birthday. With less than week's notice John discovered there really is a Choccywoccydoodah cake and produced the best one ever made!

During the 80s and 90s John was averaging making a wedding cake every month and the house was constantly under 'sugar siege'. He still continues to make the occasional wedding cake with his family assured of a cake for that special event.

I'm doing just fine....

I may have arthritis in both of my knees
and, when chatting to cronies, have a bit of a wheeze
My pulse may be weak and the blood's a bit thin
but I'm awfully well given the shape I am in..

Sleep's a bit fitful... (and there's a groove to the loo);
My eyes close at lunchtime – for a minute or two;
My wife writes me lists of things to be done
but – with just one completed – the afternoon's gone!

The Lodge is my life-line – that's always been true –
though the evenings seem longer and the words sound
quite new.
This belt gets far tighter – can that apron be mine?
and kind hands now 'dress' me – which is surely a sign?

The memory is failing, sorry, what was your name?
so I missed last month's meeting, they all seem the
same.

New chaps are joining (thus our 'lectures' are few)
but where, my good friend, are the faces I knew?

Once proud of the ritual I knew every word –
but alas my loud prompting' is sometimes still heard;
though the DC and Master I often enrage
when the words I recall are not from their page.

My hearing's first class – although others will mumble,
and I only wear specs to save a fresh tumble.
The teeth are worn flat by the mints that I chew
and our 'roasts' are a test – I now prefer stew.

So I'm still a good 'runner', given the miles on the
clock, mere light wear and tear – just ask my doc?
True, the voice may be frail and the hair's a bit thin
but I'm awfully well – given the shape that I'm in.

You may ask me again, even time after time...
...How am I doing, to which I will answer,
I'm doing just fine.

"Admitted by a rather elderly Mike Lee"

Having semi-retired John is now able to enjoy his love of baking with this Masonic life. Baking cakes for Lodge raffles has proved an excellent way for John to raise funds for the various charities he supports. Everyone agrees that baking cakes may be his passion, but eating them is even better.



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Across the Plain

The newsletter of the Masonic Province of Wiltshire

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The relationship between the Armed Forces and Freemasonry in Wiltshire has been well documented and is well known. Thomas Dunckerley, recognised as a formidable figure in Freemasonry particularly in Wiltshire was a commissioned gunner. In April the Province undertook a Twitter campaign promoting Freemasonry to military units based in the county. Specially designed posters based on cap badges and Tactical Recognition Flashes were sent or hand delivered to the Messes of every Regiment and Corps and invitations made to existing Freemasons to join a local Lodge, and for service personnel interested in becoming a Freemason to contact a unique email address.

We have been pleased with the response to the campaign which has already resulted in a number of positive enquiries for joining membership and from service personnel interested in becoming a Freemason.

While the Army is the largest service arm operating in Wiltshire, serving members and 'veterans' of the three services are always welcome to visit and join any of the Lodges meeting in the county.



Being kind towards a Brother, irrespective of rank or seniority should be second nature to every Freemason

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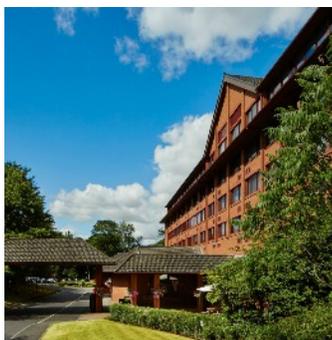
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How often have we heard the Worshipful Master seek approval for acceptance of the Minutes or a Motion by using the phrase ‘...in the manner usually observed amongst Masons...’. We might ask what ‘manner’ does he have in mind. Most Masters probably look for an outstretched (i.e. horizontal) right arm – but are they right?

The Book of Constitutions is surprisingly clear on the point. Rule 59 states that all matters are to be decided by a majority of votes and, I quote, ‘the votes are to be signified by each member holding up one hand...’ (the choice of left or right is apparently optional). So, is our Master’s expectation of a horizontal arm wrong?

One can only answer ‘not necessarily’. If we distinguish between voting on a Motion and ratification of Minutes then, in the case of a simple Motion – for or against a formal proposition say – ‘the Book of Constitutions should be adhered to.’ That is why we have a Book of Constitutions – with arm clearly held up and not horizontal.

Why, does it matter? Well, yes. There are several occasions (e.g. change of meeting – Rule 140) when a simple majority vote is insufficient. The Lodge Secretary then needs to count the precise number for, against and abstaining. Members in the second or third row therefore need to hold their hands high so that they may be recorded; a horizontal arm may well be hidden by the comfortably proportioned chaps in front.

Acceptance of the Minutes, however, is not a simple vote. It is an affirmation that in the view of the individual Mason the Secretary’s transcript represents a true and accurate record *to the best of memory*. The reality may differ slightly from one man’s memory to another. What sign then do we use for a ratification?

We have a choice of two. We can raise our right arm horizontally with thumb enclosed as if we were touching the VSL or other holy book and, by implication, swear on it as to its believed truth. If we possess a ‘blotting-paper-memory’ and wish to make the point more forcefully we might even extend the right arm with the thumb extended (slightly adapting the Penal Signs of all three Degrees) and transform a simple belief into a solemn and binding obligation as to the Minutes’ veracity – but I suspect few of us ever wish to go that far.

Which of these is used for the Minutes in your own Lodge can be safely left to the Brethren’s good judgement and local traditions and for its uniform application to an ever-vigilant Director of Ceremonies.

Our Master in the first paragraph probably had it about right but the next time your Lodge takes a formal vote, if uncertain, you may wish to take a peep at your local Grand Officers. I’m sure they keep the Book of Constitutions open by their bedside, possibly at Rule 59.



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The Provincial Grand Master looks forward to welcoming you to the annual meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge on Thursday 3rd October 2019.

The summons and agenda for the meeting is enclosed with this copy of Across the Plain.

This really is an occasion not to be missed and provides a wonderful opportunity for you to support the Brethren of your Lodge who will be receiving a well deserved Provincial appointment or promotion.

We look forward to seeing you at City Hall, Salisbury

Have your say!

Have you a question to ask, or is there something you want to know about Freemasonry. Maybe you just want to express a view or make a comment, whatever it is why not write to the Provincial Grand Master?

ATPLetters@pglwilts.org.uk

All letters and emails are subject to editorial control. Regrettably due to space not all letters can be published

Would you like to play a part in promoting Freemasonry in the Province, can you write media copy? The Communications Team would be pleased to hear from you. pc0@pglwilts.org.uk

Barry Cooper's Word Search

In this edition Barry asks do you know your racecourses?



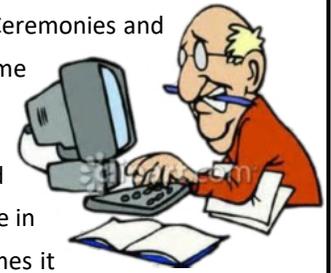
WHICH COURSE HOSTS THE FOLLOWING HORSE RACES

- The Grand National
- Scottish Grand National
- Welsh Grand National
- Irish Grand National
- Derby
- 2000 Guineas
- St Leger
- Gold Cup
- Champion Hurdle
- Betfair Chase
- Christmas Hurdle
- Fighting Fifth Hurdle
- Long Distance Hurdle
- Haldon Gold Cup
- Summer Cup

(ANSWERS TO QUIZ ON PAGE 22)

The Provincial Grand Master replies to your question:

Q. In some Lodges I have noticed the Director of Ceremonies and other officers 'square' the Lodge. Is this for some symbolic reason or is it just for show?



A. That really is a very good question, which I should answer by first stating that very little of what is done in the Lodge Room is purely for show; although at times it may seem like that. Generally speaking there is a logical reason behind the actions and movements in the Lodge, all of which add lustre to our ceremonies.

The origins of squaring the Lodge might be explained by reference to the excellent article on the Tracing Boards written by Bro Peter Hanfrey (see page 21). Bro Hanfrey points out that first example of a Tracing Board was a drawing in the sand which then became a floor cloth and ultimately what we now refer to as Tracing Boards. It was placed in the centre of the Lodge; where many Lodges now place their Tracing Boards, while others place them at the Junior Warden's pedestal.

It would have been an affront to the Brother who drew the design for the Brethren to walk through his work and destroy it, hence they would have walked around it and in so doing they would by default 'square the Lodge'. There are times when the action becomes exaggerated and time wasting and it is not a universal custom. In some Wiltshire Lodges it is the custom for the DC only to move round the Lodge Room in whatever form he chooses. There is no rule in Freemasonry which states where the Tracing Boards will be placed; it really is a matter of custom and practice or maybe tradition.

Masonic Word Search - set by Barry Cooper of St Edmund Lodge No.4714

H	J	N	C	C	G	G	J	U	A	H	N	F	C	N
T	U	P	C	H	F	E	P	T	M	A	E	D	H	I
P	Q	C	F	E	J	P	T	T	A	Y	W	H	E	I
D	P	E	J	L	Q	S	N	O	Y	D	B	Z	P	D
X	K	R	Y	T	E	O	E	X	I	O	U	F	S	D
E	X	E	T	E	R	M	W	E	X	C	R	A	T	O
L	N	S	D	N	A	A	C	T	Q	K	Y	I	O	N
L	S	E	D	H	I	P	A	E	X	P	A	R	W	C
A	K	W	W	A	O	C	S	R	B	I	Y	Y	E	A
I	U	E	R	M	H	U	T	H	A	E	H	H	R	S
N	H	A	M	P	A	Z	L	A	L	F	K	O	F	T
T	X	Y	Z	P	F	R	E	Q	S	Z	Z	U	L	E
R	R	R	X	M	T	X	K	C	K	C	N	S	B	R
E	B	J	M	D	F	O	D	E	G	D	O	E	I	J
E	L	I	P	Q	F	H	N	K	T	P	H	T	I	R

Events and more.....



The beautiful village of East Knoyle is home to The Lodge of Innocence and Morality No.9587 one of Wiltshire's younger Lodges having been consecrated in May of 1995 by then Provincial Grand Master RW Bro Byron Carron.

The unique character of the Lodge is enhanced by its location in the thirteenth Century Village Hall, which undergoes an amazing transformation for every meeting.

The fact that the hall was once the carpenters workshop adds another level of interest to the Speculative Masons who meet there and has an aura about it that gives a feeling of peace and tranquility which must be of great help to Candidates when being conducted around and seeing the light.

A visit to East Knoyle Church, followed by lunch at the nearby Fox and Hounds Pub was top of the agenda for the Salisbury and South Wilts Branch of the Wiltshire Masonic Widow's Association. After a refreshing cup of coffee and the obligatory biscuit they were shown around the church by Mrs Joan Claydon (widow of WBro Tony Claydon) before being given a short history of the village, it being the birthplace of Christopher Wren.

A very special moment for the ladies was when Bros Bob Maidment, Graham Hacker and Malcolm Case assembled the Lodge Room in the adjoining Village Hall, just as it would be for a regular Lodge meeting .



The installation at Downton Lodge No. 9064 on the 13th May was special not only for the incoming Master Clive Emerson, but also for his father Paul Emerson who was delighted to install his son. Thanking Paul at the festive board, Clive said "Dad, whilst I may have spent my first 40 years having a bit of a laugh at your Freemasonry you took it well, always maintained a sense of humour and patiently waited for when I was ready. Freemasonry is the gift you gave me and I thank you so much for that."

Downton Lodge No. 9064 is the most southern of the Lodges in Wiltshire and meets in the village social club on the first Monday of the month.



Not many Brethren can boast a record of service to a single Lodge spanning four decades, but St Aldhelm Lodge member **John Kerslake** can. Initiated into St Aldhelm Lodge No.2888 in 1971 John was invited to act as 'clerk of works' - a role he now describes as being akin to a maintenance manager. If John thought the role was 'temporary' the next few years confirmed to him that it was anything but, and it was only in 2016, a mere forty years later that John stepped down from the role. Having devoted so much time to the role you might suppose John had little if any time for anything else. Having been Master of the Lodge in 1986 he took on the office of Director of Ceremonies where his talent for getting the best out of people was developed even further.

John's Masonic interests include the Holy Royal Arch, Knights Templar and The Ancient and Accepted Rite (Rose Croix). At the beginning of May, V.III.Bro. Francis Wakem 33° (Inspector General of Wiltshire) congratulated John on his service to the Order and presented him with an engraved whisky glass as a gift from the Chapter, and a beautiful bouquet of flowers for his wife.

Welcome the Wardens.....

The Provincial Grand Master has announced that Bro Lance Andrews and Bro Richard Wright will be the Provincial Grand Wardens for 2019/20. Lance and Richard will be Invested at Provincial Grand Lodge in City Hall, Salisbury on Thursday 3rd October 2019.

Lance is a proud Ulsterman who was born in Bangor, Co Down, N Ireland.

While Lance's father was not a Freemason, his grandfather was Worshipful Master of a Lodge in Bangor in 1912 and a member of other Masonic Orders. Lance continues to wear his grandfather's sword and hat in Knights Templar. Lance's wife Yvonne also has a family Masonic connection, her father was Master of another Lodge in Bangor.

Joining the Army as a Junior Leader when he was just 16, Lance was posted to the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars who were on operations in Aden. Lance's service included tours in the Persian Gulf, Malaya, Singapore and Borneo before moving to Germany. It was while in Malaya in 1964 that Lance discovered the Army operated helicopters and applied to join the Army Pilots course in 1966, just after England won the world cup. Lance qualified in May 1967 and flew non stop with the Army Air Corps (Prince Harry also qualified as a pilot) Following his retirement from the Army he enjoyed a second

career with an electronics firm in Newbury, Berkshire.

The highlight of his military career was being awarded the *Air Force Medal* for his service in Northern Ireland, and being able to take Yvonne, daughter Natalie and son Keith to Buckingham Palace in 1981 to receive his medal from Her Majesty The Queen.



This is in sharp contrast to the negotiations he had with Yvonne to cancel a cruise to Canada that they had booked 15 months earlier, so that he could attend Provincial Grand Lodge in October to be invested as Provincial Senior Grand Warden. The good news is that Lance and Yvonne will be going on a cruise to Venice a week after Provincial Grand Lodge.

Lance's Masonic experiences have been many and varied. Being Installed as Master of The Lodge of Brothers in Arms No. 9540 in 2008 and being appointed Provincial Grand Sword Bearer in 2014 count as memorable highlights; as does being Installed as Z in Chapter Elias de Derham No. 586 in 2014 and in 2016 as Eminent Preceptor of William Longespee Preceptory No.322



Richard Wright a Past Master of White Horse Lodge No. 2227 will be Invested as Provincial Junior Grand Warden in October.

Born and raised in Rutland, which has the distinction of being the smallest County in England, Richard attended Oakham School and comes from a family with strong Masonic connections.

His father is a Freemason and at the age of 96 still attends Lodge meetings regularly. Father and son jointly have 95 years Masonic service. In 1981 Richard was Initiated into Saxony Lodge No. 842 (Grand Lodge of British Freemasons in Germany) and in 1987 Joined Old Oakhamian Lodge No. 8033 (Leics & Rutland). Richard joined White Horse Lodge No. 2227 In 2009; the Lodge meets in the Wiltshire town of Westbury.

Richard embarked on his military career Joining the Royal Artillery at age 18. He had three tours of duty of Northern Ireland after which he completed an Arabic language course which qualified him for a two year spell on Loan Service to the Sultan of Oman's Artillery. On retiring from the Army at the age

of 40, Richard decided to do something different every year. Backpacking in India when in his 50's was a highlight as was indulging in 'the sport' of free fall parachuting - very scary, according to Richard but also very exhilarating!

Richard's wife June's grandfather was a Freemason and resident steward at the Masonic Centre in Northwick Circle, London. She has happy memories of visiting the centre whilst growing up, and last year Richard and June were given a tour of the building.

Amazingly it took Richard 32 years to get to be a Master and then he held office in two Provinces in the same year (by dispensation). The highlights of his Masonic career to-date include being Chain Bearer for the investiture of the PrGM in 2014, and two very rewarding years as a Provincial Steward; especially being able to take an active role in the Provincial Grand Master's procession in Salisbury Cathedral, where we were joined by civic leaders to celebrate the Tercentenary of the first Grand Lodge .

"Being invited to be a Provincial Junior Grand Warden was totally unexpected. It is an honour to receive a Provincial appointment but a special privilege to receive an active rank. I will do my utmost to discharge my duties to the best of my ability.

Tracing Boards as we know them today were not an original part of the Lodge furniture. In my previous article (Winter 2018) I referred to the practice of designs being drawn on the floor. In the middle of the 18th Century great controversy was caused by the gradual introduction of permanent floor cloths in lieu of sand, To justify their disquiet the traditionalists cited that part of the obligation which instructs us to not write those secrets, indite, carve, mark, engrave or otherwise them delineate.



The introduction of Lodge cloths or 'floorings' as they were often called met with considerable opposition from conservative quarters. We gain a hint of this from the French exposure of 1745 which was widely circulated and appeared in England. In translation under various titles it said *"what is properly called the Lodge that is to say the designs drawn on the floor on the days of reception must literally be drawn and they must not be painted on a cloth which is kept specially for those days, as is done in some Lodges"*.

In a minute of the Old King's Arms Lodge No.28, for the 3rd December **1733** meeting – *"The acting Master represented that whereas the institution of new Brethren was attended with more than ordinary and perhaps unnecessary trouble, it was therefore moved that a proper delineation should be made on canvas and be deposited in the repository ready for those occasions."*

However, the convenience of a permanent design prevailed and by the second half of the 18th century the Masonic symbols were being painted on a variety of materials ranging from small marble slabs to canvas, all to give a more decorative and elaborate symbolic display. Such painted cloths are mentioned increasingly in lodge minutes in the latter half of the 18th century.

During my researches I discovered that The Union Lodge No.129 meeting in Kendal, possesses a set of painted floor cloths which date from as early as the year **1772**. These show the first simple developments in the introduction and embellishing of Tracing Boards. I was keen to learn more about these particular painted cloths and contacted the Secretary of the Union Lodge to seek more information. He advised that Masonry began in Kendal with The Union Lodge in **1764** and eight years later the Lodge commissioned a set of cloths. They still have in their possession the painter's receipt dated 19 June 1771 which reads:

Received of Mr Jackson the sum of one pound twelve shillings for a set of 'Floorings'. P.S. You have the scripture texts enclosed.

The scripture texts would of course be copies of the passages describing the pillars of King Solomon's Temple.

The first drawing shows the outline of a building, a floor, two walls and a pointed roof which represented the lodge enclosure and is a feature found only on the very earliest drawings of a building on the floor of the meeting room. Some of the other objects depicted fit quite neatly into the 1st Degree as we know it today. Looking at the 2nd Degree we have two steps and should note the position of the square and compasses. On the 3rd Degree we have 3 steps, the square and compasses in their positions and with additional implements and symbols, including some that are not now employed in English Craft Masonry. This ties up with the separate development of two Grand Lodges and their amalgamation in **1813**.

These old painted cloths were kept hidden from the Lodge for a number of years, rolled up in a box, with the minute books and a mass of receipts and other papers. In the 1920's W.Bro. Herbert Poole, who was an important member of the Quattuor Coronati Lodge, the leading body in the world in Masonic Research, came across them. After some debate these cloths were taken out of store and now are suitably framed and hung on the wall of the Lodge.

It is interesting to note that in 1723 the First Book of Constitutions (Moderns) published by Dr Anderson mentions only two Degrees, the Apprentice and the Second or Fellow Craft (or Master). There was no Third Degree. Circa 1725 the Third Degree was acknowledged as an accepted rite, the subject matter being separated from the previous degrees and the Royal Arch legends. It incorporated the legend of Hiram Abif in the ritual.

It was in 1738 that the Revised Edition of Book Of Constitutions (Moderns) again published by Dr Anderson recognised the three degrees. But there are no illustrations of the more elaborate symbolism and their historical romances that have been woven into our present 2nd and 3rd Degrees and shown on our current tracing boards. That does not mean that such concepts didn't enter into masonry before 1772 because they certainly did. It merely means that it was not thought necessary or proper to depict them on the traditional floorings. They couldn't very well have been done in a few minutes on the floor with chalk.



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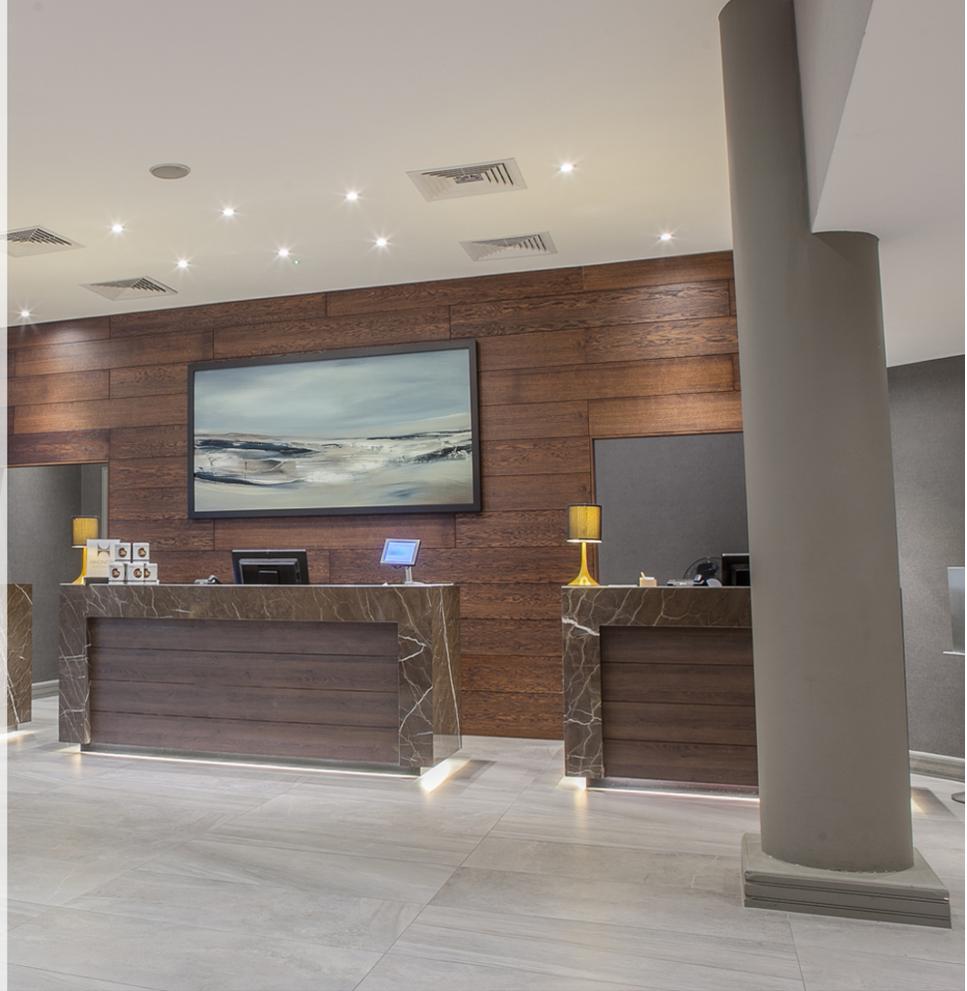
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