

# Across the Plain

The magazine of the Masonic Province of Wiltshire



Winter 2018



## A VERY SPECIAL MOMENT

**VW Bro Maurice Leighfield PGSwdB, PDepPrGM**

**congratulates his son**

**W Bro Simon Leighfield APrGM**

**on his appointment as**

**Assistant Provincial Grand Master of Wiltshire**

**Thursday 4th October 2018**

**Photograph by Bro Gary Dolphm.**

# The Provincial Grand Master.....



I begin this article by thanking the many Brethren who made such a wonderful contribution to the success of this year's Provincial Grand Lodge. I am sure the past year has been one of the most worrying for the people and city of Salisbury, no one could have failed to notice the continuing high visibility of police officers in and around the city centre. I must confess there were moments when I contemplated whether or not we would have to hold Provincial Grand Lodge in a different location, but I am glad that we made the decision to proceed as planned and trust you all enjoyed the day as much as I did. For those who could not attend I trust the superb images on the centre pages of the magazine, captured by Simon Grove will whet your appetite to join me next year - the date for your diary is **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019**.

I am particularly grateful to everyone who made the trip to Salisbury and filled the City Hall where I was able to thank Stephen Bridge, Simon Ellingham and Ian Priest for their service to the Province, each of whom has played a key role in the administration and management of the Province during the past four years. I am sure you will give their successors Simon Leighfield, Chris Robbins and Derek Gibbens every support as they take up their important roles

Many Brethren received Provincial honours, some a first Provincial Grand Rank while others received much deserved promotions. Appointments and promotions are not a reward for 'time served' - although it is generally recognised that unless there are special circumstances a Brother is only considered for Provincial Grand Rank after he has occupied the Chair of a Lodge - but are conferred in recognition of the contribution a Brother has made to the Province, to his Lodge and to Freemasonry in general. For some Brethren their appointment is to serve the Province in an active capacity which includes attending Installation meetings in support of myself, the Deputy and the Assistant Provincial Grand Masters.

In the middle of August I was the guest of the Wiltshire Masonic Golf Society for their annual Open Tournament which was held at the magnificent Wrag Barn Golf Club just a couple of miles from Highworth which is home to the Province's most northerly Lodge. An incredibly high standard of golf was played by 98 competitors. This fact alone confirmed that I made the right decision to watch and not play! My thanks to Merv Johns, Mark Manning, Mike Eagle and the team of very willing helpers who made the day such a great success. The Masonic Golf Society was able to present Julia's House with a cheque for £3,000. A superb achievement which I was delighted to acknowledge at Provincial Grand Lodge.

I was particularly delighted to meet new members and their partners at the New Members Reception held at Chippenham in early September. It was encouraging to hear why they became Freemasons and what their expectations are from the Craft. It was also interesting to listen to their partners' views, something we need to do as we recognise their invaluable contribution and support.

September provided me with an opportunity to pay tribute to the Active Officers of the year when they attended the traditional end of term dinner organised by the Provincial Wardens. We are very fortunate in Wiltshire to have the amazing support of the Provincial Team at the 44 Installation ceremonies held throughout the year. The evening was made even more memorable by the wonderful contribution made by guest speaker John Davies the Chief Executive Officer of Dorothy House Hospice.

In mid-November I will be joined by Sally at The Bear Hotel at Devizes where we will welcome Masters in office and a number of Immediate Past Masters together with their partners for what promises to be a very enjoyable evening. Our after dinner speaker will be UGLE's Director of Communications Michael Baker; erudite, cultured and incredibly well read, Michael is a great supporter of Wiltshire Freemasonry and it will be a real pleasure to welcome him and his wife to Devizes.

In the September newsletter I mentioned the importance of recognising the need for change in order that Freemasonry might prosper in the future. I am pleased that many Brethren in the Province have responded in a positive manner to what I had to say. In the November edition of the Provincial Newsletter, W Bro Andy Entwistle of Methuen Lodge No.8692 reflects on the importance of maintaining tradition in Freemasonry, particularly within our ceremonies, while at the same time recognising the necessity to embrace change in order to engage with, and relate to younger prospective candidates, and with newly made Freemasons. In this edition of ***Across the Plain***, the editor talks to Provincial Charity Steward Derek Gibbens about his new role and how he is looking forward to meeting Lodge Charity Stewards to explore, how, by working together, individual Lodges and the Province can maximise the effect of its contributions to local charities, and further promote Freemasonry in Wiltshire.

# Proud to be a Wiltshire Freemason.....



## The Sarsen Club

*A Circle of Upright Pillars – A Club for Young Masons in Wiltshire*

The Sarsen Club has been founded to give young Freemasons in Wiltshire a means to meet and socialise with Brethren of a similar age. Membership is open to any Freemason under 45 years of age and whose Lodge, place of work or home is situated in the Province. Through Masonic education, social interaction and Lodge involvement the aim is to empower younger masons to take an active role in their Lodge and help influence a strong future for Freemasonry in Wiltshire.

The Sarsen Club has social media profiles on Twitter and Facebook and you are encouraged to access these sites which are a great way to share stories, experiences and keep up to date with The Sarsen Club events.

During October Sarsen Club members were encouraged to visit a Lodge at which they had never previously attended. This initiative provides a great opportunity for members of The Sarsen Club to meet fellow members, forge new and lasting friendships, and make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.

The Provincial Grand Master asks that Masters of Lodges might publicly acknowledge the presence of members of The Sarsen Club either at the beginning of the meeting or during the Third Rising.

If you have any questions, then please don't hesitate to ask. Bro. Mitch Bryan Secretary, The Sarsen Club. 07540 166664

### Members of **The Sarsen Club** at work, rest and play.



**RECRUITMENT IS THE JOB OF EVERY FREEMASON**

At the recent annual meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge, the Provincial Grand Master Philip Bullock Invested Bro Derek Gibbens, a subscribing member of Lodge Elias de Derham, as Provincial Grand Charity Steward. The editor of Across the Plain caught up with Derek at his office in Wilton where he was able to discuss his new role and ask how Derek was planning to 'put his mark' on the job.



**DM.** Has being appointed Provincial Grand Charity Steward sunk in yet?

**DG.** Having only been appointed to the office of Provincial Grand Charity Steward at Provincial Grand Lodge on 4<sup>th</sup> October It's still very new to me, but I can say it is an incredible honour and I intend to give it my very best efforts.

**DM.** You take over from Ian Priest who was in office for four years - tough shoes to fill!

**DG.** Absolutely, and I know Ian did so much for the Province particularly in supporting charities which worked with sick children and vulnerable young people. Ian has been very kind in giving me great support and offering me some wise counsel.

**DM.** I know you are a keen charity fund raiser and have done a few 'zany' things to raise money - can we expect you to organise some unusual albeit interesting challenges?

**DG.** You know, I remember the words of the late Peter Winton who said you should never take the fun out of fundraising. He was right, and so yes it will be one of my ambitions to inject some fun into fundraising. Bike rides, half marathons, long walks even jumping on the spot - who knows what we will do!

**DM.** The Province has a number of sporting and social groups will you be working with them to raise funds?

**DG.** I most certainly will be talking to them. They are important to the Province and I am sure will be very receptive to a visit from the Charity Steward. Having said that, perhaps I could do with a lesson from Merv Johns, after all the Golf Society raised £3,000 for Julia's House in Devizes, how amazing is that!

**DM.** The recent amalgamation of the four national Masonic charities to become the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) has had a mixed reception. What will your relationship be with the MCF?

**DG.** I expect to meet with the MCF very soon in order that I can learn more about what they can do for the Province and what their expectation is of us. I am confident we can develop a mutually beneficial relationship - one in which the Province's views will be taken fully into account particularly on the matter of allocating members' money to organisations.

**DM.** Last year the Provincial Grand Master launched a Wiltshire fund - how do you think the members can help finance it?

**DG.** First, we have to recognise that every pound given to a charity comes directly out of the pocket of a Freemason, by calling on him to exercise that virtue which may justly be denominated the distinguishing characteristic of a Freemason's heart - I mean charity. But there are so many competing claims for the pound in a Brother's pocket and we do need to be careful not to place him in an embarrassing situation. Having said that, I feel sure Brethren will rally round and support the very good idea of creating a fund of sufficient size to enable future charitable programmes to be financed through the interest earned rather than a diminution of capital.

**DM.** It has been whispered to me that you like a good party - do you think there is any appetite for a large Provincial do - along the lines of a spring or summer ball which could double up as a super social event combined with a charity feel about it?

**DG.** Who doesn't like a good party - especially a well organised one? Seriously Des, I hear from Lodges how they are struggling to put on a Ladies Night and in some cases they have just abandoned any hope of doing so. Other sources tell me how they have joined forces with a neighbouring Lodge and enjoyed a successful event. I believe we can translate that thinking into creating an evening of magic with 250 people having a great time, with good food, superb entertainment at a smart venue and to top it all I could tell everyone a few of my jokes. Have you ever heard any of my jokes Des?

**DM.** Ah, well everything was going well up until this point. Derek we can't inflict your jokes on anyone - really no jokes....

There will be considerable national and local interest in the 100th anniversary of the 1918 Great War Armistice before and after November 11th 2018, and St Aldhelm Lodge No 2888 which meets in Malmesbury has a special reason to celebrate the centenary as it is a Hall Stone Lodge. The awarding of this very special jewel commemorates the fact that St Aldhelm was the only Wiltshire Lodge to give over ten guineas per member (£10.10s - £10.50p now, which was a large sum in those days) towards the building of a new Masonic Hall in central London. Freemasons' Hall was opened in 1922 as a memorial to fallen brethren.

WBro Chris Harvey, who will be St Aldhelm Worshipful Master in November will join other Hall Stone lodge leaders and national Masonic dignitaries at a United Grand Lodge of England special Armistice Centenary meeting at Freemasons' Hall on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November, the day before the national Armistice Day centenary commemoration.

He will wear the "jewel" as he and every St Aldhelm Worshipful Master does at every meeting of the Malmesbury lodge. It is passed to the new Master when he is installed in September, and is one of the lodge's most prized possessions.

In Malmesbury the lodge will mark the centenary and the jewel at a White Table dinner to be held on **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November at 7.00pm** to which members will be able to invite family, friends and non-masonic guests. The Masonic Hall including the Lodge Room will be open to visitors, and there will be a short presentation on the history of the Hall Stone Jewel.

The theme for the presentation will include Malmesbury and St Aldhelm Lodge in the 1914-18 War with extracts drawn from the Lodge Ancient Minutes.

On display, together with other memorabilia will be the actual 1914 telegram sent from Buckingham Palace by the Prince of Wales to the Malmesbury Lodge, asking for a significant donation to the Prince's War Fund (which was also handsomely supported by St Aldhelm Lodge)

Another feature will be a little-known patriotic part the Craft played during the Great War as described by English journalist, short-story writer, poet, novelist and prominent Freemason Rudyard Kipling in one of his best short stories "In the interests of the Brethren". As a twenty-year-old journalist on the Civil and Military Gazette in Lahore, Kipling was initiated in 1886 into what he would describe as "an Indian Mixed Lodge" [letter to the Worshipful Master of Friendship and Unity Lodge No.1271 Bradford-upon-Avon, 10 January 1931], Hope and Perseverance No. 782 in Lahore, in what is now Pakistan. He went on to say: *"I was entered by a Hindu, raised by a Mohammedan, and passed by an English Master, but never rose beyond the office of Secretary"*



## Newly appointed Assistant has first outing.....

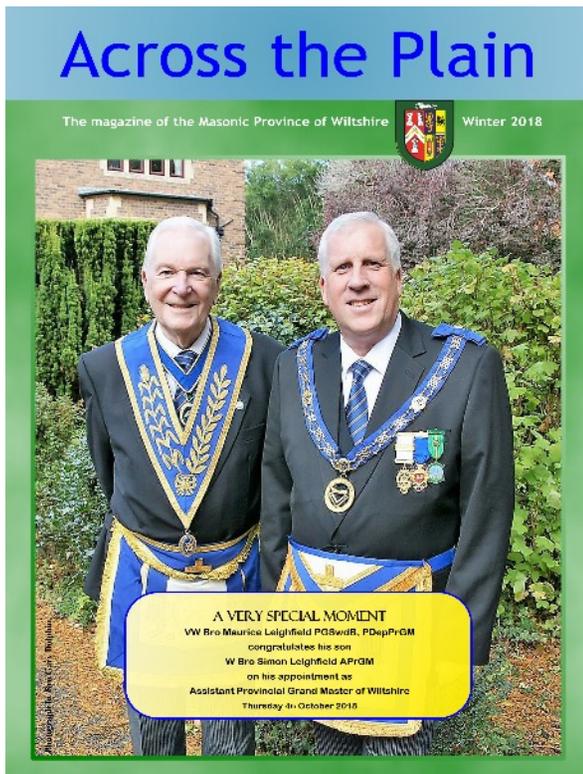


W Bro Simon Leighfield APRGM

Having been appointed, obligated and invested the new Assistant Provincial Grand Master Simon Leighfield (pictured) was soon 'in the thick of things' when he returned to Salisbury on Wednesday 10th October to preside at the Installation Meeting of Stonehenge Lodge No.6114. Simon was accompanied by a large number of Provincial officers for this, his first outing as a member of the 'chain gang'.

Your editor spoke with Simon after his first meeting and asked him whether he had enjoyed himself. Simon responded "I was quite nervous but I knew the team around me would be wishing me well and I really could feel those very positive vibes. My predecessor Stephen Bridge told me to 'just be yourself' and that's exactly what I did. I knew the words of the Address to the Master, but there are some words which can be cheeky little tongue twisters, thankfully I got past them. I'm sure the Director of Ceremonies for the evening, Barry Jordan-Davis, must have let out a sigh of relief when he escorted me back to my seat in the North East - I know I did."

**Editor's note:** Simon is in action again in the New Year when he visits Swindon on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> January to preside at the Installation meeting of Royal Sussex Lodge of Emulation No.355



### “FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION”

Our front cover shows proud father VW Bro Maurice Leighfield a Past Deputy Provincial Grand Master and his son W Bro Simon Leighfield (Gooch Lodge No.1295) - who was Invested as Assistant Provincial Grand Master at Provincial Grand Lodge on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018. (See Page 5).

(Photograph by Gary Dolphin)

### Important information.

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There will surely be no quibble with the statement that to be Installed as Master of a Lodge is the highest honour the Lodge can bestow on any of its members. Such an honour not only bestows privilege it also brings with it responsibilities, one of which is to represent the Lodge at various functions throughout the Province. One of the most important formal Masonic occasions is Provincial Grand Lodge, swiftly followed by the Masters' Dinner which this year is being held on **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> November** at The Bear Hotel, Devizes. A black tie, event to which partners are invited, as is the Immediate Past Master of the Lodge and his partner. The Provincial Grand Master is looking forward to welcoming Lodge Masters to this year's dinner when the guest speaker will be UGLE Communication Director Michael Baker.

As we fast approach Christmas when invitations will be extended to Christmas meetings followed by a festive board where turkey, stuffing, roast potatoes and chipolata sausages, followed by rich fruit puddings soaked in brandy and covered in cream or brandy butter will be in abundance, spare a thought for all those members who are trying to lose an inch around their waist line and yet don't want to seem unsociable by refusing that small slice of cake or the extra sliver of Stilton. I know of one Lodge where the dining secretary is keen to help improve the well being of members by introducing healthy options to the menu - best of luck with that I say!

Have you ever wondered what it's like to be interrogated by Jeremy Paxman or John Humphreys? I guess it could be scary especially if you are unprepared, and it's to avoid such a situation that UGLE have undertaken to train Masonic ambassadors in the 'dark art' of the media. Four Wiltshire Brethren have been selected to join PrGM Philip Bullock and receive detailed briefings on how to present themselves and Freemasonry to journalists and interviewers.

One of the thrills in being a Freemason is making other people happy - especially young people, and that's just what happened when Ian Lever and his friends took eleven youngsters from Swindon's Uplands School on a fishing trip to Walters Lake.



**Note from the editor:** Articles appearing in the Monthly Newsletter or Across the Plain have a number of purposes, to inform, to educate, to entertain and to challenge. Not every piece written will meet with universal approbation but neither are they intended to offend. The editor is delighted to receive your views on any article appearing in the Newsletter or Magazine.

*In a much-loved episode of 'Yes Minister', amid a swirl of rumours about their Minister's future, an anxious Bernard asks the formidable Sir Humphrey what will happen. Sir Humphrey lowers his newspaper, leans over confidentially to Bernard and in a quiet conspiratorial voice says: 'Bernard, can you keep a secret?'. 'Gosh, yes.' replies Bernard. Slowly returning to his newspaper Sir Humphrey murmurs, dismissively; 'And, Bernard, so can I'.*

In many Lodges the dining room curtains and doors are carefully closed for the Toasts and the staff hover outside waiting – impatiently - to bring in the coffee, clear the tables and go home! But why do we exclude them? They have heard that rhythmical crashing and banging for years. Is Masonic Fire really such a deep secret we must still preserve it?

Many have asked that question following the demonstration of Masonic Fire in the recent screened TV documentary approved by Grand Lodge and watched by Mason and non-Mason alike. If the aim of Grand Lodge was to soften the public view that we are a secret society then the continued exclusion of dining staff by lodges, might, to some members, appear illogical.

Let us remember though that Grand Lodge governs not only the inner ceremonial of a Masonic Lodge but also the 'After Proceedings' which it does through recommendations of its Board of General Purposes which are contained within the little blue booklet '*Information for the Guidance of the Craft*' which should be issued to all Freemasons. On page 29 (2017 Edition) there is a clear directive as to what constitutes correct form, stating - '*whilst there is no objection to drinking Masonic toasts in the presence of non-Masons...it is recommended that 'Fire' and the Tyler's toast – both of which have their origins in the Masonic Lectures - **should not be given on such occasions***'. Some interpret the term *non-Masons* to mean wives and partners or guests. However, it could be said, that if this is what the Board of General Purposes meant - they would have said as much. They didn't.

Why then is Masonic Fire so secret? Let us take it step by step. We commence 'Fire' by tracing out an equilateral triangle with our fingers, followed by a Masonry-related series of 'hand-claps' or bangs of a firing glass to the rhythm of an EA – *never* as a FC, by the way. This triangle is a Masonic symbol as are the EA knocks. 'Fire' therefore employs two Masonic symbols and is seemingly subject to the very clear guidance given above - specifically excluding the presence of non-Masons which may properly refer to waiting staff.

So if Grand Lodge can break the rules then why can't we? Well, bluntly, the rules are theirs to make or break and Great Queen Street can always 'open their doors on Freemasonry' as and when they think the publicity will be favourable. More importantly they are then able to tightly control the circumstances in which masonic secrets are to be revealed. However they cannot guarantee that individual lodges throughout the world will always take the same care for the ethos or traditions of Freemasonry should non-Masons or their local media be present. In private lodges we are therefore still required to keep Masonic symbols and ritual appropriately secure just in case a 'bad apple' or the media may take things out of context and misinterpret our cause.

In Wiltshire the PrGM has chosen to use his discretion. If all the members of the catering team are of long standing he would normally permit them to carry out their duties throughout the 'after-proceedings'. When the team is drawn from casual staff however he might then advise caution. (If in any doubt the PrGSec will most happily advise.) Equally, to avoid any issue it is probably best to err on the side of caution and 'close the door' before embarking on any Masonic related activity.

As loyal Freemasons we should continue to accept Grand Lodge's '*do not do as I do but do as I say*' concerning the need for secrecy but also – and as importantly – to understand exactly why.

## Did you know - festive board proceedings are covered by the Book of Constitutions

"If there is one event that I would urge every Freemason to attend it has to be the December Quarterly Communication meeting of Grand Lodge held at Freemasons' Hall in London. This year it's on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December at 12 noon." Philip Bullock PrGM



# The Grand Superintendent



As I sit at my PC I find myself looking at the keyboard and asking myself, just how difficult can it be to write one thousand words twice a year for the two editions of Across the Plain? The second thought I have is whether or not I can say something substantially different from the previous seven editions - and it was the realisation that this is my eighth magazine submission and readers have been subjected to over 7,000 words (soon to be 8,000) which made me realise the talent possessed by the writers who produce the many Masonic reference books which take up so much room in my study. I was also minded to be grateful for my computer and the ubiquitous genius of Microsoft WORD - can you imagine typing out 1,000 words on a typewriter or worse submitting my piece to the editor in long hand, believe me he would first have to decipher the text -

no easy task I can assure you. Yet in 1977 - not that long ago, Ken Olsen founder and head of Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) a major force in the world of computing said *"There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home"*. How spectacularly wrong he has proven to be - and how easy it is for us today, with the benefit of hindsight, to smile at his supposed foolishness. Although I suspect many Companions would have agreed with Ken Olsen had anyone said to them that one day they would have a personal computer, a mobile phone, the internet, an email address, Facebook and a Twitter account. Oh for the days when an Apple and Orange were just fruits and found in a Christmas stocking!

Today we take much of technology for granted and hardly blink an eyelid when someone tells us that if you Googled Wiltshire Freemasons you would get 72,700 results in 0.46 seconds, or better still, if you searched online for Wiltshire Royal Arch Masonry you would get 120,000 results in pretty much the same time. The fact is, that change in technology affecting our everyday lives, occurs and continues to occur with a speed which is unparalleled in human history.

However, change isn't only happening with technology. Our society is changing as well, to which some might say "and not for the better" and in many respects they may well be right, but such opinions will not halt the inexorable march of social change such as that which recently resulted in Supreme Grand Chapter issuing a document detailing a Masonic policy on the legal rights of the LGBT+ community and our obligations as an organisation.

In the September Monthly Newsletter the Provincial Grand Master wrote about change and quoted the words of George Bernard Shaw who wrote *"Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything"* I am in full agreement with Philip Bullock - Freemasonry is not immune to change, and if it chooses to ignore the changes taking place in society today it will wither on the vine and die, and that is not an exaggeration.

Contrary to popular opinion there have been a number of changes in seemingly 'unchanged' areas of both the Craft and Chapter; not least the subtle amendments made to the ceremonies of which we are so very proud. I was recently asked whether I could cite a major change which has occurred in the Royal Arch and immediately thought about the Lectures, which as some 'older' Companions will know have been the subject of change (usually a reduction in the amount of content): and also the decision to allow Brethren to become a Principal in a Chapter before they had been Master of a Craft Lodge, a change which occurred as recently as 2004.

For me the most exciting aspect of this time of change is that we are a part of it, we are intrinsically involved and should we choose to embrace it wholeheartedly it will be a vehicle for tremendous opportunities for the future. Talking of opportunities for the future, I do hope you have seen the great promotional images designed by Communication Officer Mark Fuller and featured on our Twitter site - they really are imaginative and eye catching. Mark is working very closely with his Craft counterpart Des Morgan and I feel sure the fruits of their endeavours will benefit Freemasonry in general and the Royal Arch in particular.

I am also delighted to offer my full support to the recent initiative announced by the Provincial Grand Master in which Royal Arch representatives will be encouraged to an active participation at Lodge meetings (see facing page). This is a unique development evolution of the Province and confirms the extremely close relationship between the Craft and the Holy Royal Arch.

## Are you interested in joining a local Chapter ?

[www.pglwilt.org.uk/royal-arch/royal-arch-news/](http://www.pglwilt.org.uk/royal-arch/royal-arch-news/)

“aim to make change happen”



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 very grateful and of which I am intensely protective.

The very close affinity between the two Orders has for many years resulted in the presence of a Royal Arch representative in every Craft Lodge. In some cases the representative scheme has not functioned as we would have liked it to, and in order to address this issue a Working Group consisting of Brethren and Companions of the Province have undertaken a detailed review and made a number of recommendations which the Provincial Grand Master and myself have agreed will be adopted.

- The Royal Arch (RA) Executive in consultation with the Lodge should have an input in the appointment of the RA representative, and the appointment should ideally be for a term of up to 5 years. Therefore the RA would like to agree the appointment with the Lodge.
- The Provincial Grand Master/Grand Superintendent's joint letter should be presented to all Master Masons in Open Lodge and whenever possible by the RA representative. It might be beneficial if this was done following on from them receiving their Grand Lodge Certificate or in Open Lodge at the next convenient meeting.
- At the earliest opportunity Brethren in our Lodges are to be made aware that there are four steps in Pure Antient Masonry.
- RA representatives to be invited to give a short presentation once a year to their Lodge of Instruction so the newer Brethren are better informed about the Order.
- The name and contact details of the RA representative to be recorded on the Lodge summons.
- If and when appropriate the RA representative could be invited to give a report during the meeting under a specific agenda item or under the agenda item *Any Other Masonic Business*.

Companions, the Craft and RA in the Province of Wiltshire continue to enjoy the affinity of Pure Antient Masonry and together with the Provincial Grand Master and our respective Executives I fully support and endorse the recommendations outlined. In order for the RA representative scheme to be successful I trust you will give the aforementioned recommendations your full attention and support.

*John*

**Talk to your Lodge Royal Arch Representative**

[www.pglwilts.org.uk/royal-arch/royal-arch-news/](http://www.pglwilts.org.uk/royal-arch/royal-arch-news/)

The current Tracing Boards of the three degrees are a significant survival from our Masonic past when designs were drawn on the floor. In a sense they epitomise a stage in the development of speculative Freemasonry, by way of accepted masonry, from the operative craft.

The Masonic Lectures speak of the 'Tracing Board', together with the Rough and Perfect Ashlars, as the three Immovable Jewels of the Lodge. Immovable because they lie open and immovable in the Lodge for the Brethren to moralise on.

Quite often, however, the Entered Apprentice remains little more than aware of the existence of the Tracing Board. The Fellowcraft may be a little more fortunate and have an opportunity to make a closer acquaintance with that of the Second Degree, whilst the Master Mason will have his attention briefly drawn to the Tracing Board of this Degree.

It is from the ceremony of consecrating a new lodge that the tracing board proclaims its ancestry. A rubric (direction for conduct of a divine service) in the ritual for this ceremony directs that the lodge room shall be set out 'in the usual manner, *with the Lodge Board in the centre, covered with cloth, and the Cornucopia (horn of plenty), wine and oil cups, and the censer (incense burning vessel), placed at the end.* In the course of the ceremony the consecrating elements are poured on the lodge or tracing board with the ritual and symbolic significance.

Over 200 years ago William Preston, in his *Illustrations of Masonry*, outlined a similar ceremony of consecration, but with one important difference in terms:

*'The Grand Master and his Officers . . . having taken their stations, and the lodge, which is placed in the centre, being covered with white satin, the ceremony of consecration commences.'*

Much has been written on the subject of 'the lodge', covered with white satin, to which there are many references in 18<sup>th</sup> century records, but it has been convincingly demonstrated that in all probability it was something which we would recognise today as a tracing board.

In a classic essay on 'The Lodge', Bro. RJ Meekren developed a theory that some time remote in Masonic history the primitive operative lodge was held **out of doors**. Echoes of this tradition are to be found in early speculative documents and some still persist in the Lectures. To the student of folklore, says Meekren, "the marking out of a ritual enclosure on the ground is a familiar and explainable practice." When lodges came to meet indoors, it would be natural for them to continue the customs which were used out of doors.

The 'enclosure' had therefore to be formed on the floor of the meeting room. This enclosure, the lodge, the 'oblong square' of the 18<sup>th</sup> century catechisms, in becoming a drawing on the floor, entered on a stage of development and revivification which was ultimately to give us our pictorial tracing boards today. And so the early drawings on the floors could be said to represent the actual lodge.

Reference to 'drawing the lodge' and the Tyler's duty in connection with this are a familiar feature of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century minutes. Of the nature of the diagram drawn on the floor we are less sure. Some old documents help, hinting at several variations in the 'form of the lodge', cruciform, triangular and rectangular. This is borne out by the illustrations given in many of the contemporary printed exposures of the Craft system.

The earliest reference to the use of tracing symbols and designs appears in the year 1727. Prior to this it seems to have been common practice for the Master or Tyler to draw, with chalk or Charcoal, on the Lodge floor, the design of the Degree being worked. Evidence suggests that a simple boundary in the shape of a square, rectangle (or "double square"), or a cross was drawn first, with various Masonic symbols often of a geometric type (e.g., circle, pentagram, etc.) drawn later, the former usually being drawn by the Tyler and the latter possibly by the Master. Later various symbolic objects, (such as a ladder, beehive, etc.) were added and sometimes drawings were interchangeable with physical objects.

I raised the question at one meeting, when I was giving this lecture, as to the significance of the beehive, and discovered, from a brother (*Bro. William Hughes*), that it was used on painted aprons dating from the 18<sup>th</sup>C and 19<sup>th</sup>C but seems to have been discontinued, at least in this country. (Editor's note: The Beehive was abandoned upon the Union of the two Grand Lodges in 1813). It is

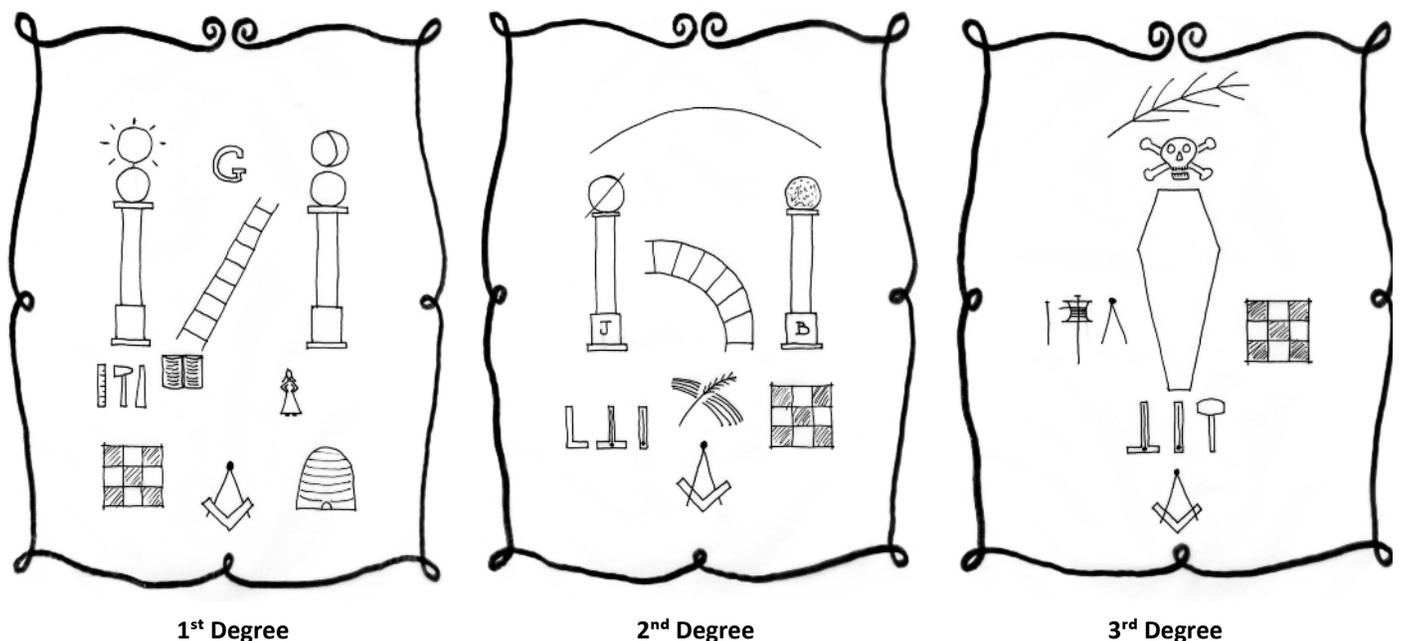
## Tracing boards continued.....

however shown on the Bath 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Tracing Board (Editor's note: Royal Cumberland Lodge No.41). I also discovered, after further research, that it is or was also a part of the American Master Mason Degree and the following description was taken from a monitor, or minute, of a Lodge.

*"the beehive is an emblem of industry and recommends the practice of that virtue to all created beings, from the highest seraph in the heavens to the lowest reptile of the dust. It teaches us that as we come into the world endowed as rational and intelligent beings, so we should ever be industrious ones, never sitting down contented while our fellow creatures around us are in want, when it is in our power to relieve them, without inconvenience to ourselves."*

When the lodge was closed it was the duty of the Initiate, or the candidate for that meeting, to erase these markings with a mop, symbolically to display his obligation of confidentiality. For convenience this was later etched in a framework of sand, but again on each occasion after closing the Lodge it was the duty of the Entered Apprentice or candidate to remove the design.

Again I have raised the question, when giving this lecture, as to what would have been drawn and Brother Steve Richards (Geoffrey Short Mark Lodge 971) kindly sent to me copies of the drawings that are still made today at his French Craft Lodge, with chalk on a blackboard on the floor, and wiped out after the meeting. In this case the JD starts the drawings when the Lodge is opened, after the JW's knocks. When opening in the second and third degrees it is the SD who draws the designs. It is the Deacons' responsibility to clean off the drawings once the Lodge has been closed. In this Lodge they have an additional Officer, Guardian of the Tracing Boards' whose duty it is to ensure that the Deacons draw the Tracing Board correctly.



## You want more.....

It was Oliver Twist who famously asked for more which in his case was a bowl of thin gruel. Freemasons throughout the ages have sought answers to their questions and today's Freemasons are just as keen to 'know more'. If you have enjoyed reading Peter's article on the Tracing Boards and want to know more about the symbology of the Lodge and of Freemasonry in general why not visit **The Preceptors' Page** on the Provincial website, where you will find short articles presented in an easy to read format.

At Provincial Grand Lodge the Provincial Grand Master Philip Bullock announced the appointment of David Davies DPrGM to oversee the provision of education in the Province and that Steve Lee will be responsible for implementing a programme of innovative, interesting and informative seminars and training sessions.

Steve said "I am delighted to be leading the team charged with helping Wiltshire Freemasons make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge - which is not just about learning ritual. It includes understanding who we are, and why we do what we do"

**Why are there four tassels pendant to the corners of the Lodge (carpet) ? See page 20**

# Provincial Grand Lodge .....



# The inside story ...



What did happen?"



You can see more Provincial Grand Lodge photographs taken by W Bro Simon Grove by visiting the website [www.pglwilts.org.uk](http://www.pglwilts.org.uk)

# The art of communication.....

It might seem odd to think that the Provincial Grand Master should need to undertake a media training course, but that is precisely what Philip Bullock has done. As part of the move to improve how Freemasons interact with the media UGLE, in conjunction with the Provinces has designated Brethren who will be the principal point of contact with journalists from the press, radio and television.

To make sure the newly appointed Provincial 'ambassadors' have the necessary skills to carry out their duties, the communication team at Freemasons' Hall have organised special training sessions which includes being filmed and recorded while being interviewed by a professional news presenter/interviewer.

Provincial Grand Master Philip Bullock was one of the first to participate in the programme and said "I am sure that the training provided by the communication team at UGLE will prove to be invaluable in my next encounter with a journalist"



Philip Bullock in a media interview training session.

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



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## Across the Plain

The newsletter of the Masonic Province of Wiltshire

# Rate Card 2018

Across the Plain is published twice a year. It is posted out to approximately 2,500 Wiltshire Freemasons and the widows of Freemasons during the months of June and November.

Space	Size depth x width in mm	Single Insertion rate	Double insertion rate
Back Cover	303 x 216	£340.00	£600.00
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When considering new applicants for membership Freemasons are faced with an increasing dilemma. Grand Lodge, while acknowledging that Freemasonry is not a religion or denomination of any religious persuasion, has emphasised that a first condition of membership is a belief in the Supreme Being. *'This is essential and admits of no compromise'*. To provide the correct VSL on which to make an Obligation a Candidate must also reveal some indication of Faith. However recent Gallup and YouGov polls have shown that the percentage of Britons believing in God (or 'Great Architect') is now only 28% - greater for women, fewer for men. If Freemasonry is to thrive it seemingly needs to draw on the morally sound and well motivated members within that non-believing 72% of the community – but how? Let's eavesdrop on a conversation which might just be familiar.

While you quietly enjoy a sip of Scottish nectar at the Lodge Bar (for medicinal purposes, of course) two rather senior Lodge members nearby strike up a casual conversation on this very topic. Sorely tempted to listen, you succumb.

**Charlie.** *I'm thinking of proposing my nephew into the Lodge,*

**Fred.** *Nice young chap from what I remember, happily married, in a good job, kids growing up... he'll make a good Mason. But does he believe in God, Charlie?.*

**Charlie.** *Doubt it. He's never been a 'God-Botherer, Just like other young men really - always preferred to kick a ball about on Sundays. Does it really matter these days?*

**Fred.** *Well the Book of Constitutions does say the first condition of membership is a belief in a Supreme Being and admits of no compromise. You can't argue with that surely? And a vague acceptance of 'perhaps there is something else' is not really enough, is it? Remember, the DC needs to know a man's Faith so the correct VSL can be in place for the Obligation.*

**Charlie.** *Come on, Fred, be realistic That Poll last year showed fewer than 30% of all Britons believe in God – for young men it was about 25%. It means 75% of us chaps now live in a secular society where God plays no part. Look. If Masonic membership continues dropping we'll have to reduce the number of Lodges in every Province and the per capita costs of Great Queen Street will go sky high. If we want Freemasonry to thrive and Lodge numbers to go up we can't possibly ignore the talent in the other 75% or so of the population. We just need to modify 'the God bit' a little to attract them.*

*Another thing, Fred. We want chaps to share our Masonic principles and live their lives by them – and have a thundering good time in the Lodge in the meanwhile! They can only see who we are and where we are going if they are actually in 'the Temple' watching the rituals. We simply have to get them through the Lodge door first. Is it not better that we encourage all 100% to believe in a Supreme Being by their life's end rather than just restrict it to the 25% who slip in at the start? Come on, Fred, you know it makes good sense'*

**Fred.** *Charlie, Freemasonry is not just a local pub social club, it's a world-wide system of morality. We start our evenings and our ritual with a prayer. We take our Obligations on a Holy book. We pray to Almighty God to keep us steadfast and we rely on The Great Architect finally to see us safely through to the Grand Lodge Above. God's response to the 75% non-believers might well be: 'Who are you? Have we met? Sorry, I only serve regular customers...' No. If a chap doesn't really believe in God in the first place he will just be play acting, mouthing prayers without believing in a single one. I won't call it blasphemy but in my book it's pretty close. There's another thing, Charlie. When Gallup asks them, only 25% of blokes say they believe in God. When the Lodge Committee asks them 100% of the chaps express a faith. How do you account for that eh? Has the Light miraculously dawned or was it just a teeny hint by their proposer of the answer required? If we are so proud of our three principles - Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth - what value do we place on Truth if we encourage a man to start out his Masonic career with a fudge? Answer me that!*

**Charlie.** *Ah well, Fred, perhaps we can agree on one thing. Grand Lodge is unlikely to change the Constitutions any time soon so we shall just have to let our own consciences do their work for them.*

Looking round they suddenly see you contemplating a last wee dram and say. *'Brother, you're on the Lodge Interviewing Committee. Tell me, are you a stickler for the Constitution's need for a belief in a Supreme Being or, to swell Lodge numbers, have you occasionally been tempted to turn a Nelsonian blind eye?'*

**WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

## 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. [pco@pglwilts.org.uk](mailto:pco@pglwilts.org.uk)

## Barry Cooper's Word Search

In this edition Barry asks do you know twenty TREES

### Acacia or Cassia

What do you know about the acacia shrub?

There is a good deal of confusion over the shrub associated with the discovery of Hiram's grave but it is most probable that it would have been Cassia and not Acacia. Prichard's *Masonry Dissected* and Anderson's 1738 Constitutions both mention Cassia rather than Acacia in relation to the grave.

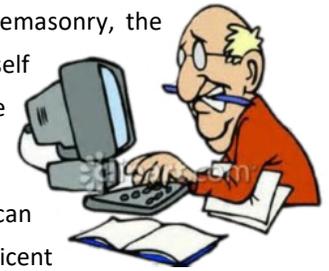
We cannot be precise as to when the change began but at the Union of 1813 it was settled that Acacia should be the word for ritual use and, eventually, Cassia was no more.

It is worth mentioning that Acacia is the Shittah (plural Shittim) of Exodus 25:10, the wood from which the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle were constructed.

**(ANSWERS TO QUIZ ON PAGE 20)**

## The Provincial Grand Master replies to your question:

**Q.** I want to introduce a friend of mine to Freemasonry, the problem is that I am only an Entered Apprentice myself and I'm not sure whether I'm allowed to propose anyone yet. Is there a rule I need to follow?



**A.** That really is a very good question and I can understand why a new member may feel slightly reticent about introducing a friend to Freemasonry. But let me urge you to put any concerns you may have to one side as you are perfectly free to propose a friend or relative to your Lodge. The issue of the time you have been a Freemason is immaterial with the only consideration being the suitability of your candidate.

Recently Deputy Provincial Grand Master David Davies has launched the Members Pathway, a UGLE inspired initiative outlining what the Province considers to be a 'best practice' model for recruitment of new Freemasons. You can view the 11 steps of The Members Pathway programme on the Provincial website [www.pglwilts.org.uk](http://www.pglwilts.org.uk) Please do take the time to research what The Members Pathway has to offer - I am sure you will be pleasantly surprised.

Should you introduce a friend to your Lodge don't be surprised or offended if other members conduct exploratory meetings with 'your friend' - it is sensible that more senior Freemasons take the lead in processing any application. One of the greatest privileges afforded to a Brother is having their name on the Form P (Proposal Form) as either the Proposer or Seconder - I hope your name will feature.

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

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

Many Brethren take the view that the after-proceedings are an essential part of a Lodge's meeting. From an historical point of view they are undoubtedly right, since in the eighteenth century the ceremonies themselves were very short and much the greater part of the Lodge's work was carried on at table, in the form of Lectures worked in catechistical form, that is by way of question and answer. What cannot be denied is that one of the most enjoyable aspects of Freemasonry is the opportunity to renew old acquaintances and make new friends, and one of the places such friendships are formed is at the festive board or supper table.

However it occurs to me that very little time is ever taken to explain to new Masons the etiquette and protocols which in some way govern this aspect of Freemasonry. Is it any wonder that occasionally a new Brother appears shell shocked and ill at ease when he is faced with calls to order, taking wine, grace – sung or spoken toasts, Masonic Fire and of course speeches. Could we and should we do more to guide newer Brethren and make what should be a joyous occasion even more pleasant? My top ten tips for a new Brother can be summed up as follows:-

1. One of the first rules of dining is to **never rearrange the table plan**. Remember the Brother responsible for all the dining arrangements has organised where Brethren should sit based on information provided to him, and by the need to accommodate everyone, especially visitors who may not know anyone in the Lodge. It is also the case that the dining steward will have advised the catering staff of any dietary requirements including where the Brother is sitting.
2. The one rule which everyone should adhere to, is to **be in your place**, standing behind your chair, before the Master is escorted into the dining room by the Director of Ceremonies, to be welcomed with a warm round of applause.
3. **Heckling is not appropriate** behaviour when a Brother is proposing or responding to a toast.
4. Unless in a real emergency, **leaving the dining table during the meal is discourteous** to your table companions and to the Master of the Lodge. Should you find it necessary to leave, always do so quietly and as inconspicuously as possible.
5. If you are asked to propose or respond to a toast **there is a format which should be used** and which has stood the test of time – *Worshipful Master, Brother Wardens, Grand Officers and Brethren* – do not fall into the trap of trying to recite Provincial Ranks etc, it's okay to simply include everyone in an all embracing opening line.
6. It's not everyone's forte to be a comedian, sometimes it's best left to the professionals. However, if you decide to tell a joke, always remember there are jokes which are more suited to a specific audience and **some jokes told at a festive board are totally unsuitable** – best to avoid embarrassing the Lodge, the guests or yourself and refrain from 'trying to be funny'.
7. Always **'Be Prepared'** just in case you are asked to propose or respond to a toast. You may be a visitor and asked to respond to the 'Visitors Toast' – the Brother who has been nominated to propose a toast may be unavoidably absent, and you might be asked to 'stand in' – if you would rather not, just say so, but if you feel able then seize the moment and do your very best.
8. So what should you say? Well if the meeting was a good one, say so, particularly mention an officer who did a great job, compliment a candidate on their performance, and if you want to be sure of a return invite **don't forget to tell the Master what a wonderful job he did!** If the meeting wasn't particularly special, and not every one is – simply restrict your comments to the good things, after all you can be sure everyone who took part did their very best.
9. Probably the best bit of advice you can be given with regard to proposing or responding to a toast is to **be as brief as possible** while saying just enough to please your audience. There are no prizes for being verbose.
10. Finally, the festive board is **an opportunity to meet Brethren from other Lodges**, even other Provinces and Constitutions. It is not uncommon for the festive board to be the occasion when a kindly Brother invites you to be a future guest at his Lodge, out of such contacts are lasting lifelong friendships made. Whatever else you do remember to enjoy the festive

**Did you know - Rule 115 BoC requires a Brother who wishes to be Master of more than one Lodge at a time to obtain a dispensation, which must be granted by the Grand Master, except when the Lodges are in the same Province. The dispensation authorises the Installation and not the election (see Rule 109) and can only be granted after the Brother has been Installed in the Chair of one Lodge and elected to the Chair of the other. A dispensation is hardly ever refused for a second Chair and virtually never granted for a third. By the way, the fee for a dispensation is paid for by the second Lodge.**

In this the fourth and final part of '1717 - DECODING THE EPOCH', the author will present the case for the selection of the date chosen for the formal launch of Freemasonry.

'Three (3) steps (parts) to initiate the journey and identify the quest – the fourth to confirm the path to be taken.'

In our increasingly busy lives, the date for a special event is usually chosen for its convenience. We may even defer an anniversary date to a day which will suit the majority of those wishing or being invited to attend. The social status of our founders would however have enabled them to pick a date in advance without needing to consider its convenience.

The first three parts of 'Decoding the Epoch' have prepared the way for this final part which presents the hypothesis that both the venue and the date of the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 1717 were deliberately chosen. It started in the deserts of Egypt, the knowledge obtained by the Knights Templar during their time in the Holy Land and the rising status of science over the church.

The inspiration for this research came from the author's mother lodge, Gooch Lodge 1295 meeting in Swindon. While preparing a presentation, it was soon realised that within the context of the 300-year anniversary, the Gooch Lodge number of 1295 was significant.

There are three main forms of numerology; Pythagorean, Chaldean and Kabbalah. Of the first two, the Chaldean system is considered by many to be more accurate but is not as widely used. This is probably because the chart is not as easy to use as the simpler Pythagorean chart. Numerology requires that, except for certain values (e.g. Chaldean 9 and Pythagorean 11, 22 and 33), all other numbers are reduced to a single value.

Pythagorean Table									Chaldean Table							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	A	B	C	D	E	U	O	F
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	I	K	G	M	H	V	Z	P
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z		J	R	L	T	N	W		
									Q		S		X			
									Y							

The number 9 is not present in the Chaldean chart. This is because the number 9 is considered sacred, however the reduction of a multi-digit number to the value of 9 is permitted e.g. 36 (3 + 6) = 9. Could this be a reason why a first throw of 9 in the Game of Goose immediately advances the player to square 53?

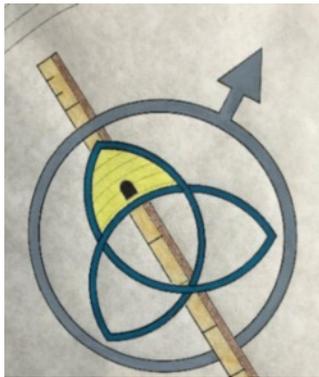
And so, to Gooch Lodge 1295. The sum of (1 + 2 + 9 + 5) is 17. The further significance of 17 is that 1 + 7 is 8, a number also created by adding 5 + 3 (53). Further reference to the Game of Goose?

In science we seek to confirm our initial observations by looking for a method(s) of validation. The century was 17, the year was 17 so what else would yield this result. The answer lay in the analysis of the month – June – and the day. It is known that John the Baptist was a significant figure to the Knights Templar and that the 24<sup>th</sup> of June is widely regarded as his birthday.

Using the Chaldean chart, the value for June (1 + 6 + 5 + 5) is 17. We now have the year 1717 and the month of June with a value of 17. The sum of the three (3) values (1 + 7 + 1 + 7 + 1 + 7) is 24, the same value as the day. The sum of the two values (2 + 4 + 2 + 4) is 12, which is further reduced (1 + 2) to 3.

The significance of the number 3 is well documented. The significance of having three 17's was particularly significant - but first an introduction to the Vesica Piscis is required. This iconic shape is formed by the intersection of two circles having the same radius, centred on each other. It appears in the first proposition of Euclid's Elements where it forms the first step in creating an equilateral triangle. The ratio of the height of the Vesica Piscis to the width across its centre is the square root of 3 (265:153).

*Did you know that Rule 172 prescribes an interval between degrees of four weeks, and a ceremony carried out in contravention of the Rule is void. If a dispensation is not granted to correct an error, the ceremony must be carried out again. The most common causes of a breach of the Rule are the incidence of a public holiday and the 'farming out of a ceremony' - Be aware.*



The first 17 numbers when added = 153, the second value of the ratio 265:153. Three Vesica Piscis (3 x 17) form the Triquetra (the basic 'Celtic Knot') which originally meant 'triangle'. In Christian Tradition, it is a sign of the Trinity, but another interpretation is that it represents the father, mother and child.

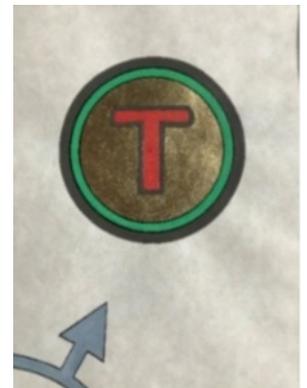
The image shows a beehive embedded within a Triquetra, itself contained in a circle (the Alchemy symbol for the male, Iron and Mars) rotating on an axis, the 24-inch gauge. It represents the birth of a brotherhood (the male Child) from the union of the Mother (ancient wisdom) and the Father (the founders). Perfectly formed from the shape of the Vesica Piscis, the beehive is an ancient Masonic symbol representing the working lodge. The beehive teaches us that:

'as we are born into the world rational and intelligent beings, so ought we also to be industrious ones, and not stand idly by or gaze with listless indifference on even the meanest of our fellow creatures in a state of distress if it is our power to help them'.

A simpler version of this teaching is presented in the EA working tools, so why in recent times was the symbol of the beehive dropped? (Editor's note: The beehive, was abandoned at the Union of the two Grand Lodges in 1813)

Hidden in the image above is a cross (X) formed by the 24-inch gauge, the arrow of the male symbol and the lower Vesica Piscis. The arrow points to the letter 'T'. This is enclosed within brown (stability, structure and support) and green (balance, harmony and growth) circles and is highlighted with Gold, a symbol of divinity.

The letter 'T' represents the iconic letter 'G' when converted using the Atbash Cipher. 'G' (Gimel) is the third letter of the Hebrew alphabet and therefore has a numerology value of 3. In mystical teachings it represents stability and in Jewish teaching, the word is said to stand for three things: Torah, work (prayer) and acts of loving kindness – core values.



Again in science we try to prove our initial results/findings by looking at the data using alternative methods. This seemed difficult at first until the second value of the ration 265:153 was considered. How many consecutive numbers would need to be added together to yield 265. While not an exact value, 265 falls between 22 (253) and 23 (276) (mean 264.5) – which when rounded is 265. Within the context of this part 4 of '1717 - DECODING THE EPOCH', it represents the year 1723, a date which many consider is the true launch date of modern Freemasonry.

And so, our journey together is complete. This series of articles may have failed to convince you the reader that literally taken, the 'Goose and Gridiron' was nothing more than an appropriately named eating house and that the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 1717 was simply a date convenient to all. Many readers have asked whether 'our founders' would have given so much thought to the date. My response is quite unequivocal – I believe that they did. They had the knowledge and the means and opportunity to expose that knowledge, albeit by allegory and illustrated by symbols. Maybe the proper question to be asked should be - how much of their knowledge have we forgotten or lost and how might our own lives be changed if it were to be rediscovered?



Veronica Manning was very nearly 'lost for words' at a recent event. Following some meticulous, and it has to be said, ingenious, planning by her very dear friend Sylvia Sutton, ably assisted by Brian Vines, a very special tribute lunch was held in her honour at Calne Masonic Hall. Attended by the Provincial Grand Master and Sally Bullock; Veronica, her daughter, and son-in-law were warmly welcomed by a host of her many friends. During the course of the luncheon Veronica who by now was wearing her Chairman's collarette of office was treated to a retrospect of the past 16 years. The story was related to the guests by Andy Bell, who with his wife Karen was instrumental in setting up the Wiltshire Masonic Widows Association. John King who was appointed Provincial Almoner in 2006 paid his own sincere tribute to the work of this "remarkable lady who has overseen and nurtured the well being of the Chippenham branch"



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The four tassels are said to remind us of the four cardinal virtues, namely temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice

## Barry Cooper's

Quiz Answers  
From page 18

LARCH	ACACIA
APPLE	FIR
ELM	LIME
ROWAN	MAPLE
PALM	PINE
PLUM	SYCAMORE
BIRCH	HOLLY
CHESTNUT	OAK
BEECH	ALMOND
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