



In touch > On line

The newsletter for Wiltshire Freemasons

*But give me holly, bold and jolly, Honest, prickly, shining holly;
Pluck me holly leaf and berry, For the day when I make merry.*



DECEMBER
2021

Wiltshire
Freemasons

December's chill wind heralds winter....



One of my favourite pieces of seasonal music is the evocative 'In the Bleak Mid Winter' written by Christina Rossetti as a poem but more commonly performed as a Christmas carol. The poem was published, under the title 'A Christmas Carol.' The composer Gustav Holst of 'The Planets' fame composed a setting of Rossetti's words (titled "Cranham") which is sung throughout the world. However, it is Harold Darke's 1909 composition which is widely performed by choirs, and in popular polls is regularly named as one of the best Christmas carols of all time. I thought it right, given the time of year, to use another verse of a poem by Rossetti to remind us that Christmas is only a few short weeks away.

Sadly, the most recent announcement by the Government has cast a dark shadow and it now looks as though Christmas 2021 will not be as anticipated. A new variant of the Coronavirus which has been called Omicron has been found in the UK, and on Friday 27 November it was declared to be in the same category as the Delta variant, which has caused waves of infection to sweep across the globe, forcing several European countries to re-enter lockdown. As a result the Prime Minister has announced a number of intermediate measures which are designed to restrict the spread of Omicron; one of which is that face coverings will be mandatory in shops and on public transport in England from Tuesday 30 November. The government has said this change will remain of force for three weeks. The wearing of face masks is **not** mandatory in a Freemason's Lodge. Should the rules change the Province will advise Lodge secretaries as quickly as possible. However, I wish to repeat my previous advice, which is that if any member feels uncomfortable about attending meetings during these trying times, they should stay at home and return to Lodge when they feel confident to do so.

On a brighter note I am looking forward to viewing the Christmas 2021 video from Corsham Lodge No.6616. I am told that rehearsals and filming has continued apace with director John Deane revealing his Alfred Hitchcock, and Stephen Spielberg producer skills. I am sure that together with Tom Snell's nifty camera work the video will be a huge success.

I was joined by a good number of Wiltshire Brethren when we had the immense pleasure of attending the Installation meeting of St Patrick's Lodge No.295 (IC). The Lodge is currently meeting at Warminster where the Royal Dragoon Guards are based.

On Wednesday 8th December I will be joined by a number of Brethren at the Christmas QC meeting at Freemasons' Hall in London. This meeting is always well attended and I anticipate this year being no exception. I often wonder how much notice is taken of the Ancient Charges, which every Master gives his 'unqualified assent' - in particular No.12. For those who can't remember, it is the clause which reads - "You promise a regular attendance on the Communications and Committees of the Grand Lodge." A promise made, but seldom kept.

After Christmas comes the New Year, I wonder if Masters in Office might take time to reflect on the promises they make prior to Installation into the Chair of the Lodge.



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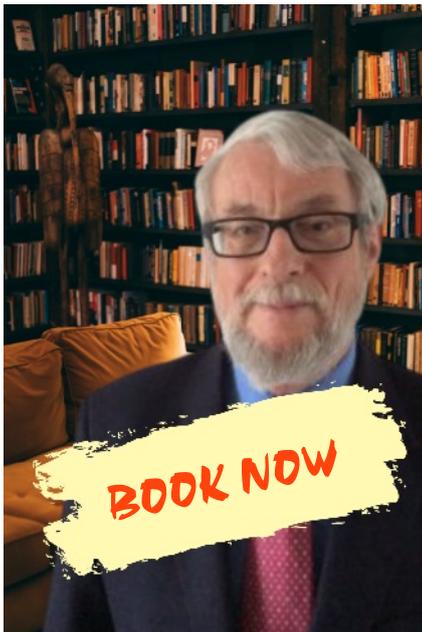
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A few more days to book a place....

The traditional host for the Prestonian Lecture, Methuen Lodge No.8692, has joined forces with Vastern Lodge No.8977 and invited W Bro Dr John Wade, the lecturer of 2009, to once again visit Wiltshire on **Sunday 5th December at 7.00pm**. This event will take place using ZOOM and the link is available from pcowiltshire@gmail.com

Dr Wade will not be reprising his 2009 lecture (it was titled 'Go and do thou likewise') but will tell us what it means to be a Prestonian Lecturer.



Methuen Lodge No.8692
Vastern Lodge No.8977

Invite you to meet

Dr. John Wade PAGDC
Prestonian Lecturer 2009

Being a Prestonian Lecturer

SUNDAY 5th DECEMBER
7.00pm

Contact - pcowiltshire@gmail.com

Thank you to all Lodge Treasurers....

Who would be a treasurer? It's an okay role until that moment when you have to advise the Lodge of an increase in subscriptions, or present the accounts to the Brethren. Every Lodge owes a debt of gratitude to the treasurer, one of only three officers elected by the Lodge. But here's a question to tax the most agile of brains, 'What are the duties of a treasurer, and where can I find a comprehensive explanation of them in the Book of Constitutions?'



The answer can be found under Rule 153 in the BoC. Fifty years ago Rule 153 consisted of a single clause, today there are five clauses; evidence if needed, to the ever changing role of this important office.

One of the questions frequently asked by the newly elected Treasurer is with regard to accounts held by the Charity Steward, and the Lodge Almoner. Do these funds come under the same rules as those governing the Treasurer? The answer quite simply is 'Yes they do' - Rule 153 (e) makes it clear that "The same procedure of annual accounts, audit and presentation to members of the Lodge shall be followed in relation to **any other funds** maintained by or in connection with the Lodge."



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Fiat Lux raise £800 for Poppy Appeal....



It is traditional for Fiat Lux Lodge No.9773 to invite partners and guests to a White Table at their November meeting. It also a custom of the Lodge to donate all monies raised at the meeting to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. This year was no different.

Following Lodge business and after closing the meeting, ladies and other guests were treated to a talk by Bro John Merrett on the history of Devises Lodges. This was followed by an excellent lunch.

The Lodge raised the amazing total of £400 which was further enhanced by Kevin Toft, the County Standard Bearer, and Secretary of the Seend Branch of the Royal British Legion, whose company has a policy of match funding donations. Picture shows Bro Steve O'Shea presenting a cheque to Kevin Toft.

Interviewing potential members....

I'm sure we can all remember the first time we appeared in front of a Lodge committee. Almost certainly it was not long after a zealous Brother persuaded you to sign your name on the ubiquitous Form P thus starting your journey into



Ancient Free and Accepted Masonry. For some the moment will be indelibly printed on their minds, but not necessarily for the right reasons. Thankfully, today interviewing committees are generally smaller and less intimidating, although it should be said, they are no less effective as a result. In fact some might argue that small really is beautiful when it comes to the composition of a committee. The secret is not in the size of the panel, but in the degree of professionalism each member brings to the table. Is your Lodge still using six or more members to interview a prospective candidate? Perhaps, now might be a good time to review your Lodge policy and adopt the new Pathway guidelines.

Wear a mask....

Following the government announcement that the wearing of face masks is to be mandatory in shops and on public transport, and in other designated spaces, the UGLE has issued guidance for Masonic meetings. As from Tuesday 30 November the wearing of face masks in Lodge meetings is **recommended** unless the Brother is exempt. The Provincial Grand Master concurs with this advice, and asks that Brethren adhere to the guidance as issued.

Members are still encouraged to undertake a lateral flow test, available free from NHS Test and Trace, prior to attending any Masonic meeting.



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An event to look forward to.....

Planned for 2021 but delayed by Covid, **Open To The Skies** is an open air concert featuring the Central Band of The Royal Air Force, and is being held at Bowood House & Gardens (between Calne and Chippenham) on Sunday 24 July 2022. **Teddies For Loving Care (Wiltshire)**, Julia's House, and Wiltshire Air Ambulance are among the nominated charities who will benefit from the concert. Wiltshire Freemasons, their families and friends are being given the opportunity to buy discounted tickets up until 31 January 2022.



OPEN TO THE SKIES at BOWOOD House & Gardens
SUNDAY 24 JULY 2022

- THE CENTRAL BAND OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE
by kind permission of the Air Force Board of the Defence Council
- BATTLE OF BRITAIN MEMORIAL FLIGHT
Subject to weather conditions
- RAF FALCONS PARACHUTE DISPLAY TEAM
- FIREWORK DISPLAY

BUY TICKETS FROM
www.opentotheskies.co.uk



Gooch Lodge No.1295

A busy day for Lodge Charity Steward Jeremy Barker when he visited both Swindon Womens' Aid and the Phoenix Enterprise Works to present cheques each for £500 on behalf of the Lodge.

The members of Gooch Lodge No.1295 have a long standing tradition in supporting both organisations, and Jeremy's visit was welcomed by Charlotte Gibbon from Swindon Womens' Aid (pic R), and Brian Mildenhall from Phoenix Enterprise Works.

WM Stephen Halliday said: "Gooch Lodge members are great supporters of local charities, and we are once again pleased to help Phoenix, and SWA."



WILTSHIRE FREEMASONS



Provincial Officers' Dinner

Wives and
Partners

05
02
22



The Corn Exchange - Devizes

Saturday 5 February 2022 at 7.30pm

Guest speaker: Professor Allan Johns

Foster Telford I 15 Wessex Road I Bulbridge I Wilton I SP2 0LW

E.mail: foster-telford@outlook.com