



APRIL 2026

Sorting fact from fiction and understanding Freemasonry...



John Reid

As I scan the pages of InTouch>OnLine I'm sure I'm not alone in looking for the April Fools spoof feeling sure the editor has planted something for our readers to find.

In today's world recognising what is fact and what is fiction has become incredibly difficult and I for one occasionally have difficulty in distinguishing the difference; even the most far reaching and implausible story or comment could actually be true or contain just enough truth to cause me to stop and think. I don't believe I'm alone.

Freemasonry has for many years been assailed with stories ranging from the absurd to the ridiculous and it's often the most outrageous error that garners the most attention. I'm not going to recite them nor attempt to counter them as my experience is that any defence simply gives Freemasonry's detractors even more opportunity to make egregious statements that bear little resemblance to who we are, what we do and seek to undermine our fraternity and the principles by which we act and abide.

At a recent meeting a much respected colleague and neighbouring Provincial Grand Master spoke eloquently about the need to embrace the intellectual element of Freemasonry, something with which many of our members would agree; after all the third of the Antient Charges reminds us that *"A Lodge is a place where free-masons assemble to work and to instruct and improve themselves in the mysteries of the antient science."*

I often remind myself that Speculative Freemasonry is simply *a system of morality* by which every Freemason should live their life. That the system is veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols doesn't mean it's hidden from view or hard to deduce, rather it suggests that for the diligent Freemasons its' there to be found and simple to understand. Just like the parables of the New Testament the allegorical stories in Freemasonry serve to reveal mysteries to the Brother seeking to make a daily advancement while concealing the truth from the cowan and intruder. In this sense the allegorical stories are a mystery revealed and a truth concealed.

To the individual Freemason a strong belief in the principles and ethos that identify us, Integrity, Respect, Friendship, and Service is essential, as is the recognition that contributing to society is not something exclusive or unique to Freemasonry, but it is central to it. Society is strengthened by those values, and they are what Freemasonry stands for.

So, for me it is clear that a combination of the practical and the intellectual is required if we are to experience the full Masonic journey of discovery. Building Together, recognising the special indissoluble link and relationship between the Craft and the Royal Arch is an essential part of the journey every Freemason is undertaking; it is my hope that the many Wiltshire Freemason ranged under its banner will come to appreciate the value of completing their journey in pure antient Masonry and experience the joy of being Exalted into the Royal Arch. It's certainly an opportunity to Discover More.

One of the greatest privileges and pleasures of being the Provincial Grand Master is that I get the opportunity to thank Members of the Province with the award of Provincial Grand Rank. This year a number of new faces will join the Active Team, I am delighted to welcome them and look forward to their participation in the Installation Meetings and their regular attendance at special events especially **Carols at Christmas on Sunday 20th December**. I'm also pleased to be able to confirm the appointment of the two Provincial Wardens for the new Masonic year as well as a new Assistant Provincial Grand Master - for more details see page 3.



In Touch > On Line

The newsletter for all Wiltshire Freemasons



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INTRODUCING: THE ONE JOURNEY STRIPES...

In a move reflecting the continued alignment of the Craft and Royal Arch, the new 'One Journey' striped trousers have been introduced. Designed to symbolise unity across the two orders, these vibrant stripes blend tradition with a more contemporary expression of Freemasonry.

Worn with standard morning dress, the trousers offer a subtle yet striking way to reflect your place within the wider Masonic journey. The colours represent harmony, progression, and shared purpose, while sitting neatly beneath the apron.

Suitable for meetings of both the Craft and Royal Arch, they provide a bold way to show pride and individuality while maintaining that all important of concepts - tradition.

Available now from Freemasons' Hall



Thank you Graham...

The late Graham Waller was Charity Steward of Vastern Lodge No.8977, on his death the Brethren were sorting through his regalia case when they came across an envelope marked 'TLC' containing £50. It was typically characteristic of Graham to make sure every penny he collected was carefully allocated and Teddies For Loving Care (Wiltshire) is so grateful to receive the donation.

If you are thinking of a charity or good cause that would value your support please spare a thought for Wiltshire's very own **Teddies For Loving Care** and make a donation today. Thank you.



Promotions and Appointments...

The Provincial Grand Master RW Bro John Reid has announced the appointment of the two Provincial Grand Wardens for 2026/27. Bro Steve Darlington of The Border lodge No.3129 will be Invested as the Senior Warden, and Bro Marcus Reeves of Lodge of Remembrance No.4037 will be Invested as Junior Warden. Steve and Marcus will be Invested at Provincial Grand Lodge on Thursday 1st October 2026. We congratulate Steve and Marcus on their appointment.

The Provincial Grand Master has also announced that Bro Mark Whitmarsh of Gooch Lodge No.1295 will be appointed and Invested as the Assistant Provincial Grand Master. Mark will succeed Bro Steve Lee who will have completed a two year tenure in office. In making the new appointment the provincial Grand Master thanked Steve for his service to the Province and wished him the very best in his continuing role as Provincial Grand Master of Mark Master Masons for Wiltshire. Mark will be Invested at Provincial Grand Lodge on Thursday 1st October 2026.

The Provincial Grand Secretary has notified all Brethren being Promoted and receiving a First Appointment in Provincial Grand Rank. Responses to the Provincial Secretary are required to be returned by Monday 1st May.

The Border Lodge No.3129...

Another year ... another 10 mile march in support of Combat Stress. Bro Rick Whitehead and Bro John Crozier (aided and abetted by Rae and Mags) organised this year's Border Lodge 'March for March'. Their initial target was £300 and they are currently well over £700. Helping serving soldiers remain functioning members of society – particularly once they are looking at transitioning into the civilian environment is part of the role of Combat Stress and the 'March for March' is The Border Lodge No.3129 way to help make a difference. P.S. We think Rick was in charge of the bar. Well done The Border Team.





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Vastern Lodge No.8977...

Members of Vastern Lodge No.8977 are always looking for ways to connect with the local community whether that be with Guiding or supporting a worthy cause such as Swindon's Great Western Hospital. On 25th March 2026 WBro Mike Bracken visited the hospital and presented nursing staff on the children's ward with a superb collection of soft toys.

These we gratefully received by the team on the ward and will hopefully undoubtedly make a real difference to those children on or visiting the ward over the coming weeks and months.

This was the second year the Lodge has donated soft toys to the children's ward at the GWH and judging by the happy smiling faces we imagine Mike will be encouraging Members of the Lodge to start collecting for next year. Well done Vastern Lodge.



Congratulations to Brian Carter...

The Provincial Grand Master is delighted to congratulate W Bro Brian Carter of St Aldhelm Lodge No.2888 who has received a promotion in Grand Rank to Past Junior Grand Deacon (PJGD). Many congratulations from your many friends in Wiltshire. Brian enjoyed a wonderful Masonic career in Hong Kong before moving to Malmesbury and joining St Aldhelm Lodge No.2888..



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Have you asked for your copy?

The Provincial Grand Master is also the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent which means he leads the two two principle elements of pure Antient Masonry; the Craft, and the Royal Arch. As part of the theme 'One Journey - One Organisation' John invites you to ask him for a copy of **Welcome Companion** an introduction to the Royal Arch.

The Royal Arch

Welcome Companion

A narrative for the 21st Century Freemason

"Ask me for a copy of Welcome Companion."



PROVINCIAL GRAND CHAPTER OF WILTSHIRE



Wiltshire Freemasons

One Journey • One Organisation



WILTSHIRE FREEMASONS



JOIN ALAN AND THE TEAM AS THEY HELP YOU NAVIGATE THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF FREEMASONRY

FINDING YOUR FEET

Masonic Hall | Yerbury Street | Trowbridge

SATURDAY 28th FEBRUARY 2026

BOOK ONLINE: <https://tinyurl.com/feet-26>

ALL COURSES ARE SUBJECT TO SUFFICIENT NUMBERS SIGNING UP TO A MODULE

COMPLETED



PREPARING FOR THE CHAIR

Swindon Masonic Centre | The Plantation

SATURDAY 21st MARCH 2026

BOOK ONLINE: <https://tinyurl.com/Chair-March-26>

ALL COURSES ARE SUBJECT TO SUFFICIENT NUMBERS SIGNING UP TO A MODULE

COMPLETED



PREPARING FOR THE CHAIR

Masonic Hall | Yerbury Street | Trowbridge | BA14 8DP

SATURDAY 25th APRIL 2026 - 10.00am until 12.00pm

BOOK ONLINE: <https://tinyurl.com/Chair-April-26>

ALL COURSES ARE SUBJECT TO SUFFICIENT NUMBERS SIGNING UP TO A MODULE



BUILDING TOGETHER

Attracting Members – Growing Freemasonry



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How many collars can you wear?

To answer this question you need to ask another

How many Offices can one Brother have?

Leaving aside the question as to why anyone would want to hold multiple offices in a Lodge, sometimes needs must. However, there are rules to be obeyed.

The rule in question is Rule 104 (a).

This rule sets out who the Regular and Additional Officers of a Lodge are and every Lodge Secretary should make sure they are aware of the difference.

The *regular* Officers are the Master, the two Wardens, a Treasurer, a Secretary, two Deacons, an Inner Guard, and a Tyler. That's nine Officers.

If the Brother holds a Regular Office, he can only hold **one** additional Office as well, and no more.

The *additional* Officers, are also appointed at the discretion of the Master, that is they are not required to be appointed by the Book of Constitutions; they are a Chaplain, A Director of Ceremonies, a Membership Officer, a Mentor, an Assistant Director of Ceremonies, an Organist, an Assistant Secretary, and a Steward or Stewards.

The Book of Constitutions is silent on whether a Brother can hold multiple additional offices. However, after receiving advice the answer is he can, but it is to be avoided if possible. What is clear is that a Brother **must** wear the collar and jewel of all the Offices he holds plus his Past Master's Collar or his Provincial Collar. (A Provincial Collar makes the Past Masters Collar redundant)

Finally, "Is there such a thing as an Immediate Past Master's Collar" to which the answer is **NO**. There is a Past Master's collar and jewel both of which are described and accounted for in the Book of Constitutions which as every Brother knows is the book to refer to as "*there is scarcely a case of difficulty in the Lodge in which this book will not set you right.*" The rule to be observed is Rule 264 and relates to Collars of Past Masters of private Lodges. All Past Masters, other than those who hold Provincial or Grand Rank must wear a collar of light blue ribbon, four inches wide, with silver braid a quarter of an inch wide in the centre. Appended to the collar is the jewel of a Past Master and the design must conform to that shown in plate No.32 in the Book of Constitutions (see Rule 250 BoC).

Never miss a word...



Have you had trouble following your Lodge or Chapter meeting? Help yourself and help the 2028 Festival by booking a hearing consultation with Reeds who will provide you with expert advice and guidance, while you contribute their normal fee (£85.00) to the 2028 Festival. Reeds Hearing Care cover everything to do with hearing, tinnitus, wax removal and can provide help, support and advice for all issues. Reeds is a professional, independent, family caring business based in Swindon. e.mail: reeds@reedsear.co.uk or text 07585525993.

WILTSHIRE FREEMASONS

Special **PROMOTIONS APPOINTMENTS**

<https://tinyurl.com/solomonsattire>



Provincial Dress
Apron and Collar
(lambskin)

£65

Buy online use code
and save 10%



Provincial undress
Apron and Collar
(lambskin)

£45

Buy online use code
and save 10%



Buy online

**SAVE 10% WITH CODE
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use code when placing order on-line