

Across the Plain

The magazine of Wiltshire Freemasons



Winter 2020

“Thank you David”



The Provincial Grand Master.....



It is my customary practice to use the writing of my winter article for Across the Plain as an opportunity to reflect and comment on the activities of the past year. I am sure you will agree that 2020 might well be regarded as Freemasonry's annus horribilis, a term made famous by Her Majesty The Queen when in 1992 the institution of monarchy was rocked by the collapse of three royal marriages, and a fire which destroyed more than a hundred rooms in Windsor Castle. Who among us, back in the early part of the year could possibly have predicted that an unknown and previously unheard of bug from the corona virus family would have such a devastating affect on the lives of so many people around the world, and especially in the United Kingdom? So it was that Covid-19 entered the vocabulary of not only the medical and scientific professions, but also that of every person across the globe. I think it true to say that it was probably the only thing that could have knocked Brexit off the front page of every newspaper in the land, and I am sure you will agree its effect has been both far ranging and far reaching, hardly any part of the world has remained untouched by its malignant power, and its lethal impact has placed the virus in the same category as the Spanish flu of 1918, Asian flu in 1957 and the Hong Kong flu of 1968. Sadly, many Freemasons have succumbed to the ravages of this insidious virus, and many more have suffered serious bouts of illness associated with the disease which has left them with what we now call 'long Covid'. I offer my sincere condolences to the families of those who have passed away.

However, despite the not insignificant problems and restrictions associated with the virus we have witnessed some quite incredible acts of kindness and a level of innovative thinking which I am assured follows the time honoured line of 'necessity being the mother of invention'. The desire to make things work, is I'm told an echo of the 'blitz spirit'. This determination to not be beaten has been epitomised in many ways, some of which have been mentioned in the Province's newsletter In touch > On line and on our social media sites, twitter and Facebook.

The Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) has been at the forefront in helping support a number of national and local charities which have experienced serious shortfalls in their income. In particular, against a background of increased domestic abuse and violence, funding has helped support the work of various Women's Aid groups

Charities in our own Province have greatly benefited through the generosity of the MCF with significant donations being made to SERV Wessex, Severn Freewheelers, and the Wiltshire Music Centre. SERV Wessex and Severn Freewheelers provide a critical service transporting blood and plasma products to major hospitals within the region and can be recognised by their distinctively liveried motor cycles.

Wiltshire Music Centre's Zone Club may seem an odd choice for funding support, but believe me they need and deserve our support for the work undertaken by the centre in running monthly music-making project for young adults aged 16+ with learning disabilities. These are brilliant sessions, where young people can create their own music, lyrics, dance and films. They are expertly supported by musicians, music therapists, film-makers and theatre practitioners. Whether it's rapping, singing, song-writing, music tech, conducting or drumming - Zone Clubbers always lead the way. I am delighted that Freemasons in Wiltshire have been so supportive of these three charities and I am sure when the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted we will be able to meet the charities for some media publicity.

One of the questions which is put to me by almost every Freemason I meet is "When will things return to normal?" I wish I knew. What I do feel, is that at the conclusion of this crisis there will be a 'new normal' in many respects very different to what we could call the previous normal, but nearer to reality than what we have experienced over the past ten months. I have been reading the articles from the editor in our monthly newsletter, and take some consolation from the fact that the three Pandemics he mentioned had a short life span; albeit each one left a trail of death and desolation. What forcibly struck me is that despite the awfulness of the three pandemics mentioned, the reality is that the nation came through them and prospered. We hope for a similar outcome.

Thank You David Davies

The past few months has enabled me to undertake a review of the six years since my appointment as Provincial Grand Master, and to set out a plan for the future. It was a very interesting exercise and one which I would heartily recommend, especially to those who have responsibility for the administration of the Lodge.

You will be aware of the changes to the Provincial Team which have been communicated by the Provincial Grand Secretary to all Lodge secretaries. One of the announcements was to advise the impending retirement of the Deputy Provincial Grand Master VW Brother David Davies, who will step down from office on Thursday 7th October 2021

This announcement affords me the opportunity to express the thanks of the Province to David for the substantial contribution he has made to the growth and vitality of our Province in the offices of Provincial Grand Secretary, and Deputy Provincial Grand Master. It also provides an opportunity for me to thank him for his friendship, and invaluable help during the past seven years I have had the privilege of working with him.

I am immensely grateful for his dedication on so many levels. I have benefited from his knowledge and profited from his wise counsel; equally I have witnessed his inexhaustible levels of enthusiasm, which has helped fuel the momentum our Province has achieved especially with the sustained membership growth enjoyed over the past few years. David has worked with Brother Steve Lee and his team directing the impressive highly acclaimed training workshops which have helped countless Brethren appreciate and enjoy their Freemasonry.

It was always so reassuring to know that with David alongside me, I was always confident that the launch of any new initiative or project would be implemented to the highest possible standard, on time and with the minimum of fuss.

Without doubt, one of the many things I shall miss will be his company. We have enjoyed many hours spent travelling to and from Provincial Grand Lodge meetings throughout the region. This time was never wasted, together we shared ideas and earnestly discussed the many initiatives which we truly hoped would be to the benefit of the Province we both love so dearly.

However, all things in life have a natural cycle, and inevitably the pages of history continue always to turn. David was very clear with regard to his intent to serve a single three year term as Deputy Provincial Grand Master, and when he stands down at the Provincial Grand Lodge meeting in October 2021 he will do so with the good wishes of everyone with whom he worked. David has also played an extremely important role in preparing the way for the new and exciting team which will be confirmed at Provincial Grand Lodge

Along with everyone in the Province of Wiltshire, I will be forever grateful to the Deputy Provincial Grand Master; for his amazing contribution, his impressive legacy will enable our Province to continue on course to grow its membership, and enable Brethren to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge

David, I am truly most grateful for all that you have contributed and my thanks also to your wife Marion, for her invaluable support.

Finally, I wish to thank each and everyone of you for the steadfast manner in which you have continued to support your Province during the past months. It is a bit of an understatement to say that it has not been an easy ten months, and as I am sure you are all aware, we are not yet out of the woods but we have been thrown a lifeline. The announcement that a vaccine for Covid-19 will be available in December is a cause for celebration, but it is not a license to lower our guard or relax our endeavours to manage the virus.

Sally and I wish you all a very happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year.



Provincial Appointments for 2021....

One of the privileges of being the Provincial Grand Master is being able to pleased to appoint and invest Brethren to Provincial Grand Rank and I am particularly pleased to be able to announce the following appointments of which many of you will already be aware of from the monthly **In touch > On line** newsletter. The promotions and appointment will take effect at Provincial Grand Lodge on Thursday 7th October 2021.

VW Bro David Davies: Deputy Provincial Grand Master VW Bro David Davies **PGSwdB** having been in office for four years, has expressed his wish to retire immediately prior to the annual meeting, and the Provincial Grand Master has been pleased to accede to David's request. RW Bro Philip Bullock in paying tribute to David's service said, "I have been very fortunate in having David as my deputy, he has been a great support, an honest critic, and a trusted friend. His work across the Province has been undertaken with consummate skill and little fanfare, which reflects the nature of the man."

W Bro Simon Leighfield: The Provincial Grand Master is pleased to announce that on Thursday 7th October 2021 he will appoint and invest W Bro Simon Leighfield APrGM as the 25th Deputy Provincial Grand Master of Wiltshire. The occasion of Simon's appointment will be exactly 30 years since his father VW Bro Maurice Leighfield was invested as Deputy Provincial Grand Master of Wiltshire in October 1991.

W Bro Phil Still: The Provincial Grand Master is pleased to announce that on Thursday 7th October 2021, he will appoint and invest W Bro Phil Still PrGSec as the 13th Assistant Provincial Grand Master of Wiltshire.

W Bro Rob Evans: The Provincial Grand Master is pleased to announce that on Thursday 7th October 2021, he will appoint and invest W Bro Rob Evans PrAGSec as the Provincial Grand Secretary.

I am sure you will join me in congratulating Simon, Phil and Rob as they look forward taking up their new offices.

Phil Still
Assistant Provincial
Grand Master



Rob Evans
Provincial Grand
Secretary



Simon Leighfield
Deputy Provincial
Grand Master

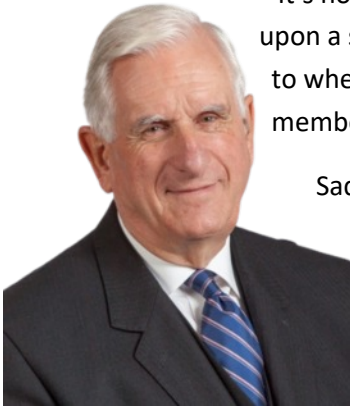


PROVINCIAL APPOINTMENTS

W I L T S H I R E F R E E M A S O N S

EFFECTIVE THURSDAY 7th OCTOBER 2021





It's no secret that the long term future of any membership dependent organisation is reliant upon a steady stream of new people joining its ranks. Whatever personal view we may hold as to where new members are to come from, we surely must accept the fact that Freemasonry is a membership organisation, and as such relies on new members to swell its ranks.

Sadly some of our members pass away as a result of illness or advancing years and we are reminded that "The wisest among us knows not how soon." Some of our members move away in a geographical sense, while others have grown apart in an emotional sense having perhaps become disenchanted with Freemasonry; and a very small number leave our ranks due to economic and social reasons. Every loss is hard to bear and has an affect not only on the Lodge but also the Province, and the wider family of Freemasonry. After all if there are no initiates to Craft Freemasonry this has an impact on the number of potential Exaltees available to the Holy Royal Arch. That, as one might say is not rocket science, simply a statement of the obvious. It is therefore vital that we not only stem the flow of leavers (where we can), but also take action to grow our membership with new entrants. Neither task is easy, but if we don't address them of one thing we can certainly be sure, and that is we won't have an organisation on which to build and what remains will become less attractive to join and will in all probability wither and die; something no one wants to happen.

In recent years the Province of Wiltshire has bucked the national trend with record numbers of men enquiring about Freemasonry, which has resulted in many of our Lodges conducting double Initiation ceremonies in order to welcome new members. It has also seen some Lodges holding emergency meetings either to Initiate of Pass a Brother. Covid-19 has put an unwelcome brake on such events but I was glad to note that before the second lockdown and subsequent suspension, and despite only being able to operate with the 'rule of six' some Lodges were embracing and employing the UGLE adaptations and conducting ceremonies .

We have over 90 candidates allocated to Lodges, and waiting to be initiated of which 31 have not yet completed Form Ps, with a large number having not yet been interviewed. There are also 9 gentlemen waiting to be allocated to a Lodge by the Divisional Officer, and a further 10 who have made membership enquiries in the last few weeks. It would be good if all the Form Ps could be completed and interviews could be carried out as soon as practicable as we could then more accurately assess the true number of potential initiates.

Part of my role as Divisional Officer Co-coordinator has been to review the way in which the Province manages membership and in particular new and prospective members. I am sure you will agree that keeping in touch with potential members during these particularly difficult days is very important, and that every effort should be made to maintain close contact and engage in regular communication with every person who has expressed an interest in becoming a Wiltshire Freemason. It is vitally important that we do everything we can to enhance the experience of the applicant, and to make them feel even more 'wanted'.

What I am very aware of is that Covid-19 has created a barrier to meeting new members and the rule of six is not conducive to making a new Brother feel 'at home' in a truncated meeting format. Consequently I am planning to hold a series of open ZOOM meetings for potential and possible candidates (who have completed their Form P) and their partners to meet and ASK ME ANYTHING. This forum will include an introduction which will feature a short history of Freemasonry in Wiltshire and an explanation of its governance. However, the main purpose of the meeting is to enable not only the potential candidate but also his partner to ask any questions they might have, and to receive answers to their questions.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank every secretary who has provided the essential detail which has enabled me to contact and invite potential and possible candidates to attend an **ASK ME ANYTHING** meeting.

"Life is all about growth and change. It's not static."

Clubs, Societies & Events....



The Sarsen Club has a new Chairman and Secretary. At their recent Annual Meeting David Little relinquished the post of interim chairman and handed over to Mitch Bryan (Royal Sussex Lodge of Emulation No.355). Mitch's previous role as secretary will now be undertaken by Alex Corbett (Harry C Preater Lodge No.8204).

Assistant Provincial Grand Master Simon Leighfield is the new President of the club, and Provincial Grand Master Philip Bullock becomes club Patron.

New social secretary Mike Boddy will be organising a number of social events 'post Covid -19' and looks forward to welcoming young Masons to join the Sarsen Club and have some fun.



WILTSHIRE FREEMASONS

The Provincial Communication Team

NEW FOR 2021

- guest speakers
- great subjects
- genuine debates

Contact: pcowiltshire@gmail.com

It's time to check the bike, and don the lycra....

And join the **WILTSHIRE MASONIC CYCLING CLUB**.

Whether you are a keen cycle rider or just a social cyclist who would like to meet other like minded Freemasons who share a passion for cycling.

Are you are interested in Swimming, Running, Triathlons, or just enjoying a leisurely social cycle? The Province's newest club could be just the ticket.

The **WILTSHIRE MASONIC CYCLING CLUB** is being run by Alan Colman and Alex Laird and they have just announced that a WMCC Facebook page has been created (just search for Wiltshire Masonic Cycling Club) and keep in touch with everything that's being planned.

Contact [Alan Colman](#) or [Alex Laird](#), who will be arranging guided rides visiting some of our Masonic Halls, and Lodge venues; and probably a coffee or pint along the way.



WMCC
WILTSHIRE MASONIC CYCLING CLUB



This month's cover says it all in three words
"Thank you David"

"The life so short, the craft so long to learn
Hippocrates

Important information.

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Just when we thought things were getting better.....

Along comes a second 'lockdown' and a letter from the Grand Master suspending Masonic activities until who knows when.

No I don't know about you, but frankly I'm getting fed up of this stop start regime, I just want some settled science to provide a settled form of life - is that too much to ask for, well seemingly it is, which means we have to muddle on for a few more months.

The good news, yes there is some, is that Pfizer has developed a vaccine, which at £12.50 a shot (you have to have two) appears good value for money. But don't get too excited as there will be a queue for the first batch, and the target group may not include you. So it's good news, and not so good news.

One bit of good news which doesn't come with any catch whatsoever is that Simon Leighfield (Gooch Lodge No.1295) will be the next Deputy Provincial Grand Master. Current Deputy, David Davies will be stepping down on 7th October 2021 which it has to be said was always his plan. I imagine David will celebrate his successful tenure with a bottle or two of superior red wine, and why not, he deserves it.

There were other important appointments announced and you can find further details on page 4 - hopefully as this is page 7 you had already seen the whole page article. We all wish David a happy retirement; Simon, best wishes as he follows his father in to the 'hot seat' - and Phil Still as he assumes the mantle of Assistant Provincial Grand Master.

I haven't forgotten soon to be Provincial Grand Secretary Rob Evans (Longleat Lodge No.1478, its just that it's a tough call as to whether one should congratulate or commiserate with Rob; on the one hand it's a great promotion, while on the other it's one of the toughest jobs in the Provincial team, and that's a fact as everyone who has held the office will confirm. Rob we are sure you'll do well, so it's definitely congratulations from all of us.

Finally, Christmas is just around the corner. Sadly, it won't be like any recent Christmas, especially if the Covid lockdown reverts to the rule of six. But it does mean you won't have to invite all those aunts, uncles and long lost cousins for drinks on Boxing Day - very cloud has a silver lining. All that remains if me to say, have a happy Christmas and thank you for supporting **Across the Plain**.

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



The Grand Superintendent



As I sit at home in front of a blank computer screen, my fingers poised over the keys, my brain struggling to decide which one to press first, I find myself wondering “How has it come to this?” This time last year I wrote of how the past year (2019) had been unprecedented in terms of Chapter activity, with Exaltations at record high levels and the general standard of meetings being of an exemplary nature. “ I concluded with a familiar refrain, wishing all Companions, health and happiness as we came to the end of one year and looked forward to the next. Little did any of us know what would transpire during the next few months.

Just three short months into 2020 the government imposed restrictions on our liberties and UGLE and Supreme Grand Chapter issued a notice advising of the suspension of all Masonic activity. If we didn't think the situation was serious, we did now.

A previously unheard of corona virus supplanted Brexit, Megxit, US elections and almost every other news story, not just in the United Kingdom, but across the world. A new word entered the medical lexicon, that word was Covid-19 where 'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus, 'D' for disease, and 19, the year it was first recognised. Covid-19 wasn't the only new word of which were to become familiar.

Within days of the New Year celebrations grim news forecast the arrival of the virus, and in March the recently appointed Prime Minister in a speech more redolent of wartime that spring 2020 announced that his government would be imposing 'lockdown' across the country. Many of us had never experienced an enforced lockdown backed up by legal powers and enforced by the police, to say it was a shock to the system would probably be a candidate for the understatement of the year. But with few exceptions the public at large complied with what they thought was a temporary situation - three weeks was the original plan, this quickly turned into six and then into twelve weeks. Would there ever be an end to it?

Well yes there was, well almost but not quite. The country moved into a tier structure and Freemasons (including our Chapters) were allowed to meet under the rule of six. Along with Philip Bullock, I was amazed at the ingenuity and the positivity of Masonic Hall committees, Brethren and Companions who worked so hard to make premises Covid secure, put in place measures to protect users, and generally set about creating an environment in which we could meet and practice an adapted form of Masonic ceremony. It wasn't perfect, and it wasn't exactly what we wanted, but it was something, and something really was better than nothing.

And then in a few short weeks another 'lockdown' was announced, followed by a notice of a second period of suspension of all Masonic activity. The lockdown will run from the 5th November until the 2nd December, at which point we will just have to wait and see what happens next.

I was still sat at my computer, still thinking what can I write when something I heard recently came into my thoughts. In the Book of Constitutions (I'm sure you are all acquainted with its 321 pages) there is a lovely phrase under **The General Heads Of The Charges Of A Freemason** which defines a Lodge, and its purpose. It goes on to say “and every Brother ought to belong to one” - something with which I am sure we all agree.

Just prior to the first lockdown the Pro Grand Master and Pro First Grand Principal Peter Lowndes expressed the view that every Master Mason should join the Holy Royal Arch, even to the point where he made it very clear that while he is not in any way against Craft members joining appendant Orders, far from it, he reiterated his firm belief that Royal Arch should be the first priority; and who am I to disagree?

A basic human instinct is to belong to something, and the need to belong motivates us to develop strong social relationships. These relationships are important to us physically, emotionally, and spiritually; they also improve the quality of our lives. Just as importantly they also provide us with a clear sense of identity and security.

Asks, do you feel you belong?



When we belong, we feel cared for and valued, we have someone to turn to for support when life becomes difficult. Psychologists generally agree that a link exists between a positive sense of belonging and our ability to function in the world around us. Strong social relationships provide us with a greater capacity to manage stress and anxiety, making them essential to our health and happiness.

Our need to belong is what drives us to seek out stable, long-lasting relationships with other people. The sort of relationship found in the Holy Royal Arch and Freemasonry in general, where by belonging to a group, we don't just feel as if we are a part of something bigger and more important than ourselves, we know it to be the case.

As we approach the time of the year when Lodges and Chapters ask their members to pay their annual subscription, one of the questions which might be asked, particularly as a result of the pandemic is whether or not it's worth renewing my membership. Part of the answer to the question will centre on what value you place on belonging to what we acknowledge to be an ancient and honourable institution; what value you place on the friendships you have made in Freemasonry, and whether you recognise the truth of the comments I have already made.

In his regular Question and Answer column, the Provincial Grand Master responds to a question about subscriptions in which he makes the very good point that membership of a Lodge at £120 (average) represents exceptionally good value, as does the £35 average amount for a Wiltshire Chapter.

It is my hope that Companions throughout the Province will adopt a very positive view for the future, and will continue to support their Chapter as we move into the new year. I do not doubt that the road ahead will be bumpy at times, I am sure that there will be set backs, and that we will have to adapt to a new normal (whatever that may be). But I do know that Wiltshire Companions have a track record to be proud of, and that the real sense of belonging to a dynamic organisation which prides itself on providing support to every member, will ensure that we will emerge from this dark period stronger and even more united.

On behalf of Carole and myself myself we wish you all a very happy Christmas, with the hope that 2021 will be a good year.



Obeying Rule of Six

Chapter Elias de Derham beat the second nationwide lockdown, and suspension of Masonic activity and held a rule of six meeting.

The Companions opened the Chapter, conducted some much needed business and then closed

Everything was carried out in accordance with the rules and with safety in mind. The Companions retired for some socially distant refreshment and to enjoy the view across the beautiful city of Salisbury

Making light of it....

Charlie was sitting on Fred's patio closely comparing the speed with which two droplets were slithering down the side of his ice-cold Peroni. He won his mental bet and as a prize awarded himself another Peroni. Fred meanwhile was emptying his mower box into the barrow so that he could gratefully limp off and join his guest in ransacking the cold box.

'How's the Royal Arch coming on? Know what it's all about yet?,' jested a surprisingly jovial Fred, removing his bottle top with an accustomed ease.

'There's a reference in Chapter ritual about 'want of light'. I thought it simply meant being unable to see or read the parchment but old Carl told me that there's much more to it than that. When I asked him what, he just smiled and said "you must find the answer for yourself." What did he mean, Fred?.'

Fred laughed. *'That's old Carl for you. He's right of course. Only you can find the answer'.*

He paused. *'There are several references to light in our ritual: "in the light of our mysteries"; "for want of light I am unable to discover" – mentioned twice I think; "Light - the predominant wish of your heart"; "for the same want I was unable to read its contents"... Yes, there's certainly a goodly number of mentions'.*

'Mind you the first step in understanding or interpreting any of them is in Royal Arch's 'other half', the Third Degree ceremony. We really need to understand that Degree properly if we're ever to understand the Royal Arch. Do you remember the Charge? "Let me beg you to observe that the light of a Master Mason is Darkness visible".'

'Darkness visible' – that's an odd phrase. What's it mean, Fred?'

'It's a phrase from Milton's 'Paradise Lost' – "yet from these flames... is not light but darkness visible" Perhaps we can come back to that!'

'It doesn't sound my scene, Fred, but thanks all the same'.

'The thirty or so lines of the Charge in the Third have been described variously as being the heart, the soul, the marrow, the essence, the core of Speculative Freemasonry. You can pick your own description, Charlie. Certainly the theme of 'Darkness Visible' has attracted the attention of many great authors over the years. They nearly all found that a complete book was necessary to express thoughts inspired by just these 30 lines.'

'Best not go there, Fred.'

'Our Charge in fact refers to three sources of light: "that Light which is from above", "this glimmering ray" and "that bright Morning Star".'

'Let's try to disentangle them. "That Light which is from above". What do you reckon that means', Charlie?'

'Well, give me a moment, The Candidate's in darkness, right?. Must be the candle by the Master's Chair.'

'Very reasonable – but Charlie, could there be other explanations – say, the words in the VSL or perhaps divine inspiration? As the Candidate's already been informed of three Great Lights in Freemasonry and that "the first of these is the VSL" it's probably not that'.

'I think the key is the reference to human reason. This suggests that it's not a physical but a mental and spiritual light that's being discussed. "That Light which is from above" may perhaps best be explained then as the guidance or inspiration that flows directly to the Candidate from the Great Architect'.

Charlie thought for a moment: *'What about 'this glimmering ray' though?'*

'I think the clue here, Charlie, can be found in the remainder of the sentence – 'you perceive you stand on the brink. etc.' As the candidate is being asked to view an object in the Temple the light can only be a physical one and, in the

prevailing darkness, the candle by the Master's Chair is the only possible source. The word 'glimmering' ("to shine faintly and intermittently") is important. The flickering alludes to the frailty of human existence. Interestingly as only a candle flame has this quality 'Grand Lodge' doesn't officially approve of any alternative such as a lantern or artificial light possessing a steady beam'.

'The only other other reference I can think of, Charlie, is: "we lift our eyes to that bright Morning Star". The phrase comes from Revelations (Ch. 22 v. 16):

"It is I, Jesus...I am the root and descendant of David, the bright morning star..." Its inclusion was an over-sight by the 1816 Lodge of Reconciliation which removed all other references to a specific religion'.

'I think we can sum up, Charlie, by saying that in all of Speculative Freemasonry the word 'Light' can have three meanings – the physical light that illuminates, say, a page or scroll; the inspiration or enlightenment that may come from reading that page; and, thirdly, the divine assistance that comes directly to a Mason from his Supreme Being perhaps in answer to a prayer.'

Let's now see how all of this might help explain our Royal Arch ritual. Shall we remind ourselves of the phrases in question: "in the light of our mysteries"; "for want of light I am unable to discover"; "Light - the predominant wish of your heart"; "for the same want I was unable to read its contents".

'In that the aim of the Royal Arch is to seek the name and nature (really the same thing) of our Supreme Being – TTALGMH – through the revelations of His written word, we need to draw on **all three** interpretations of the word 'Light' each and every time it is mentioned in our ritual'

'We need physical light to read our VSL, we need intuitive light to fully understand the words we read – so that we may the better approach our Supreme Being – and we then need the light of His Divine Guidance to give direction, meaning and purpose to our lives.'

'That, my Charlie, I believe sums up the significance of Light in understanding the Royal Arch and indeed all Freemasonry.'

'I feel just that little bit overwhelmed, Fred'.

Fred laughed. 'Let's just say that we have tried to make **light** of a very difficult subject, shall we, Charlie?. Perhaps another Peroni?'

They got 'ribbed' but came out smiling at their very next meeting - well done Lodge of Remembrance No.4037





First of all, may I begin this short piece by repeating a message I have already sent out earlier this year to all Lodge chaplains within the Province. My many grateful thanks for having taken on this most important role within your Lodge. It cannot be recognised enough that the United Grand Lodge of England has always regarded the spiritual well being of its members as being of great importance – hence the reason why the office of chaplain comes, in rank, immediately below that of the wardens in a Lodge. It is therefore important to remember that the role of Lodge chaplain is not simply to say grace at mealtimes and read the ritual prayers during the various degrees but, alongside the Lodge Almoner, and Mentor to see that the brethren of your Lodge are looked after both physically and spiritually so that they remain holistically healthy in mind, body and spirit. Recent studies have confirmed that a healthy mind is most important to having a healthy body and vice versa.

It had been my intention, before the Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions occurred, to run some short courses for all chaplains to attend to provide them with extra resources to discharge these duties more fully. These resources would include honing up our listening skills, understanding and recognising when a brother might require professional help, attending to the spiritual growth and direction of a brother and above all sharing experiences of the life and work of a chaplain including dealing with issues of different faiths and cultures. A number of Lodge chaplains have responded to me very positively and I am hopeful that we can put together an initial Zoom meeting in early 2021 towards this. If anyone else would be interested in joining us or would like to know how to improve their listening skills they will be quite welcome to join us.

Lodge chaplains do not have to be theologically trained, but they do need to have those personal qualities of empathy and compassion which should, in any case, be the hallmarks of every Freemason.

As the Provincial Grand Chaplain, I am here to assist, support and give guidance to all the Province's Lodge chaplains. I do have theological training and am a fully trained Church of England licensed minister and chaplain. I am, however, deeply rooted in both the Laity and Freemasonry and my ministry in the Church of England is described as a "bridging ministry" (i.e. between ordained ministry and laity). I am also an accredited spiritual director/accompanier having spent two years study in spiritual and pastoral care at Sarum College in Salisbury. I can therefore, provide or obtain many resources to assist the Lodge chaplains.

During this past year I have come across many cases where our brethren have struggled and this is where the Lodge chaplain can help. We can't always solve people's problems; it is not our role, but we can help people solve them themselves by listening with a sympathetic or empathetic ear. We are often there as sign posters towards the proper professional help. However, it is also important to have a good relationship with the Lodge almoner and mentor and not step on the other's toes.

I like to think of the chaplain, almoner and mentor of a Lodge as its "welfare officers" – the chaplain to ensure a member's good spiritual health (spirit), the almoner to ensure a member's physical/financial health (body) and the mentor to ensure the member's good mental health (mind). Thus the three officers are there to ensure that each and every member is healthy in mind, body and spirit. What other Institutions can boast of such support?

If you need help or are thinking of taking up the role of chaplain in your Lodge please contact me at michael.jachin@yahoo.com or on 07768 220970

In the meantime may you keep safe and well and may peace be with you.

The Jewel of the Chaplain is an opened book, symbolizing the Volume of Sacred Law (the Christian Bible, Hebrew Torah or Tanach, the Muslim Qur'an, the Hindu Vedas or other Holy Books).

Firstly, I should explain that in my family, my father a bus Engineer, was a Mason and in addition my grandfather, who saw war service as a Petty Officer in the Royal Navy. As a young lad, on my return from Cubs, we used to hover outside the Masonic Hall, in Snargate Street in Dover. We giggled at the hymns and chants one could hear emanating from the Temple window. Little did I know where this would lead.

I left my home in Dover, Kent, aged 15½ years old having completed a secondary modern education achieving three 'O' levels to go and work for "The Gas Board" in Croydon as a trainee Draughtsman.

I continued my education with a day release and three nights per week at a college of Further Education. Those personnel in charge of my area of the Gas Board obviously saw some form of development in this young man, always on his motorcycle, as I was promoted to a trainee engineer which culminated in achieving a Chartered Engineer at the age of 22. At this time, I used to travel back home to Dover on the occasional weekend but going from Croydon to Dover on a Friday evening and returning on Sunday evening on the motorcycle was not only occasionally very wet but most of the time very cold.

One weekend, my mother took me to one side and said, 'Did you know that your father is very disappointed in you?' I was a little shocked at hearing this as having achieved becoming a chartered engineer was quite a change in the way that the Clark family had previously been known. This is because it was only my great great grandfather who changed his name from Clark without an 'e' to Clarke with an 'e' when he obtained his second fishing traveller. The rest of the Clarke contingent were either publicans, scrap merchants, Rag 'n' Bone men etc. Our family being a fairly mottled Dover crew. The local Constabulary knew the family in the 1920/30's quite well I believe.

I enquired of father as to why he was disappointed in me only to be told that I had not asked how to become a Mason. At that time my father had gone through the chair. I'd attended his ladies' night as a young man in short trousers and I joined my parents at various social functions. To the delight of my father (who by then was a senior East Kent Mason) and indeed my grandfather, I immediately overcame this area of disappointment and joined the Military Jubilee Lodge in Dover.

I attended quite often and that is now some 47 years ago, but in truth I still recall my father conducting my initiation and particularly being elevated to the 3rd Degree. That will stay in my mind as a vivid memory until I die. Unfortunately, like (probably) many men, building a successful company and travelling extensively throughout the world on business my Masonic career initially took second place.

However, I have always tried to maintain my basic Masonic principles in life, and indeed in business. Although 50 years in the Craft is not far off, it's only really in the last 20 years that I've been able to apply myself to my Masonic career and indeed thoroughly enjoying the company of like-minded Brethren.

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Seb Salt (City Lodge No.5955) managed not one but two wreath laying ceremonies on behalf of Wiltshire Freemasons. The first was 'at home' while the second saw Seb joined by John Holt (Lodge Elias de Derham No.586) and civic dignitaries at Salisbury. The Provincial Grand Masters offers his thanks to each of the Lodges who attended Remembrance services on Sunday 8th and Wednesday 11th November.



Forget-Me-Not Masonic Horse Brass



In the old days this attractively designed horse brass would have been attached to the top of the bridle of a heavy horse. It is being produced now as a most desirable reminder of the absence of our beloved Masonic meetings due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The humble forget-me-not, has been an emblem of Freemasonry for many years and stems from the legend surrounding German Freemasonry during WWII.

In recent years the subject has been researched and as much as we would like to believe that the little forget-me-not lapel pin was worn as a point of recognition during the dark years of the war no evidence of this has ever been found. The most poignant final paragraph of one research paper concludes;

“The history of the forget-me-not, is laden with legend and symbolism. And quibbling over historic accuracy merely clouds the true intent of the story. Legends like these are not told to teach us historical fact; they are meant to teach us enduring truth, or even truths, plural. And the truths of the forget-me-not are these; We must never forget our duty to the poor and distressed. We must never forget to persevere through troubled times, as light and life will always spring anew. We must never forget those who have come before us; the sacrifices they made, and the love that they shared with us. We must never forget our duty to honour their memory, and continue their legacy of brotherly love, relief, and truth. Amor fraternus, levatio, veritas. Forget. Me. Not.”

Brent Williamson Millersville Masonic Lodge No 126 Indianapolis, USA

The brass including base, is supplied boxed with a copy of the Masonic legendary history. Retail price £22.00 plus UK postage £3.00. A wholesale option for five or more is available at £17.00 per brass plus bulk postage. Overseas postage available at the appropriate rate.

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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

Is this for you?

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

Barry Cooper's Word Search

As many of you doubtless will have noticed, there is no quiz in this edition of the magazine.

But don't worry Barry is designing a fiendishly difficult quiz for In touch On line

IF YOU HAVE A STORY
TO TELL
LET US KNOW



editor@pglwilts.org.uk

The Provincial Grand Master replies to your question:

Q. In a presentation I attended just recently the speaker emphasised the importance of belonging to a Lodge, and outlined the rights, privileges, and also the responsibilities Lodge membership provided. In these very difficult times some members, particularly younger Brethren will be finding it very hard to afford their annual subscription which becomes due for payment in January. Will the Province and UGLE be offering a rebate or a discount for the time that we have been unable to meet?



A. That's a very interesting question, but before I answer it let me just say that I do understand the point you make with regard to the financial issues which some Brethren might have, especially those who have lost their job during the pandemic, and it is my hope that Lodges will be as accommodating as they can be in helping a member get through any financial difficulty they may be face

To answer your question I want to break down the elements which make up a Freemason's Lodge subscription. At the top end is the amount we all pay to Grand Lodge which is £57 made up of £40 to UGLE and £17 to Masonic charity. The second amount is the contribution to the running of the Province, and this is £10.50 which includes a £2 contribution to the Provincial charity. The total levied is therefore **£67.50** per member, per year. Added to this figure the Lodge elements, normally made up of a contribution to the running of your Lodge and an amount to cover the cost of maintaining the Masonic Hall where your Lodge meets. For some Lodges that will include rent payable for the hire of a hall or rooms. The average subscription in the Province is £120 per annum, or £2.30 per week. To put this into context, a Cappuccino coffee from Costa is £2.25.

I am aware that some Brethren suggest that Freemasonry has to offer 'value for money' - a position which does surprise me. To my knowledge being made a Freemason and welcomed as a member of a Lodge has never been 'sold' to an initiate as offering any value beyond that of belonging to an organisation which values Integrity, Friendship, Respect, and Charity as its core principles.

In today's society there is a notion that everything must provide a return for the 'investment' and that if someone feels they are not getting something back for the money they pay in, then that is somehow a negative position. This is a view with which I fundamentally disagree. I believe that belonging to a Lodge and being a part of the Wiltshire Masonic family is worth every penny of the annual subscription. From this, I am sure you have already worked out the answer to the question.

The simple truth is that neither UGLE or the Province can afford to reduce the fees charged. However both organisations have announced that there will be no increase in fees for 2021. I trust this will help any Brother who is experiencing financial difficulties. If this applies to you, please do not hesitate to speak to the Lodge secretary or treasurer who will be able to advise you.

Officers of Provincial Grand Lodge 2020 -21

Provincial Grand Master - RW Bro Philip S.A Bullock

Deputy Provincial Grand Master - VW Bro David M Davies PGSwdB

Assistant Provincial Grand Master - W Bro Simon R Leighfield PJGD

Provincial Senior Grand Warden	W Bro Colin J Davies	9773
Provincial Junior Grand Warden	W Bro Foster R Telford	586
Provincial Grand Chaplain	W Bro Michael F Barratt PPrSGW	5137
Provincial Grand Treasurer	W Bro Christopher J Robbins PPrSGW	1478
Provincial Grand Registrar	W Bro John O Badger PAGDC	626
Provincial Grand Secretary	W Bro Philip J Still PAGDC	6114
Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies	W Bro John R Smith PAGDC	1295
Provincial Grand Sword Bearer	W Bro Nigel J Bates	1533
Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works	W Bro A L (Sandy) Steele-Davis PPrJGW	8435
Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies	W Bro Barry Jordan-Davis PPrJGW	5955
Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies	W Bro Ian W Lever	8435
Provincial Grand Almoner	W Bro Gary Dolphin PPrSGW	1295
Provincial Grand Charity Steward	W Bro Derek K Gibbens	586
Provincial Grand Orator	W Bro Des Morgan PAGDC	335
Provincial Grand Mentor	W Bro David Little PAGStB	9064
Provincial Senior Grand Deacon	W Bro Gordon E Lindsay	8692
Provincial Senior Grand Deacon	W Bro Marcus G Reeves	4037
Provincial Senior Grand Deacon	W Bro Mark A Whitmarsh	1295
Provincial Junior Grand Deacon	W Bro Clive L Emerson	9064
Provincial Junior Grand Deacon	W Bro Robert G Walker	8435
Provincial Junior Grand Deacon	W Bro Michael K Wills	9587
Provincial Assistant Grand Secretary	W Bro Robert J Evans PPrSGD	1478
Provincial Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies	W Bro Michael JD Forster	9540
Provincial Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies	W Bro Christopher J Linham	8620
Provincial Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies	W Bro Michael J Pearce	626
Provincial Grand Organist	Bro Gary E Cook	632
Provincial Grand Standard Bearer	W Bro Peter WA Bint	1295
Provincial Grand Standard Bearer	W Bro Paul A Robinson	663
Provincial Grand Pursuivant	W Bro Kevin J Tedd	5955
Provincial Grand Steward	W Bro Robert A Betchley	9587
Provincial Grand Steward	Bro Mitchell L Bryan	355
Provincial Grand Steward	W Bro Alex Laird	2227
Provincial Grand Steward	Bro Paul A Sharp	1295
Provincial Grand Steward	W Bro Leslie R Welling	9773
Provincial Grand Steward	Bro Adrian R Wheeler	8204
Provincial Grand Tyler	W Bro Stephen J Smith	3129
Divisional Coordinating Officer	W Bro Colin CC Cheshire, OBE PJGD	632
Divisional Officer (North)	W Bro David Reed PPrSGW	4037
Divisional Officer (Central)	W Bro Barry Jordan -Davis	5955
Divisional Officer (South)	W Bro David F Henery PJGD	8692
Divisional Mentor (North)	W Bro Alan Colman PPrSGD	355
Divisional Mentor (Central)	W Bro Richard D Wright PPrSGW	2227
Divisional Mentor (South)	W Bro Foster R Telford PrJGW	586

Provincial Promotions 2020 -2021....

Past Provincial Senior Grand Warden	W Bro Christopher B Dawe	626
Past Provincial Senior Grand Warden	W Bro Geoffery H Grant	9773
Past Provincial Senior Grand Warden	W Bro Peter M Harper	9090
Past Provincial Senior Grand Warden	W Bro Peter F Wood	9035
Past Provincial Senior Grand Warden	W Bro Richard D Wright	2227
Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden	W Bro Stuart M Burrell	8547
Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden	W Bro Peter G Gale	9090
Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden	W Bro Clive G Hackett	5955
Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden	W Bro Steven D Hocking	8435
Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden	W Bro Michael G James	9773
Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden	W Bro Jeremy RL Jarvis	8388
Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden	W Bro Alan Salkeld	9035
Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden	W Bro Sebastian J Salt	5955
Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden	W Bro William F Shrewsbury	9035
Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden	W Bro Christopher R Sibley	663
Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden	W Bro Gary Smith	6616
Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden	W Bro Ronald E Stiles	5955
Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden	W Bro Michael P Swanton	9090
Past Provincial Grand Registrar	W Bro John Burgess	8388
Past Provincial Grand Sword Bearer	W Bro Robert E Bullen	663
Past Provincial Grand Sword Bearer	W Bro Terence R Davis	355
Past Provincial Grand Sword Bearer	W Bro G (Brandon) Harman	8388
Past Provincial Grand Sword Bearer	W Bro Paul Jones	355
Past Provincial Grand Sword Bearer	W Bro Terence McCann	8204
Past Provincial Grand Sword Bearer	W Bro Kevin M O'Daly	4714
Past Provincial Grand Sword Bearer	W Bro Stephen RW Rayment	9035
Past Provincial Grand Sword Bearer	W Bro Brian J Tracey	8692
Past Provincial Grand Sword Bearer	W Bro Lindsay A Young	1478
Past Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works	W Bro David M Clover	2888
Past Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works	W Bro David T Edwards	8718
Past Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works	W Bro Neil A Miller	9090
Past Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works	W Bro Simon J Natelson-Carter	4451
Past Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works	W Bro Robert T Wiltshire	4714
Past Provincial Senior Grand Deacon	W Bro David G Logan	8388
Past Provincial Senior Grand Deacon	W Bro Bryan J Piper	8620
Past Provincial Junior Grand Deacon	W Bro Steven J Davis	9548
Past Provincial Junior Grand Deacon	Bro John M Place	9090
Past Provincial Assistant Grand Director Ceremonies	W Bro John HV Cadby	632
Past Provincial Grand Pursuivant	W Bro Ryan B Hartley	5908

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Provincial Appointments 2020 - 2021....

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Past Provincial	Junior Grand Deacon	W Bro I (Philip) Lever	9587
Past Provincial	Junior Grand Deacon	W Bro Peter WM Watt	9035
Past Provincial	Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies	W Bro David J Aldridge	5955
Past Provincial	Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies	W Bro Robert M Fear	9090
Past Provincial	Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies	W Bro Peter M Gee	4037
Past Provincial	Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies	W Bro Terence O Hemmings	9009
Past Provincial	Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies	W Bro John G Jenkins	8718
Past Provincial	Grand Standard Bearer	W Bro Keith Acreman	5955
Past Provincial	Grand Standard Bearer	W Bro Paul N Billett	2227
Past Provincial	Grand Standard Bearer	W Bro Mark A Cox	8747
Past Provincial	Grand Standard Bearer	W Bro David E Glaholm	9548
Past Provincial	Grand Standard Bearer	W Bro Adrian P Mayo	632
Past Provincial	Grand Standard Bearer	W Bro John P Moorehouse	2227
Past Provincial	Grand Standard Bearer	W Bro Simon L Powell	4714
Past Provincial	Grand Standard Bearer	W Bro Brian WD Turnbull	8747
Past Provincial	Grand Standard Bearer	W Bro Robert A Youngs	4687

Appointments under Rule 69a:

Past Provincial	Senior Grand Warden	W Bro A (Tony) Sugdon PPrGReg (Yorks N&ER)	2227
Past Provincial	Junior Grand Deacon	W Bro John R Willis PPrAGReg (Surrey)	2644
Past Provincial	Grand Standard Bearer	W Bro Roger CP McBride (London)	9064

Many congratulations to every Brother who has been appointed to serve the Province in an active officer, promoted, or received a first appointment. I am often asked on what basis appointment and promotion in Provincial Rank is conferred, to which the answer is simple; it's on an individual's merits.



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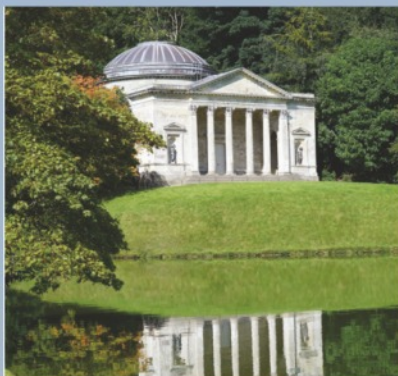


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