



"I appoint you my Director of Ceremonies"

April 2021

Getting ready to return

Wiltshire Freemasons



In the April mid month edition of **In touch>On line** I referred to my keen interest in reading and remembering quotations, some of which I use in my articles. Many of the quotes I use are from well known writers, while others are less well known. One quote which I particularly like is not from a writer but from a musician, the famous Austrian conductor and composer Gustav Mahler who wrote: *"With the coming of spring, I am calm again."*

Mahler wrote wonderful music but was said to have told friends that, if he could say what he had to say in words he would not bother trying to say it in music. Mahler composed only in the media of song and symphony, and despite his limited output three of his works are considered important enough to be featured in the top ten symphonic works of all time. It may surprise you to know that Mahler considered himself to be first and foremost a conductor rather than a composer. He was a brilliant orchestrator and conductor, able to bring together the various players and instruments and unify them into a finely honed unit; capable of producing sublime music in performances which stirred the emotions while thrilling and entertaining the audience.

The conductor in Freemasonry is without question the role played by the Lodge Director of Ceremonies. I recall attending an Installation meeting in London at which the following words were used by the new Master when he invested his Director of Ceremonies. *"It affords me much pleasure to appoint you Director of Ceremonies of the Lodge and to invest you with the collar and jewel; and hand you the wand of your Office. **Your duty is to see that our ceremonies are carried out with propriety and decorum, also to receive any distinguished Brethren and to ensure their receiving the honours due to them.**"* What a responsibility.

I have no doubt that every Lodge Director of Ceremonies in the Province will be planning a schedule of rehearsals to ensure that those lessons learned in the Lodge prior to 'lockdown' are not completely forgotten. The phrase "it's like riding a bike, you never forget" comes to mind, but I'm guessing there will be many Lodge (and Provincial) Officers who will be poring over their ritual book and practising the ceremonies. I am sure there will be no tut tutting from a sedentary position, rather I anticipate a degree of understanding from the Brethren as everyone returns from an extended period of refreshment for the further despatch of Masonic business. I have spoken to the Provincial Director of Ceremonies, and his team is chomping at the bit to assist in making your Lodge meeting a very special occasion.

I am delighted that the editor has included the collar jewel of the Lodge Director of Ceremonies in the top right hand corner of this edition of **In touch>On line**.

Today we are even closer to a resumption of Masonic activity with a number of Wiltshire Lodges set to hold a meeting on Monday 17th May (albeit under the rule of 6 unless the Masonic Hall has the necessary permission and is able to safely accommodate more than 6, up to a maximum of 30.) While the Provincial Secretary has provided details of Provincial support for Lodge Installations, please remember that in these extraordinary times the restriction in numbers able to attend, and a wish to accommodate members in the first instance may result in those arrangements being amended at short notice.



April 2021

The first Annual Report

The United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) has launched its first annual report in its 300 year history. The report includes the new mission statement, which sits alongside the UGLE's four key values of integrity, respect, friendship and charity. It is available on the Wiltshire website.

Dr David Staples, chief executive, said: "Our first ever annual report is a major step ahead for the organisation in terms of the transparency and normalisation of Freemasonry, we want to tell the public who we are and what we do. This year, we have raised more than £42m for charity with 90% of the donations being given to projects and people across the country to provide relief from suffering, misfortune and poverty. Only 10% of the total money disbursed goes to UGLE members and families, on a means-tested basis."



David Staples
CEO and
Grand Secretary UGLE

According to Dr Staples, "The essence of Freemasonry is the practise of charity. It is so inextricably linked that every Lodge meeting includes a charity collection and every Lodge and Province has a charity steward, who is responsible for coordinating the financial commitments and voluntary actions of the members. Many of the charitable efforts of the UGLE and its members are channelled through the Masonic Charitable Foundation, the Freemasons' primary charitable grant-giving body."

During the pandemic, it was discovered that fewer than 2% of the UGLE membership were actively considering leaving Freemasonry. The UGLE had planned for a significantly higher drop in membership, comprising those leaving because of financial hardship and those sadly passing away. Instead, the vast majority are greatly looking forward to things returning to normal and to resuming their Masonic lives.

Since taking over as CEO of the 200,000-member UGLE, Dr Staples has targeted many improvements within the organisation. "The challenges I have set myself are to improve the public perception and understanding of Freemasonry, and to improve the administration of the organisation, modernising our systems and processes within this context."

In the last few years Freemasons have been busy modernising and launching campaigns inviting the public to experience the world of Freemasonry. As a result, since 2018 the public's perception of Freemasonry has improved significantly, according to external opinion surveys.

Furthermore, a new cafe is opening next year within Freemasons Hall, with the objective of allowing the general public to experience the historic building, alongside new digital tours and a brand new visitors' shop.

Looking further ahead, an important milestone to be celebrated in 2022 is the consecration of Lodge number 10000, a Lodge formed to cater for the needs of the under 35's.

To read the full report follow this link: www.ugle.org.uk/about-us/annual-report



April 2021

So, what is a private Lodge?

It's not a question often asked of the Provincial Communication Team, but when it is the answer given is not always the expected one. So, what is a private Lodge? Well put very simply it's a Lodge which is not a Grand Lodge, that's it plain and simple. The term 'private' is merely a reflection of the position of a Lodge within the structure of Freemasonry, and a private Lodge is subordinate to a Grand Lodge, be that the Provincial Grand Lodge or UGLE.

Some Brethren may be a little taken aback by such a simple and straightforward definition, especially if they thought that being a private Lodge meant that the Lodge could do what it liked, when it liked and is answerable to no one in the running of its affairs. The reality is very different.

All private Lodges are Warranted by and appear on the Register of the United Grand Lodge of England, and the interests of Freemasonry are managed by the Grand Lodge. In fact every Freemason agrees to an acceptance that the Grand Lodge possesses the supreme superintending authority, and alone has the power of enacting laws and regulations for the government of the Craft. The Grand Lodge through the Book of Constitutions has devolved to the Provincial Grand Lodge (and its Provincial Grand Master) many of the operational aspects of making sure the laws and regulations are followed.

The freedom of a private Lodge to function is based on its full compliance with the Book of Constitutions, its By Laws and its acceptance of the authority of the Provincial Grand Master.

Occasionally a Lodge secretary might be of the view that information sought by the Province can be withheld on the basis of the Lodge being 'a private Lodge'. Such a view is erroneous as can be understood by a reference to Rule 74 BoC. The authority of the Provincial Grand Master or his representative to request and be granted access to documents or information held by a Lodge is absolute. Indeed, if a request is not complied with, an explanation may rightly be sought and a determination made as to whether the action should be treated as one of contumacy. Thankfully, it has not been necessary to apply this provision in Wiltshire.

Did you meet the Provincial Superintendent of Works?

The fourth in a series of six Meet The Officer Zoom meetings was held on Friday 30th April and featured the Provincial Superintendent of Works Sandy Steele-Davis who shared details of his early life, his work, his love of sport (only spoiled by the news that his beloved Swindon Town FC has been relegated to Division Two of the Football League.) and his Freemasonry. I am sure many of those attending were surprised to discover that Sandy was a proud collector of Dinky toys.

It really was a very special evening which was well supported not only by Freemasons but also by a number of non Masons.

The next 'Meet The Officer' Zoom meeting will be on Friday 28th May at 7.30pm. To book your place and to be sure of a connection email pcowiltshire@gmail.com



Sandy Steele-Davis



April 2021

Chris is still pointing the way....

In the April editions of **In touch>On line** we paid tribute to the selfless work undertaken by Brethren who gave freely of their time to undertake various duties at vaccination hubs across the Province.

We were delighted to feature Bro Chris Lush the treasurer of Sarum Lodge No.3129, who exchanged his Masonic regalia for a hi viz tabard when he volunteered to help with marshalling duties at The Michael Herbert Hall.

Chris is just one of many Wiltshire Freemasons who has made a real difference during the Covid - 19 crisis.

In its first Annual Report UGLE Chief Executive David Staples wrote: "We want to tell the public who we are and what we do. This year we have given more than 18.5 million hours of our time in unpaid social and civic volunteering." It's something we really should be proud to tell the world.



Bro Chris Lush
Sarum Lodge
No.5137

Do you want to update your Lodge logo?

Is your Lodge logo looking a little tired, maybe its been copied so many times that its lost definition. Well don't worry. The Provincial Communication team can help you to rejuvenate your existing Logo, whether it's a simple badge, or a more complex coat of arms, our expert design service really can make your Lodge logo something of which you can be justly proud. For more information email: pcowiltshire@gmail.com

A great word....

As you can imagine, in much the same way as mathematicians love to explore the use of numbers your editor loves finding 'interesting words'. In a recent homily from the Provincial Chaplain, Michael Barratt used the word 'acronymically' a wonderful thirteen letter word -

National Bee Day....



Did you know that the 20th May is National Bee Day or that the Beehive was once a symbol commonly used in Freemasonry to denote 'INDUSTRY'?

Seven bees are usually seen flying around the hive, seven being the number to make a perfect lodge. The bee was used as a symbol in ancient Egypt, and the beehive symbol dates back to at least ancient Rome. The beehive as a symbol was adopted by many Friendly Societies, Trade Unions and insurance companies, the hive representing industry and the bees the workers.



April 2021

Calling all Lodge Secretaries....

The Provincial Grand Secretary is looking forward to welcoming all Lodge Secretaries when they join him via ZOOM on Saturday 8th May at 2.00pm. If you have not yet received details of the ZOOM link please contact Phil Still p,still@btinternet.com

Wiltshire Freemasons



**Proud to be a
Wiltshire
Freemason**

**Clive Emerson
Downton Lodge
No.9064**



In touch > On line

The newsletter for Wiltshire Freemasons

"I appoint you my Director of Ceremonies"



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Wiltshire Freemasons

WILTSHIRE REGALIA

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STEPTRONIC®
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