

Across the Plain

Online edition

The magazine of Wiltshire Freemasons



Winter 2021



Philip Bullock
Provincial Grand Master



Simon Leighfield
Deputy Provincial
Grand Master



Phil Still
Assistant Provincial
Grand Master



The Provincial Grand Master.....



This time last year I wrote of my hope that terms such as ‘social distancing’ - ‘self isolation’ and ‘increased transmissibility’ would vanish from our vocabulary. Sadly they haven’t quite yet, but I live in hope that the vaccination programme will prove to be the way out of the possibility of another period of lockdown. In 2020 I used a quote which I believe remains relevant for today. The quote read; *“On your darkest days do not try to see the end of the tunnel by looking far ahead. Focus only on where you are right now. Then carefully take one step at a time, by placing just one foot in front of the other. Before you know it, you will turn that corner.”*

Having taken small steps during the better part of nearly two years the eager anticipation of a return to normality was seized upon not only with a sense of relief but also with the Masonic virtue of caution. How right we were to be cautious. At the moment we thought the battle had been won, Covid-19 played one more hand and Omicron has become the nemesis we must now conquer.

For many of our senior Brethren the pandemic has been more than just a mild inconvenience: it has deprived them of the contact and social interaction they have with their friends in the Lodge. It has also sapped them of the energy to attend meetings or engage in Masonic activity. This comes as no surprise considering the threat to their health and wellbeing. However, I am pleased to note that communication has been maintained with members during the Covid pandemic. I thank every Brother who has taken the time to enquire about the health and well being of a friend or Brother in time of need, and to express the hope that such care and concern will continue as we move forward into 2022.

It is almost certain that the Government will soon introduce further restrictions on the movement of people, and new requirements designed to delay the spread of Omicron throughout the nation. I am persuaded by the medical evidence that the double jab, followed by a booster jab is an essential requirement; and I encourage any Brother who has not taken advantage of the offer to be vaccinated, to consider the matter very carefully and to make an appointment to have their jabs.

I would also ask that every Brother observes the rules set out by each Masonic Centre they visit. Every centre is entitled to attach conditions of entry which may seem excessive, but you must adhere to them.

This Winter 2021 publication of **Across the Plain** is the fifth edition that has been published ‘online’. The decision to produce an online version is one of simple economics. As readers of the magazine will know, **Across the Plain** is supported by advertisements from several businesses owned by Wiltshire Freemasons. The pandemic has adversely affected many of the businesses which has had a significant impact on the advertising income so vital to the magazine. The editor will be in conversation with current advertisers to gauge the level of support available in the future with regard to future editions of **Across the Plain**.

In October I had the pleasure of Investing Simon Leighfield as my Deputy, and Phil Still moved out of one hot seat into another when he accepted the invitation to become the Assistant Provincial Grand Master. I am sure that they are too conversant with the laws of propriety, and the rules which govern our ancient institution to exceed the powers with which they have been entrusted, and you my Brethren will be of too generous a disposition to envy their preferment. I am sure you will join me in wishing them well in their new roles in the Province.

As we come to the end of yet another tumultuous year I take this opportunity to thank you for your support of the many initiatives which have come out of Freemasons’ Hall, and from the Province.

I wish you a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

Recently I have been asked a question which is as old as the hills: “Are we trying too hard to get men into Freemasonry? I know it is a question which has exercised the minds of Freemasons for many years, and indeed there have been times when I have wondered whether we should reduce our efforts to attract new members to our Order. My friend the Provincial Orator often reminds me that we need to be as keen to get masonry into men (Learning & Development) as we are to get men into Freemasonry.



However, a sense of reality kicks in and I am persuaded that not only are we right to try hard to get men into Freemasonry, but that we need to try even harder. Why I think this to be the right course of action can be answered by a the use of a simple metaphor. Without growth in the number of members: the organisation will eventually die.

Fifty years ago Freemasonry in the UK had circa 500,000 members, twenty years ago that number had fallen to circa 250,000 and today it is nearer 170,000. That is not a trend which any organisation can accept as being in anyway ‘okay’. In a recent edition of Freemasonry Today the Deputy Grand Master reminded us that *“We must ensure that Freemasonry enhances its reputation as a thriving organisation that people aspire to join, and broaden our membership across all age groups.”*

He was right to do so as it is quite apparent from research undertaken by the UGLE that the public perception of Freemasonry is nothing like as negative as a minority would have us believe. In fact I am sure you would be surprised to know how many men are genuinely interested in becoming a Wiltshire Freemason. This is certainly true for Wiltshire Freemasonry which is a *“thriving organisation that people aspire to join.”*

In the Summer edition of **Across the Plain** I outlined the Provincial Grand Master’s initiative to build on the attraction, engagement, retrieval and education elements of the revised PATHWAY programme. I share the view that these four elements are key to delivering the objective of building membership and ensuring the long term sustainability of our Lodges.

I was delighted to be able to speak with Lodge secretaries, through the medium of ZOOM, and explain the ambitions of the Province. We have Brethren in the Membership Team, Mentoring Team, and the Learning and Development Team who want to work with Lodges to make sure that together we deliver on the objectives we have been set. This will very much depend on everyone working together, and make no mistake, your Lodge, every Lodge, has a very important part to play. First, by providing every opportunity to conduct Initiation ceremonies within both the normal programme of activities, and additional (emergency) meetings as and when required. Secondly, to dispel the notion that ‘we don’t do doubles’ or ‘we don’t do emergency meetings’ which is not borne out by the historical records of most of the Lodges in Wiltshire, and is not an acceptable reason for delaying the Initiation of a qualified candidate.



Shop at Freemasons' Hall....

In the middle of 2021 Freemasons' Hall, the London headquarters of the United Grand Lodge of England, opened its bar and café to the public for the first time. The organisation has spent £150,000 refurbishing the art deco interior. David Staples, the Grand Secretary who is the driving force behind the Freemasons' commercial enterprises said he hoped that people would come and "have a drink with a Freemason". He added that bringing passing footfall into the building would give people "something they actually want but at the same time allows them to see Freemasons being Freemasons".

The Letchworth shop inside the building has also been the subject of a makeover and many Wiltshire members will have seen the many product advertisements placed on social media.

Located in the Drawing Room on the first floor of Freemasons' Hall, the shop offers an enhanced high end shopping experience to both visitors and members – with an extensive range of high-quality gifts and souvenirs related to Freemasonry.

A comprehensive selection of products are on sale, which includes not only books but a range of quality Freemason regalia, briefcases, men's grooming ranges, jewellery, scarves and ties, as well as several gift ranges based on the museum, library, Art Deco and Freemasonry in general.



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Mentoring Team wish you a happy Christmas....

The Mentoring Team are always ready to respond to a challenge, so when David Little suggested they should wear their Christmas jumpers at their December ZOOM meeting - they did just that. Foster Telford (who we all now call Johnny Cash) brought along Professor Dumbledore while David had a self portrait on his jumper, Alan's cat didn't do the usual photo bomb, and Richard's wife June made sure he had the most christmassy background. All in all the team provided a wonderful set of images which I trust made you smile. A very happy Christmas from the team



Solomon, a companion for Christmas....

At every Freemason's initiation a commitment is made to try and make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge, and perhaps learn something about the history of the organisation or perhaps develop confidence. Solomon is just the tool for every Freemason to do just this.

If you really can't find something to do and the Monopoly board has been put away for another year, why not sign into Solomon <https://solomon.ugle.org.uk/course/view.php?id=130>



Solomon

Fostering Curiosity- Developing Understanding

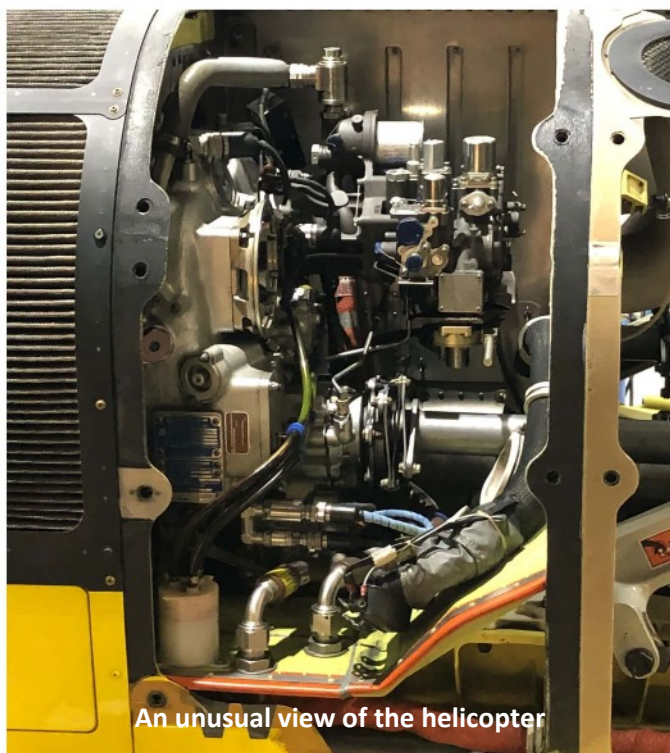


Home / Modules / Seek and Learn

Wiltshire Air Ambulance stripped back....

Wiltshire Air Ambulance is one of the best supported charities in the Province and for very good reason. It really is a life saving service and with 1,030 missions under its belt this year the Wiltshire Air Ambulance has helped save many hundreds of lives.

It really is funded by you, flying for you and as you sit down to your Christmas lunch please take a moment to think of the Air Ambulance team that will be on 'standby' ready to be airborne at a moment's notice and to fly anywhere in the County to help treat someone in need of urgent medical treatment or a medical evacuation to a specialist hospital.



An unusual view of the helicopter



Work in progress

This year the Air Ambulance (a Bell 429 helicopter) has added some improvements to the helicopter's ADAHRS (air data, attitude and heading reference system).

Chief pilot Matt Wilcock said: "This year's annual servicing saw the aircraft virtually stripped back to what we call the 'Jesus Nut'; the first component the whole aircraft is then built around. "We have completed a full airframe inspection, engine component, main rotor head and undercarriage refurbishments and avionics inspections, modifications and upgrades.

"Some of these inspections were due in the New Year, but as engineer access to the more difficult areas of the aircraft was already achieved, we brought these inspections forward to improve the availability of the aircraft next year."

Wiltshire Air Ambulance's critical care paramedics were still available to respond to emergencies when the helicopter was away, as they attended incidents in one of the charity's two Rapid Response Vehicles which are equipped with the same lifesaving equipment found on board the helicopter.

In addition, neighbouring air ambulances supported where additional speed was required, just as Wiltshire Air Ambulance assists its partners when their own helicopters are unavailable, to ensure the care of the patient is never compromised.

Earlier this year Wiltshire Air Ambulance announced its annual costs have risen to £4 million, as the charity emerges from the clinical and financial challenges of the COVID pandemic.



*Day
or
Night*



*We're flying
for you*



Wiltshire
Air Ambulance

funded by you, flying for you



The Grand Superintendent....



What a year and here we are again wondering what the future has in store for us. In 2020 we imagined that a vaccination would be the 'silver bullet' to see off Covid-19: little did we know what nature had in store for us. Three vaccination jabs later and it somehow feels as if we are neither free of fear or ready to take bold purposeful steps into 2022.

And yet I still find areas of positivity which give me cause for hope, and I trust you too will look beyond the immediate and contemplate a future free of restrictions, rules and regulations: a time when we will be able to consign lateral flow tests to the back of a cupboard, dispense with face masks, and more importantly shake the hand of a Companion.

My thoughts, as ever, are constantly directed to how the Province can improve the understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of Royal Arch Masonry in Wiltshire. The word enjoyment may at first glance appear to be a little flippant, it is not meant to. Surely for any organisation to be successful in attracting members it must of necessity provide an enjoyable experience for its members. We try very hard to explain and promote the unique relationship which exists between the Craft and the Royal Arch, and it is clear to me that without a convincing proposition as to why they should join the Order and become a Companion, we are not going to win the hearts and minds of the undecided among members of the Craft. In my last Across the Plain column I said the Royal Arch needed a USP - a unique selling point. A full six months later I have still to be persuaded that we have discovered 'What it is'. The Provincial team is working hard on new initiatives to make the Royal Arch attractive to the new Master Mason, while at the same time examining how we can better engage with our Companions, and discover what we need to do to encourage a greater participation in our Order.

My wish for 2022 is to see a substantial increase in the number of Wiltshire Craft Freemasons joining the Royal Arch. I am delighted that the Provincial executive shares this important ambition and is determined to make sure that no stone is left unturned in the quest to achieve our goal.

Growth is not going to be achieved unless each and every one of us sets out proactively to promote the Royal Arch within our Craft Lodges. Yes, we have Royal Arch representatives within our Lodges, and as important and committed as they are, they alone must not and cannot be expected to be our only source of promoting this wonderful Order. We all have the responsibility to take the Royal Arch forward simply because no one else is going to do it for us. A number for you to ponder on Companions is that there are just over one thousand three hundred Craft masons in this Province who have yet to complete their journey in Pure Antient Masonry.

The Royal Arch team is always receptive to ideas from Companions and I encourage you to share your own thoughts on how we can be even more successful. I know the Provincial Grand Orator is always keen to tell his audience that there is no such thing as a silly question, and I'm sure he will concur when I say there is no such thing as a silly suggestion - off the wall maybe, but never silly.

I recall the words of the Pro Grand Master and Pro First Grand Principal Peter Lowndes when he 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, he reiterated his firm belief that Royal Arch should be the first priority; and who am I to disagree?

Earlier in this piece I mentioned the need for Companions to enjoy their membership of the Royal Arch. One of the questions asked of me is whether or not I approve of Companions sharing the ritual. I have been very clear on this subject and for the sake of regularity I will repeat it once again. The Province is very happy for ritual to be shared among qualified Companions. Indeed a recent meeting of the Lansdowne Chapter of Unity No.626 witnessed 20 Provincial Officers taking an active role in a double Exaltation. Let me say, it did not make the ceremony less meaningful for the Exaltees.

This is where you belong....

Getting more members involved sharing the ritual has always proved beneficial in bringing us closer in our relationships, and the feeling of belonging as Companions. After all it's the hard work we put into our preparation which leads to the most enjoyable and memorable evenings.

I have already mentioned there are a number of Candidates eagerly waiting to be exalted: in addition there are a number of joining members awaiting ballot. As we receive these new members into our Order, we must ensure their expectations are met. Our meetings must be well-structured to leave a lasting favourable impression on our Candidates, not only on the nights of their own Exaltation but all subsequent Convocations. Let us all contribute to ensure our ceremonies are filled with warmth, conducted with decorum and sincerity whilst being meaningful through the information we impart, which I am sure will translate into a most pleasurable and unforgettable occasion for us all.

Should there be an occasion when there is no Candidate, this should not detract from ensuring the Convocation having added value with the inclusion of interesting, informative, and well-prepared lectures or discussions, Solomon being an excellent source of material from where to start.

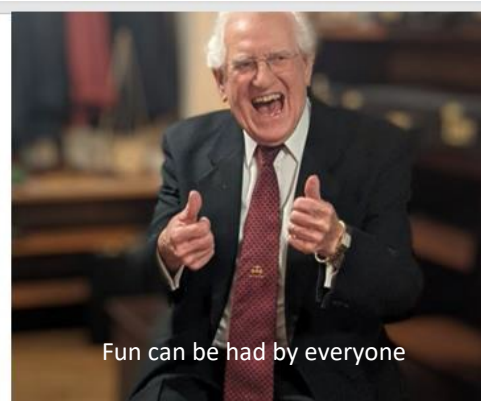
Companions, our Province continues to run smoothly due to the tireless work undertaken by the Provincial Executive, much of it un-noticed. I take this opportunity to thank my Executive and Active Provincial Officers for their support and commitment, not only to me but to all Chapters in the Province.

It would be remiss of me not to thank the Chapters that continue to donate and support our Children at Christmas initiative, your generosity has brought immense pleasure and support to many children, especially those with learning difficulties. This brings me nicely to the point where I thank every one of you for your support and as always look forward to meeting with you all in the New Year.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas. And a healthy and prosperous New Year.



It doesn't get much better than this



Fun can be had by everyone



Its not always black and white



Waiting patiently



This month's cover features three wise men otherwise known as the Provincial executive wishing all our readers a very Happy Christmas.

Important information.

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Comment, Challenge, Criticise.....

The Greek philosopher Socrates was put on trial for corrupting the youth of Athens by inviting them to 'think' about the reality of God (Socrates did not believe in God). He was found guilty and died having taken the hemlock offered by his executioner. It's difficult to believe that today in 21st century Britain we live in a time when there is a real reluctance to challenge anyone's viewpoint for fear of being 'cancelled'. While such a fate is not quite as serious as death, for some, the inability to be able to express their thoughts might well be viewed as a form of death - the death of freedom of expression.

As Freemasons we are encouraged, in our private assemblies, to offer our sentiments and opinions on such subjects as are regularly introduced in the Lecture under the guidance of an experienced master.

Sometimes, expressing a viewpoint or opinion can be misunderstood especially if made with a degree of forcefulness. Regrettably, some Brethren are disposed to 'take offence' and withdraw from dialogue despite our teaching encouraging Brethren to settle their differences amicably.

We are also witnessing another strange phenomenon, where an individual is 'not allowed' to hold, let alone express an opinion which causes or is perceived to cause offence to another.

Freemasonry we are reminded is a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. From the myriad of books and papers which have been written on the subject it will come as no surprise to discover there are many opinions on what this explanation really means.

The same applies in relation to the variation in ritual and rubric used in our Lodges. I've also been involved in a great debate on the wearing of Masonic jewels: and on whether an agnostic can become a Freemason. The UGLE holds that a person who believes that nothing is known or can be known of the existence or nature of God, can be made a Freemason. I don't agree, and reserve the right to disagree. I hope they don't 'cancel' me.

I believe we need to preserve free speech, and welcome the Brother who seeks to Comment, Challenge, and even to Criticise as part of the cut and thrust of debate.

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



It was the night before Christmas....

It was the night before Christmas, but Covid was here,
So we all had to stay extra cautious this year.
Our masks were all hung by the chimney with care
In case Santa forgot his and needed a spare.
With Covid, we couldn't leave cookies or cake
So we left Santa hand sanitizer to take.
The children were sleeping, the brave little tots
The ones over 5 had just had their first shots,
And mum in her nighty and me in my cap
Had just settled in for a long winter's nap.
But we tossed and we turned all night in our beds
As visions of variants danced in our heads.
Gamma and Delta and now Omicron
These Covid mutations that go on and on
I thought to myself, "If this doesn't get better,
I'll soon be familiar with every Greek letter".
Then just as I started to drift off and doze
A clatter of noise from the front lawn arose.
I leapt from my bed and ran straight down the stair
I opened the door, and an old gent stood there.
His surgical mask made him look pretty weird
But I knew who he was by his red suit and beard.
I kept six feet away but blurted out quick
"What are you doing here, jolly Saint Nick?"
Then I said, "Where's your presents, your reindeer and
sleigh ?
Don't you know that tomorrow will be Christmas Day? ".
And Santa stood there looking sad in the snow
As he started to tell me a long tale of woe.
He said he'd been stuck at the North Pole alone
All his white collar elves had been working from home,
Those left in the toyshop had little to do.
With supply chain disruptions, they could make nothing
new.
And as for the reindeer, they'd all gone away.

None of them left to pull on his sleigh.
He said Dasher and Dancer were in quarantine,
Prancer and Vixen refused the vaccine,
Comet and Cupid were in ITU,
So were Donner and Blitzen, they may not pull
through.
And Rudolph's career can't be resurrected.
With his shiny red nose, they all think he's infected.
Even with his old sleigh, Santa couldn't go far.
Every border to cross needs a new PCR.
Santa sighed as he told me how nice it would be
If children could once again sit on his knee.
He couldn't care less if they're naughty or nice
But they'd have to show proof that they'd had their
shot twice.
But then the old twinkle returned to his eyes.
And he said that he'd brought me a Christmas
surprise.
When I unwrapped the box and opened it wide,
Starlight and rainbows streamed out from inside.
Some letters whirled round and flew up to the sky
And they spelled out a word that was 40 feet high.
There first was an H, then an O, then a P,
Then I saw it spelled HOPE when it added the E.
"Christmas magic" said Santa as he smiled through
his beard.
Then suddenly all of the reindeer appeared.
He jumped on his sleigh and he waved me good-bye,
Then he soared o'er the rooftops and into the sky.
I heard him exclaim as he drove out of sight
"Get your vaccines my friends, Merry Christmas,
good-night".
Then I went back to bed and a sweet Christmas
dream
Of a world when we'd finished with Covid 19..



Why White Gloves?

Michael Lee CBE, PJGD

One question that has been frequently asked in our Lodge of Instruction is when– and why – do we have to wear white gloves? Today they are rarely seen outside, say, the catering profession...so why are they worn in Freemasonry?

When?

Let us start with the question of 'when'. That former Assistant Grand Secretary and reliable guide on Masonic style, Graham Redman, writes (p.28) in his book on 'Masonic Etiquette' that *'in Grand Lodge white gloves are an essential part of a Brother's regalia and are regarded as such in the majority of private lodges - but [in the latter] gloves do not have to be worn...'*

A Report by the Board of General Purposes dated 10th June 1964 sets out the Grand Lodge guidelines:

'It is left to the discretion of the Master of each Lodge to decide, after considering the interests of the members generally, whether to request that they be worn.'

When such a request is made it should include all present and not only the officers.

If gloves are worn they should be worn at all times except:

By Candidates for the three Degrees - throughout the ceremony.

By the Master Elect - when actually taking his Obligation on the V.S.L.

There is no objection to Entered Apprentices and Fellowcraft wearing gloves when not actually being Passed or Raised.'

Several points arise for a Master's consideration. While the default position of Grand Lodge is 'gloves are to worn', as they can be optional in a Provincial lodge the onus is on the Master/Secretary out of courtesy to visitors to include this requirement on the Lodge Summons: e.g. *'Dark Suit and White Gloves.'* Apprentices and Fellowcraft are not *obliged* to wear gloves until after they are Raised although if it is the Lodge tradition then they should comply.

It has often been customary on warm days for the Master to indicate that Brethren *may* remove their gloves. This is not a helpful practice; either all or none should remove their gloves. A happier phrasing might well be: *'The Temple is very warm, Brethren, let us all remove our gloves'*.

And why?

It would be tempting to say that 'white tie, white gloves and tails' for a Gentleman's evening dress are simply a continuation of the Edwardian age of elegance. The reality is that white gloves have been a Masonic requirement – both operative and speculative - for well over 600 years.

Of the two principal groups of operative masons – the *lathomus* or stone carving and the *cementarius* or stone laying – the latter were at severe risk from the fresh lime mortar that was used to bed in the stone courses. Employers – both in Scotland and England – were required by their Guilds to provide protective gloves. For example, in 1322 at Ely Cathedral the clergy were required to supply gloves for masons on all 'new work'; in 1423 at York Minster ten pairs of gloves were supplied to the mason 'stone setters' at a total cost of 18 pence [6 pence today]; and in 1456 at Eton College five pairs of gloves were supplied *'for layers of the walls as custom required'*. One suspects that, on rough hewn stone, gloves had a busy but brief life. In addition to the employers rather 'economical' contribution an additional source of gloves was to be found in the lodges themselves. The Shaw Statutes of 1599 required all on admission to the grade of

Why White Gloves....

Fellowcraft to pay a fee of £10 [!] with ten shillings-worth of gloves.

Sometimes the new mason had to provide gloves (and aprons) for the entire company as part of his entrance fees. The practice was known as 'clothing the lodge'. Anderson's Constitutions of 1723, in article VII, stipulates that *'Every new Brother at his making is decently to cloath [sic] the Lodge, that is all the brethren present'*

With the arrival of Speculative Freemasonry in the C18 the presentation of gloves took on a more symbolic or ceremonial gesture. In 1724 at Dunblane the (now affluent) members themselves presented a new entrant with his 'gloves and apron'.

In the same year at another lodge a source noted: *'When a Free Mason is enter'd after having given to all present of the Fraternity a Pair of Men's and a Pair of Women's gloves and a Leather apron...'* This is the earliest known reference to the presentation of women's gloves but the idea clearly caught the imagination. A French commentary of 1737 records that an Apprentice would receive an apron of white skin, a pair of gloves for himself and a pair *'for her whom he esteems the most'*. Gallic gallantry had taken hold.

In Count Tolstoy's novel "War and Peace" it states that: *"the newly-obligated brother was then invested with a white apron, and received a trowel and three pairs of white gloves, two pairs for himself and one pair for the lady he most esteemed, after which the Master explained their symbolic meaning to him."*

By the early C19 the presentation of gloves to the candidate gradually faded from many Minute Books – and Treasurers merely adjusted 'glove-money' within the normal entrance fees. The Emulation Ritual of 1823 ignored the practice entirely.

In the late C20 it is interesting to note that in several lodges, those working 'Perfect' or 'Staffordshire' for example, the tradition of awarding gloves remains in force to this day. The Presentation of the Gloves comes at the end of the ceremony and, using a pleasing piece of formal ritual, the Master explains the symbolism of purity and adds some words to the effect that that the gloved hands of a newly made Mason, purified by his Initiation, must never be sullied again. He adds that the second pair is intended to stress the high respect in which Masons hold women in general and in particular the one closest to his heart.

The glove's protection had been of material nature for the operative mason but symbolic and spiritual for the speculative mason. For this reason when touching the VSL in the Obligation the hand should not be covered. Likewise when forming the 'fraternal chain' customary in certain rituals, the hands must not wear gloves. This is to allow 'the subtle energies of friendship' to move freely around that circle.

After-thoughts

It is of interest that even Shakespeare, as the son of a glove-maker, used gloves as symbols of the bonds between one man and another, perhaps not unlike Freemasonry. In *The Winter's Tale*, for example, the clown proclaims: *"If I were not in love with Mopsa, thou shouldst take no money of me; but being enthralled as I am, it will also be the bondage of certain ribbons and gloves"* (Act IV, Scene 4), and in *King Henry V*, (Act IV, Scene 1). the king exchanges gloves with the soldier Williams, as a pledge to meet again after the battle.

Do our white gloves perhaps deserve a greater respect than is sometimes given to them?

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. pc@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. I saw a picture of the proposed Wiltshire 2028 Festival Jewel which I thought looked really nice and I am looking forward to getting one. But when I do get it, when and where can I wear it?



A. Thank you for this very interesting question and I am really pleased you like the proposed Festival Jewel. I know an enormous amount of work has been undertaken to produce what I believe is a quite unique design, underpinned with a story which confirms that true charity emanates from the heart, and that charity is in a Freemason's DNA. Something every Wiltshire Freemason knows.

The wearing of breast jewels is a subject which could occupy every page of this magazine, but a short explanation will, I hope, suffice.

The first part of your question asks 'when' can you wear your Festival jewel. During the run up to to a Charity Festival Brethren will be encouraged to wear the jewel as a way to promote the Festival. During the period of the Festival we hope that Brethren will choose to wear the jewel to demonstrate their personal support of the Masonic Charitable Foundation, the beneficiary of the Festival.

Of course it goes without saying that to obtain a jewel a Brother must first demonstrate a level of financial support to the Festival, and this can be individually or through the Lodge. For further details 'watch this space'.

Your second question is 'where' can you wear the Festival Jewel, In answering this I will cover two aspects. The first is with regard to where on your jacket the jewel should be worn, the second is to offer advice on where geographically it should be worn. If you are a Companion in the Royal Arch, the first breast jewel should be the jewel of that Order, immediately to its left should be the UGLE Tercentenary Jewel (subject to you being qualified to wear it). The Wiltshire Festival Jewel should follow and then any Lodge specific jewel.

The issue of 'when and where' to wear a specific jewel is also governed by the principle of etiquette, which every Brother should do their best to follow. A good guide to apply when determining what is right or wrong is to consider the description of the jewel. Therefore, a Provincial Jewel is properly worn in the Province to which it refers: likewise a Lodge Jewel is worn in the Lodge to which it applies. A good example is a Past Master's Jewel which should be worn only in the Lodge which presented it. When visiting, a Brother who is a Past Master will already be wearing the jewel of a Past Master and needs no other emblem of his status in the Craft. Similarly, a Brother who wears a Lodge centenary or bi-centenary jewel should wear the jewel only in the Lodge to which it refers.

But here is the rub: what sanctions are there for wearing Masonic jewels out of sequence, or in the wrong place? There are none, and for very good reason. It is expected that a Brother would not knowingly do anything which may cause offence, or contravene the principles of good order and etiquette.

Christmas comes but once a year....



It hardly seems two months since I was welcomed into Provincial Grand Lodge at Trowbridge and invested as Deputy Provincial Grand Master for this wonderful Province of Wiltshire. What a day it was and I want to thank everyone who attended and made my special day such huge success.

As many of you will know there is another very special reason why I am proud to be your Deputy Provincial Grand Master. In 1991 my dad Maurice Leighfield was appointed and invested as Deputy Provincial Grand Master, and it really is a privilege to be able to follow in his footsteps 30 years later.

I also want to congratulate my friend Phil Still who was Invested as the Assistant Provincial Grand Master at the same meeting. Phil has been very busy across the Province getting to know all the Lodge secretaries he dealt with in his previous role. A role he has handed over to Rob Evans who is also the secretary of Longleat Lodge No.1478. Rob will be ably assisted by John Deane, secretary of Corsham Lodge No.6616 and a much valued member of the Provincial Communication Team.

Talking of which, I do hope Across the Plain readers have viewed the Corsham Christmas video, it's brilliant and a great advertisement for Wiltshire Freemasonry. Having spent some time with Tom Snell and the team I know just how much work they put into what ends up as a 3 minute video clip.

As we fast approach 2022 (do you remember the Millenium?) I wish you a very merry Christmas, and a happy and healthy New Year. I look forward to seeing you and sharing some Masonic cheer.



BORDER LODGE NO.3129 INVITED SANTA CLAUS TO VISIT THE LUDGERSHALL PLAY SCHOOL WHERE HE GAVE EVERY CHILD A GIFT

Hospices, we owe them so much....



Since 1980, **Prospect Hospice** has provided the only dedicated end-of-life care service for people living in Swindon, Marlborough and north east Wiltshire. The Prospect team bring care, comfort and confidence, around the clock, every day of the year.

Prospect provide excellent, personalised and compassionate care for everyone in the community who is affected by a life-limiting illness. Working in close partnership with other organisations – and specifically with local health and social care professionals – Prospect staff ensure that anyone can access the best possible care whenever and wherever they need it.

Prospect Hospice provides a broad range of services to thousands of patients, carers and family members every year. A dedicated team of nurses, doctors and therapists support patients at the hospice in Wroughton, in their own homes and care homes. Carers and family members can also access a range of free support services.

Through outreach work – talking to businesses, schools, GP surgeries and community groups – the charity raises awareness about life-limiting illness and end-of-life care, and encourage conversations about death and dying. The aim is to break down any barriers that might stop people from accessing Prospect services.

Prospect Hospice is a charity, funded primarily by the local community. Each year it costs several million pounds to provide the care that patients and their families depend on. Less than a third of funding comes from statutory organisations like the NHS – the rest is raised from organisations such as the Freemasons.



For over 40 years **Dorothy House** has been an active part of the local community. Their teams recognise that every life is special. Their mission is to make sure that anyone in their community who is facing a life-limiting illness can live well, and die well.

They do this by understanding who their patients are and what is most important to them. Together, they create individual care journeys which start at diagnosis and continue with bereavement support for family members, carers and children.

Without the backing of the community, they would not be able to care for as many people as they do and be there for local families who need them most. Your support means the world to Dorothy House. That's because any donation or gift, large or small, means that people living with a life-limiting illness get the care and support they and their families need to make the most of the time they have together.



Every year, **Salisbury Hospice** provides specialist palliative care to 1,000 local people with life-limiting conditions. Through the generosity and support of local people, Salisbury Hospice can continue to offer nursing and medical care, emotional and practical support, welfare advice, occupational therapy and physiotherapy, complementary therapies and creative activities.

These services are provided free to patients and their families – either at the hospice, in the community or in their own homes. They don't just help people in the last few weeks of their lives – they often provide care for up to a year or longer.

It costs £2.4 million to run the hospice annually – and less than 45% is funded by the NHS. As a charity, Salisbury Hospice aims to raise £1.5 million each year towards these costs to ensure vital services continue. Without the generous support of the Freemasons of Salisbury and Wiltshire the hospice would not be able to achieve this.

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

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24 JULY
2022



Pre-concert Concert Finishes
6.00pm - 10.00pm

- **Central Band of the Royal Air Force**
by kind permission of the Air Force Board of the Defence Council
- **The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight**
- **The Royal Air Force FALCONS**
parachute display team [both subject to weather conditions]

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MATILDA WALE (soprano) - THE WESSEX (male choir)
MILITARY PIPES AND DRUMS - WILTSHIRE ACF CORPS OF DRUMS

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