



In touch > On line

The newsletter for Wiltshire Freemasons

*It's a new dawn, It's a new day, It's a new life,
for me, And I'm feeling good.*



JAN 22

Welcome to a New Year....



As we bid goodbye, with little, if any regret to the past year, we look forward to a new and hopefully better 2022. Despite the anni horribiles (that's two horrible years) I share the view of the Deputy Provincial Grand Master and believe 2022 will provide us with lots of new opportunities; which I trust we will seize with both hands and develop them for the good of Wiltshire Freemasonry.

My first opportunity to write for Across the Plain (the first Newsletter wasn't published until 2016) was the Winter 2014 edition. This followed my appointment as your Provincial Grand Master, and allowed me to set out what I believed were the six important issues facing Wiltshire Freemasonry. Recently I looked back on my comments and share them with you today.

- 1. We must embrace change.** It has been said that "change is the law of life" Freemasonry competes in a fast changing social arena from which it seeks to attract potential members. It is therefore imperative that we create a pleasant environment in which our members can enjoy their Freemasonry.
- 2. We need to build structures.** Having spent a lifetime in business I recognise the need to build structures which support the provision of member services.
- 3. We must be relevant.** Our objective is to make Freemasonry relevant, acceptable and accessible and to ensure the wellbeing and enjoyment of our membership. The Province will be very pro-active, showcasing Wiltshire Freemasonry and building on the spirit of openness and transparency.
- 4. We must value the family.** Family is as important in Freemasonry as it is in well organised society. It forms and underpins our the society and that of which we are a part.
- 5. We must prize what we have.** Freemasonry possesses many great traditions which have served us so well over many years. Heritage is to be prized not scorned, as it is the seemingly archaic aspect of our fraternity which is the fulcrum on which the Freemason depends for support. I am persuaded of the need to be open and transparent but not at the expense of the unique and distinctive characteristics of Freemasonry.
- 6. We must Communicate.** In a world where the smartphone, tablet and laptop rule, Freemasons must adapt to the popular means of communication. Social media sites, despite the inherent problems they have experienced are still the preferred method of exchanging information amongst a large group within society - Freemasons included.

Seven years on I am proud to say that the six points are still the surest guide to success for Wiltshire Freemasonry. As we enter 2022 I trust we will have but one aim in view; to unite in the grand design of being happy and to communicate happiness.

Sally and I wish you all a very Happy , Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

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A New Year brings new opportunities....



This really is an exciting time to be involved in Wiltshire Freemasonry with lots of new opportunities to promote and support our fraternity as we enter a new year. For me, the opportunities are exciting and daunting in equal measure. But with your assistance I am confident that during the coming year we will be prepared to seize every opportunity which comes our way.

The Provincial Grand Master has spoken at length about the need to provide support to Mentors, Membership Officers, and the many Brethren who are taking on the duties and responsibilities of a Lodge officer. I am really pleased to confirm that Steve Lee and his Learning & Development Team, working with the Membership Officer and the Mentor, are putting in place a programme of support. Subject to Covid rules (yes we do need to be aware of any restrictions placed on us by the rules) the teams will be inviting Brethren to participate either in person or online with a training course. Please do your very best to attend a course when offered the opportunity.

The Wiltshire 2028 Festival Committee has already met on a number of occasions to discuss plans for the event. For some of our new Brethren, the concept of Festival might require a little explanation. I am delighted to report that the Communication Team is putting together a short presentation which not only explains what a Festival is, but also why we have them, and what we hope to achieve from this one. I can confirm that the UGLE and the Masonic Charitable Foundation have approved the design of the Festival Jewel, and I am told they have even been struck by Toye Kenning. I'm looking forward to the opportunity to wear mine.

New and younger Freemasons are an important part of the Wiltshire Masonic family. During the past two years we have welcomed many Initiates into Lodges across the Province. I know that some of them have featured in the two Christmas videos produced by the Media Team, and it really was quite special to witness their keen support of the Province at Trowbridge in October. This coming year will see some changes which will reflect the importance we attach to new and younger Brethren while at the same time recognising the sovereignty of the Lodge.

Incidentally, I do hope you enjoyed the Winter 2021 edition of Across the Plain as much as I did. I know that there were some issues with the size of the magazine and some Brethren had issues in downloading the file. Rest assured the Communication Team has taken on board the very positive comments and will make sure future editions of the Newsletter have a file size which can be downloaded by everyone. Incidentally, I do hope Brethren will view, or listen to the Newsletter online. I must admit I do enjoy listening to the dulcet tones of Andrew Hargreaves (Vastern Lodge No.8977) as he narrates the Newsletter so superbly.

One of the most easy to see changes for 2022 is a new colour scheme for **In touch >On line**, and the use of a slightly larger 'easy to read' font size. I hope you like both features and that they will contribute to your enjoyment of the newsletter.

Finally, I wish you all a very Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you in 2022, especially at the Provincial Officers' Dinner in Devizes on Saturday 5th February at 7.30pm

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It's a very different job....



You would have imagined that having been the Provincial Grand Secretary for four years I might have had a clear insight into the role and duties of the Assistant Provincial Grand Master; you would have been wrong. Sometimes it is possible to be so wrapped up in your own job that you simply do not have time to take a close interest in the tasks performed by your colleagues. Working at close range with the Provincial Grand Master, his Deputy, and the Assistant you do get a sense of their work, and to appreciate the level of commitment to Freemasonry which is unseen by many in the Province. But you can't really claim to know what it is they actually do beyond dealing with an ever increasing pile of paperwork, attending business and Lodge meetings, presenting certificates etc.

I suppose the easiest way to describe the difference between being the Provincial Secretary and the Assistant Provincial Grand Master is by thinking of the former role being about process and administration, while the latter is much focused on being out and about and ceremonial. It is also the case that your mindset has to change from being a backroom person to being a visible face of the Province.

What I can say is that I am really enjoying the opportunity to be out and about, visiting Lodges, and meeting people; and I have been made to feel very welcome wherever I have visited. The Provincial Grand Master did tell me that I must always be careful to listen to the Provincial Director of Ceremonies when presiding at a meeting, having undertaken a few Installations I am able to appreciate just how good the advice was. All I can say is that when you reach the West of the Lodge and turn to face the newly Installed Master, your mouth goes strangely dry, you feel slightly vulnerable, and your memory fades. Thank goodness for the most important prompt of the evening - and so you begin - Worshipful Master..... and believe me there is a feeling of relief when you finish and are escorted back to your seat in the North East part of the Lodge.

It's also very special to be involved in the management of the Province in quite a different way to that of my previous role of Secretary. Wiltshire is very fortunate in that the Provincial Grand Master operates in a very collegiate manner, seeking opinions from various sources and taking advice from his executive team. As an advisor your only expectation is that something you say might influence a decision, whereas being a member of the executive allows you to become a decision maker with the huge responsibility that goes with the job.

After two months I can honestly say that I am privileged and honoured to occupy the office of Assistant Provincial Grand Master and I am looking forward to visiting Lodges across the Province, meeting Brethren and enjoying the camaraderie that is so unique to Freemasonry.

Talking of which, I would like to remind all Provincial officers that the annual dinner for active officers of the current year, and for those appointed in 2019, plus Visiting Officers and members of the Membership, Mentoring, Learning & Development, and Communication Teams is being held on Saturday 5th February in Devizes. This is a plus partners event, so please book with Foster-Telford@outlook.com

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Happy to help....

Freemasons from Wiltshire Lodge of Fidelity No.663 have been assisting as marshals and supporting the team at the Melksham vaccination centre. Well done, and don't they do look good in their 'new' regalia of dayglo orange hi viz with the square and compasses.



Bob Gabbott

John Merrett

Paul Robinson

Les Welling,

Provincial Officers' Dinner....

The Provincial Grand Master looks forward to welcoming Provincial Officers, their wives and partners, together with members of the various Provincial teams with their wives and partners to The Corn Exchange in Devizes on Saturday 5th February at 7.30pm.

Wiltshire Freemasons




Provincial Officers' Dinner
 Wives and Partners
Saturday
5th February
7.30pm
 The Corn Exchange
 Devizes
 Guest speaker: Professor Allan Johns
 Foster Telford 115 Wessex Road | Bulbridge 1 Wilton 1 SP2 0LW
 E.mail: foster-telford@outlook.com



BOOK NOW



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So many enquires about this concert...

A great opportunity to enjoy a picnic in the magnificent grounds of Bowood House & Gardens while listening to the world renowned Central Band of the Royal Air Force, and at the same time help support the work of some fantastic charities. A perfect combination.

Wiltshire Freemasons



24 JULY 2022 **LIVE** Pre-concert 6.00pm - Concert Finishes 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]

ALSO FEATURING

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

TICKETS GO TO @open-to-the-skies

visit the website: www.opentotheskies.co.uk

