



Launching the Wiltshire 2028 Festival.



In the January edition of **In touch > On line** I wrote about how sometimes we are apprehensive about our ability to meet our own self-imposed expectations. When I sat down to pen my February contribution, I became acutely aware of the truth of those words especially as I realised this newsletter would prominently feature the Wiltshire 2028 Festival and the high expectations that I and others have for it. I know that Lodge Charity Stewards, Treasurers and, of course, Lodge members will be waiting with bated breath for details of the financial goal set for the festival. I'm afraid you will have to wait a few more days as I will not be disclosing the actual goal until Saturday 18 February at the launch dinner being held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Swindon.

My expectation of how much we will raise as a Province is tempered with the reality that the cost of living has had a deleterious effect on everyone's finances and by default the amount of money we have available to spend. However, I am buoyed by the fact that Freemasons are motivated by that virtue we recognise as being the distinguishing characteristic of a Freemason's heart. I have absolutely no doubt that Freemasons across the Province will discover ways to adjust their spending in order to allow them to support the Wiltshire 2028 Festival and The Masonic Charitable Foundation.

I am also delighted to hear from across the Province how Brethren plan to raise money for the Wiltshire 2028 Festival. Some of the ideas are amazingly 'bonkers'; others quite traditional. Whatever you intend to do please be assured that the festival team will do everything they can to assist you in achieving your goal.

Finally on this subject, the festival team, under the guidance of Simon Leighfield, has prepared a presentation that they hope every Lodge will invite them to present.

I have been pleased to hear how Lodges are processing enquiries and applications for membership of our fraternity. It really is important that when a man has passed through the interview process and has been deemed a fit and proper person to be made a Freemason, that no unreasonable delay should occur in Initiating him. I do not agree with or accept the tired trope that 'I had to wait eighteen months before I was Initiated' as being a good enough reason to delay a man's reception into Freemasonry.

I am really impressed with the Provincial Team who have been quite superb in supporting Simon, Phil and myself during the past four months. Their dedication, commitment and above all their energy is something I'm very proud to acknowledge. Being an active officer in our Province certainly requires a high level of stamina. Of course, the same applies to the many Brethren who accept an appointment in their Lodge. The honour and privilege of wearing a collar comes at a cost and sometimes we are all guilty of failing to appreciate the work undertaken on our behalf. So, today I want to say thank you to each and everyone who makes a contribution to the well running of the Lodge, your efforts are appreciated.

My opening comments were directed to the launch of the Wiltshire 2028 Festival and I just want to add a postscript to them. The role of the Lodge Charity Steward is a key one and during the next five years he will be at the very heart of the campaign to raise funds for the Masonic Charitable Foundation. Please work with him as he seeks to promote the festival and be kindly disposed to him when he encourages you to sign up to a Regular Giving Plan.

Your gift will be thankfully received and faithfully applied.



The 2023 Rectitude Essay.

The Master of Lodge of Rectitude No.335 David Hogg, is pleased to announce that Bro Tony Harvey, the Prestonian Lecturer 2012 and well known author, has accepted his invitation to deliver the 2023 Rectitude Essay at Pickwick Masonic hall on Monday 15 May 2023..

A warm invitation is extended to Brethren from across the Province to attend the 2023 Rectitude Essay. You can be assured of a friendly welcome and an informative and entertaining presentation that will be followed by a superb festive board.

To book your seat at this event please contact the Lodge secretary by email: 335@pglwilts.org.uk



Thumb up or down.



Having closed the Volume of the Sacred Law, the Immediate Past Master steps forward and delivers the ceremony's final words 'Fidelity, Fidelity, Fidelity'. Visitors surreptitiously look around to see if this is a 'thumbs up' or a 'thumbs down' Lodge. Some will adjust their fingers in keeping, while others maintain the posture of their own Lodge. Which hand position is correct?

The use and misuse of the sign of fidelity and a sign of reverence has kept Lodge preceptors in business for generations. Let us start then with the sign of fidelity; a proper Masonic sign whose purpose is explained in the Emulation Lodge of Instruction (which drives most forms of Masonic ritual) as 'emblematically to shield the repository of my secrets from the attacks of the insidious'. It is quite clearly a defensive and protective action and it seems logical therefore to expand the hand with the thumb to provide the greatest area of protection. For the thumb's position to be at right angles makes very good Masonic sense and also accords with the general instruction given by the Master on another occasion.

What about a sign of reverence. We should bear in mind that a sign of reverence is not recognised or taught by Grand Lodge even though - confusingly - it appears in the rubric of 'Emulation' working. However, 'a sign of reverence' with fingers touching the seat of human emotion – the heart – has long been employed and respected outside Freemasonry throughout Western society. It is not defensive; it represents a positive outpouring of love, sympathy, respect or reverence. Its use is therefore quite appropriate when we unite in prayer to the GAOTU, indeed, it is the most simple, most eloquent and correct form when any prayer is said.

...but back to the Closing. Fidelity simply means faithfulness and is demonstrated by loyalty. The Emulation rubric does not say 'All give the Sign of Fidelity'. Indeed it cannot do so as the VSL and thus the Lodge are both now closed. It says very simply but clearly 'All touch left breast lightly with each word Fidelity', which very action mirrors a sign of reverence. The fingers of the hand lightly touch the heart to remind departing masons of the duty to keep the faith and remain loyal to those moral principles that have been taught in the Lodge, and which we are charged to practice outside the Lodge, Integrity, Friendship, Respect and Charity.



You may think you know it all, but you don't.

Which is why the Provincial Learning and Development Team is inviting you to join them at the Deacons' Workshop on Saturday 25 February at The Planks in Swindon. It's without doubt one of the most enjoyable of the Lodge offices and it can also be the most daunting.

Multi tasking is just one of the skills you will learn, as well as when to speak, and what to say and all of this at the same time you are responsible for a candidate being Initiated or a Brother being Passed or Raised. Scary, it sure can be. Satisfying, you bet it is.

It's said no one plans to fail, they just fail to plan. Well, the team will be on hand to guide you through the processes, offer you tips and advice but, most importantly, answer all your questions - even the silly ones.

**moving
to
Deacon**

**TRAINING
STARTS
NOW**



**Join the Learning & Development
Team at 10.00am
Saturday 25th February
The Planks, Swindon.
<https://tinyurl.com/y37bj85c>**

Which way is your VSL?

The Notes on Ritual and Procedure in the Emulation Ritual Book make it quite clear how a Lodge claiming to work the Emulation form of ritual should position the VSL. It is placed on the Master's pedestal so that the print is placed for him to read and the Square and Compasses are normally positioned on the right hand page as the Master looks at it. The point of the Square and the points of the Compasses are towards the bottom of the page and towards the Master.

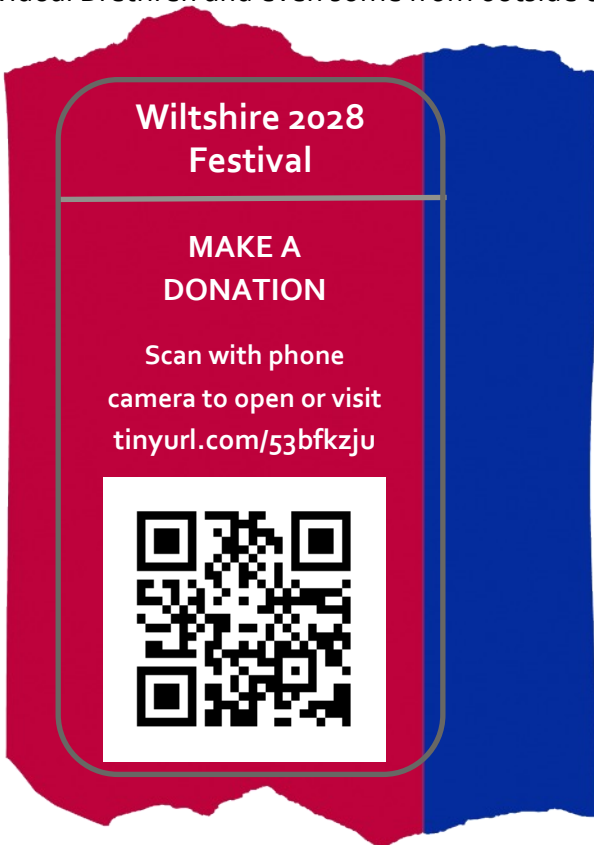
Can it be placed for the candidate to read? Of course it can but that would be contrary to the guidance of the Emulation Lodge of Improvement. However, if your Lodge chooses to place the VSL this way, the point of the Square and the points of the Compasses should always point towards the bottom of the page.



The Wiltshire 2028 Festival.

The distinguishing characteristic of a Freemason's heart. Of course, every Freemason will know and be able to recite the words which follow this phrase found in the charge given to the new Initiate as he stands for the first time in the northeast corner of the building. It is of course 'I mean charity' hence the reason this lovely piece of ritual is often referred to as The Charity Charge, and why in some Lodges it is given to the newly made brother by the Lodge Charity Steward.

As we enter 2023 many of you will be aware that the Province is also embarking on a five-year period of Festival in support of the Masonic Charitable Foundation. The Provincial Grand Master will formally launch the festival on Saturday 18th February but in truth it is already receiving support from Lodges, individual Brethren and even some from outside of the Province; to which we say a huge thank you.



During the next few months, members of the Wiltshire 2028 Festival team led by the Provincial Charity Steward, will be engaging with Lodges across the Province and asking members to do something very special by making a regular contribution to the festival.

No one is pretending that giving is easy - everyone is experiencing the effects of the cost of living crisis, and for some times really are hard.

While you will be asked to contribute to the Wiltshire 2028 Festival, your, Lodge Charity Steward will only ever expect you to give as your circumstances fairly warrant.

Thank you for all your help and support
Clive Emerson PrGChStwd.

The Provincial team out in force.

Following the Installation meeting at Royal Sussex Lodge of Emulation No.355, when Bro John Wain was Installed as Master, fourteen members of the active Provincial Team joined the Provincial Grand Master John Reid for a group photograph taken by Bro Simon Groves who was on hand to capture the moment for posterity.

Bro John Reid commented, "It really is good to see so many active officers coming out to support not only me, but the newly Installed Master, the Lodge, and the team".

