



What an amazing six months.



At our Lodge and Chapter Installation ceremonies I often tell the newly Installed Master or MEZ that despite any hopes they may have, the thief of time will reduce their year in office to a mere heartbeat and that before they know it they will be installing their successor. Time really does fly, especially when you are having fun.

That thought was brought home to me when I started writing my piece for April's edition of In touch > On line. I can't quite believe that this is my sixth edition, how time really has flown by.

In March I referred to the link connecting the Craft and the Royal Arch as being indissoluble, that is, it is lasting and can never be destroyed. I trust you have all seen the excellent graphics appearing on our social media sites, the Provincial website and in this edition of the monthly newsletter. The link symbol emphasises not only the unique connection between the Craft and the Royal Arch but also the fact that we are one organisation united in promoting Wiltshire Freemasonry. As Provincial Grand Master and Grand Superintendent I have the privilege of leading both the Craft and the Royal Arch and it is my ambition that the relationship between the two will become even stronger.

Upon my appointment to the office of Provincial Grand Master I set in train a number of initiatives, one of which was to align the promotion and appointment system to mirror that used in the Royal Arch. I also asked the executive team to develop a succession plan, similar to what we ask Lodges to do, in order that the Province can monitor and assess the Provincial Grand Officers of the future.

I was delighted to be able to notify many Brethren across the Province of their first Provincial appointment or promotion in the Craft. It is inevitable that some Brethren will feel disappointed to have missed out this year and for a very few that sense of disappointment might even manifest itself as resentment at being in some way overlooked. Let me assure you that no one is overlooked. Every eligible candidate is carefully considered for one of the limited places available. Being eligible to be considered is not itself a guarantee that an appointment or promotion will be forthcoming. In March I wrote that an appointment or promotion is not an entitlement based on length of service, although service to the Lodge after having passed the Chair is one of a number of criteria considered. The award of Provincial rank is not only a reward for past service it is also to be regarded as an opportunity and incentive for further service to the Lodge, to the Province and to Freemasonry in general. Today I want to invite every member of the Province to ask themselves - what is it I want from Freemasonry and what am I prepared to give in return?

Talking of which, I am delighted to offer my personal congratulations to brothers Piers and Tobin Rodbard-Hedderwick who are also members of Corsham Lodge No.6616. Piers and Tobin climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro the highest mountain in Africa to raise funds for the Turkey/Syria relief fund. What an outstanding achievement and amazing experience - well done.

I wasn't quite sure what superlatives I could add to the achievements of Bro Jack Jones a Fellow Craft from Longleat Lodge No.6114. Jack was presented with a Wiltshire Life Local Hero Award for his service to the local Warminster and Trowbridge community and I was left breathless when I read his story on p6 of this edition of In touch > On line. I literally am in awe of what he has done and continues to do for his community. Many congratulations Jack and dare I say - keep up the good work.



In touch > On line

The newsletter for Wiltshire Freemasons



The 2023 Rectitude Essay.

Hear Tony Harvey present the Rectitude Essay 2023 when he makes a welcome return visit to Wiltshire to tell us about the **HISTORIC LINKS BETWEEN THE CRAFT AND THE ROYAL ARCH.**



W Bro Tony Harvey
Prestonian Lecturer 2012
PRESENTS THE

RECTITUDE ESSAY 2023

HISTORIC LINKS
BETWEEN THE CRAFT
AND THE ROYAL ARCH



Monday 15 May 2023 - 4.15pm

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What is the Volume of the Sacred Law?

At a recent meeting the question was asked, "what happens to the Volume of the Sacred Law when a man who is not of the Christian faith is making an obligation such as at his Initiation? "

The first thing to say is that in a Lodge under the English, Irish and Scottish Constitutions the Volume of the Sacred Law (VSL) is The Bible. There can be little argument on this fact as the BoC makes this point quite clearly in the little read section titled 'Aims And Relationships Of The Craft' item 4.

Such is the importance of The Bible in our ceremonies, and it being recognised and accepted as The Volume of the Sacred Law, its place on the Master's pedestal cannot be superseded by any other holy book. The Bible is always open in a Lodge that is conducting Masonic business and it is the presence of the VSL that makes a Lodge 'just', as in just, perfect, and regular.

For the person who acknowledges an adherence to the Christian faith, each and every obligation they take is made on the 'open' Bible. Should an Initiate or Brother wish to take his obligation on a book which is held by them to impart sanctity to an oath or promise, that book should be positioned either at the front of the Master's pedestal or to the right of the VSL. Whether it is open or not is matter for further debate, suffice to say the wishes of the individual must always be taken into consideration.

If the Initiate or Brother happens to be a theist Quaker (that's a Quaker who believes in a God or Supreme Being) they are permitted to make affirmation instead of taking an obligation or uttering an oath.

N.B. It is probably the case that in a time before the use of The Bible, obligations would have been taken on an important document such as a book of rules.

Wear your Festival jewel with pride.

Provincial Grand Master and Grand Superintendent John Reid invites you to be proud and wear the Wiltshire 2028 Festival jewel in every Craft Lodge and Royal Arch Chapter throughout the Province.





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Can you help?

Welcome to In touch > On line with the latest roundup of news and stories from around the Province. I am always appreciative of the supportive feedback and thank everyone who takes the time to offer suggestions, comments and support. Please do keep comments and suggestions coming, not only about current content and coverage, but also about items you would like to see in those future issues.

Related to that, the Comms team is ALWAYS keen to involve members of the Province, formally or informally, in our activities - specific expertise is not always required - you could join, for example, our news gatherers around the Province that we rely upon to forward news for the website, social media and this magazine. This is not a particularly onerous task but a very important one which ensures that we have the latest news to pass to members. If you would like to help, please get in touch and we can have a no-obligation chat. Email pcowiltshire@gmail.com

Corsham Lodge members scale the mountain.

On 13 March 2023 Brothers Piers and Tobin Rodbard-Hedderwick from Corsham Lodge No.6616 climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa, standing at 5,895 meters (19,341 ft) above sea level.

Bro Piers was part of the RE:ACT Team sent to Hatay, Turkey, providing humanitarian support in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake that hit both Turkey and Syria. The disaster response charity provides direct humanitarian action, in the fastest time, to those hardest to reach and most vulnerable.

On his return to the UK, Bro Piers and his brother decided to help raise money for the charity by climbing the highest free-standing mountain above sea level in the world. Mad as hatters but truly inspiring.





Festival Jewels - have you got yours?

As the Provincial Charity Steward I have been very impressed with the response to the Wiltshire 2028 Festival, especially the number of Brethren who have made a single payment or signed up to a Regular Payment Plan (RPP) and qualified for a Festival Jewel.

During my travels around Lodges I have received some feedback which suggests that some members are unaware of the qualifying amount for a Festival Jewel and some are asking for more details of the process to obtain one.

Your Charity Steward is the 'go to person' as he is the face of the Festival in the Lodge and therefore best placed to manage the process of awarding jewels to the thren of your Lodge.

The process is as follows:

- A Brother or Companion qualifies for a Festival Jewel when they have given either £600 to the Festival or signed up for a Regular Payment Plan (RPP) that will reach £600 by December 2028 (or a combination of the two).
- Lodges are encouraged to order at least 10 jewels ready to be awarded when a Brother has met the criteria set out above.
- Jewels are available from the Communication Officer - place your order by email to pcowiltshire@gmail.com
- Please pay £10 per jewel by bank transfer to:
 - Provincial Grand Lodge of Wiltshire
 - Sort Code: 23 05 80
 - Account: 43153161
 - Reference: Lxxxxjewel (the xxxx is your Lodge number).

The Provincial Grand Master has asked that Lodge Charity Stewards present jewels in open lodge and congratulate the recipient. Some may think this to be divisive, others may see this as observing the courtesy of thanking a Brother who has practiced that virtue we all seek to admire and It is important to encourage others to follow their example.

The Provincial Grand Master in his capacity as Most Excellent Grand Superintendent has authorised the wearing of the Wiltshire 2028 Festival Jewel in Chapter convocations where they should be worn with pride (see pic on p3)

Making a single payment donation or signing up to a Regular Payment Plan could not be easier. To make a donation just follow the link tinyurl.com/53bfkzju Or scan the QR code with your phone camera



Wiltshire 2028 Festival

MAKE A DONATION

Scan with phone camera to open or visit tinyurl.com/53bfkzju





Jack's a local hero.



I took a peek into what it was that Jack did that saw him being nominated for this prestigious award.

Jack ran a Sunday Lunch Club for the past 5 years in Trowbridge which catered for 50 elderly residents who were able to come once a month for a free three course meal and entertainment. This helped raise over £1000 a year for Alzheimer's Support and served over 7500 plates of food. Last year Jack was awarded a Trowbridge Civic award for this (Club of the Year - Community)

He also organised the local 6 a side football leagues in Trowbridge which provided a means for people of all ages and abilities to play the sport they love. The league grew from 14 to 50 teams playing over three nights. Jack was also awarded a Trowbridge Civic Award for this (Club of the Year - Sport)

Jack is also a football referee and regularly volunteers to officiate all over the county. He can often be found refereeing charity football events as well as being a regular behind the bar at the Warminster Atheneum described as Wiltshire's best theatre according to Wiltshire Life Magazine. In the past year Jack and many of his friends have raised nearly £10,000 for the upkeep and improvement of the theatre and they also help support the making of stage sets for the various shows.

Warminster Action Group has just set up as a charity and Jack supports the venture by delivering prescriptions to Warminster residents as well as helping with shopping and anything else vulnerable people might need.

Besides this Jack is also a member of Sustainable Warminster, who look to support and improve all things environmental. Based in and around the Warminster area, he is out most nights doing local litter picks.

You might find it difficult to credit, but as well as working full time Jack is also serving with 7 Rifles who are based in Swindon and he hopes to train as an Emergency Medical Technician.

Jack tells me he may have to 'scale back a bit' as he has just been advised that his application to become a civic leader has been successful and he has been co-opted to become a Town Councillor with Warminster Town Council. Jack hopes this will put him in an even better position to serve his local community.

I'm just catching my breath as I think of all that Jack does. I'm sure all of our readers will agree that Jack Jones, a Wiltshire Freemason, was really deserving of the honour to be named a Local Hero.



Colin Cheshire introduces The Membership Challenge.

The Pro Grand Master has recently launched a seven-year strategy, part of which will include **The Membership Challenge**, an initiative intended to establish a year on year net gain in membership by eliminating the gap between leaving members and new members. The challenge we are being asked to address is not just about attracting new members, but also keeping the ones we have got, trying to find out why a Brother is considering resigning and trying to reverse it, and getting those back into the Lodge and Freemasonry members that have already resigned, even if they did so many years ago.

What does this mean for you and your Lodge.

- Welcoming potential members introduced to your Lodge from the Provincial Membership Team.
- Attracting new members through your own Lodge's endeavours, from your members connections at work, social life, and family.
- Retaining existing members by engaging with them, encouraging their participation thereby increasing interest and reducing resignations.

Wiltshire's Membership Team, led by Colin Cheshire, has received its individual challenge and we will communicate this as a Lodge-based version to all of our Lodge Membership Officers. It will then be up to the whole membership team, LMO, Mentor, Secretary and Master to work together to meet the challenge. The future of Wiltshire Freemasonry depends on our ability to attract new men to our fraternity, engage with existing members and retain those whose interest may have waned.

Sometimes daylight is best.

If it's a daytime meeting you want to attend then Fiat Lux Lodge No.9773 may just be right for you. The Lodge meets at The Masonic Hall, Morris Lane, Devizes at 11.00am on the third Thursday in March, April, October and November. Visitors are assured of a warm welcome.





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We are One Organisation.

I am sure that for many Companions who attended the Installation ceremony of the new Pro First Grand Principal the words of Jonathan Spence will have been received with great interest. He spoke of the historical links between the Craft and the Royal Arch, referring to the preliminary declaration in our Book of Constitutions and quoted a phrase which makes the United Grand Lodge of England unique among other Grand Lodges around the world.

The statement means that we, as Freemasons of the United Grand Lodge established in 1813, practice pure, Antient Masonry. This consists of three degrees and no more, namely those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch.

(Editor's note: I note that the Pro First Grand principal used the word 'Holy' which is quite right and correct)

The main thrust of the Pro First Grand Principal's message was one which the Provincial Grand Master John Reid endorses and is anxious that we promote in Wiltshire. It is simply that the Craft and the Royal Arch are two parts of one organisation - and when someone is made a Freemason, he should be made fully aware from the start of his Masonic journey that it consists of four elements - with the Royal Arch as the fourth and ultimate stage.



A question often asked by new Freemasons is "When should I join the Royal Arch?" The answer is straightforward - and again one cannot do better than rely on the words of the Pro First Grand Principal who said "The fourth element is one that all Freemasons under the United Grand Lodge of England ought to aspire to experience when the time is right for them".

In this respect the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent John Reid has added his own voice and said "It is counterproductive to force the issue of Royal Arch membership with new Freemasons. Our wish is to attract and encourage them to complete their journey in Freemasonry".



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The last word goes to Simon Leighfield....



Simon Leighfield raises a glass and says Thank you for supporting the Festival

I am really excited about the Wiltshire 2028 Festival. The festival team has put together a short (only 4 mins 30 sec) video explaining why we have a festival and what we hope to achieve from it. I'm afraid you get to see me making an appeal to your natural charitable instincts and reminding you that charity is a virtue we all profess to admire, and that charity is in a freemason's DNA.

In words which you will remember from your Initiation "I need not here dilate on its excellences; no doubt it (charity) has often been felt and practised by you". And it is with these words of endorsement that I ask you to give your full support to our festival.

Our Treasurer tells me that many members have already made pledges, paid amounts into the festival relief chest E2028 and completed the appropriate forms to set up a Regular Payment Plan (RPP). I am delighted that Wiltshire Brethren have responded so positively to the appeal.

I am also grateful to those Lodges that have dipped into their Relief Chest and made a payment to the Wiltshire 2028 Festival Appeal. Every contribution, large or small is important and makes a difference.

Finally, let me remind you that while raising money for the festival is a challenge it should never be a chore.

It's got to be fun



Jumping for joy

Down to earth with a bump and ready to collect donations from your sponsors



Service with a smile

A great way to enjoy good food and super company especially with a cheery chef



Be kind to animals

Sheep racing without upsetting anyone and the winner is always ewe

With thanks to the late Alan Barron George Duke of Kent Lodge No.8788 who was thrilled that we used a picture of him floating to earth