



History in the making...



Thirty Wiltshire Freemasons travelled to the International Conference Centre at Newport for what was an amazing day as the Quarterly Communication Meeting of Grand Lodge was held outside of London for the first time in over one hundred years. Brethren from the North, South and West (we don't have an East) gathered together in glorious sunshine to experience the pageantry and ceremony that epitomises the fraternity's best traditions. The Grand Director of Ceremonies and his assistants had to be 'on point' to make sure that everything was organised properly, which, given the venue was new to them, demonstrated their professionalism. Those of us who can recall Charles Hopkinson-Woolley's running of the Provincial meeting last year will not have been surprised that everything went very smoothly in Wales.

I must say that I am looking forward to our own Provincial Grand Lodge meeting on Thursday 5th October and I am particularly keen to play a part in the new initiatives introduced by Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies Barry Jordan-Davis and his team. Simply because we have done something for ten or twenty years or more does not mean that it cannot be improved upon or changed in its entirety. Tradition is all well and good, and many traditions are well worth keeping. However, innovation and variation are also good and change is often required to prevent our ceremonies from becoming stale and outdated. I'm pleased with the changes that Barry and his team have introduced for Provincial Grand Lodge in October and especially the important role assigned to the Provincial Grand Stewards.

Last month I wrote about a new initiative in which every Lodge and Chapter will be invited to sign up to @wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk One of the ideas behind this initiative is that using a discrete email address provides for separation of personal emails from those related to the Lodge, better security, and a more visible Masonic identity. I am pleased to be able to advise that members of the Provincial team are using the new email as their default email address for all Masonic business, and the majority of Lodge Secretaries and Chapter Scribes have also signed up and are using the new system. Mark Newman and Colin Froude are the Province's champions for this initiative and have been instrumental in getting this project up and running. If you have any issues setting up or using the system please do speak to them and they will do all they can to assist you.

Alan Colman and Richard Legge were joined by fellow cyclists including Deputy Grand Superintendent Simon Ellingham for their first ride in aid of the Wiltshire 2028 Festival. Members of the Widows Sons led the riders as they left The Planks. There are some pictures shown in this edition of In touch>On line that show just how much everyone enjoyed the event. As with all such events the back up and support of Brethren and their partners was absolutely key to its success and I know everyone was grateful to Jason Woosnam for driving the support vehicle and to Shirley Legge and Tina Philips for providing moral support at the start. Also, a huge thank you to the Lodges that turned out to welcome the cyclists when they arrived at each of their chosen locations.

If you haven't already booked, please do register to attend the Christmas Carol Service in the Marlborough College Chapel on Sunday 17th December at 3.00pm. It really will be a wonderfully festive event with lots of popular Christmas carols, mulled wine and mince pies. It's a great way for all the family to get into the festive spirit and we are sure everyone will be pleased with the wonderful venue chosen for this very special event. Book today using the link tinyurl.com/bd7nwpxy



Cycle Ride 2023....

Joint organiser of the Wiltshire 2028 Festival cycle ride, Richard Legge has filed his report on the inaugural 'Entered Apprentice' event.

The cyclists were welcomed to the Swindon Masonic Centre by Richard and Alan. Starting at 9.00am, we completed the ride as a full group, at around 4.00pm back in Swindon. Due to variations in the ability of the brethren the group did split at some stages - however no brother was ever left behind. We started together and finished together.

Our oldest entrant was Bob Ford at 76 years old who completed 32 miles (the longest ride he has done) from Swindon to Calne via Highworth. Temperatures were high which added to the challenge - however, refreshment stops for fluid and energy food, provided by some of the partners of entrants and Lodge members, were available at each location we visited.

I thought it would be nice to publish a few of the comments received from participants in the ride.

- The support crew were amazing and the route was a good one. Good to meet other masons that I did not know and know that there are other keen cyclists out there. A great way to raise money and really looking forward to the next one! *Bruce Broughton-Johnson, Gooch Lodge No.1295.*
- A most enjoyable day taking in the Wiltshire countryside, visiting Lodge buildings in the North of the county, but above all meeting new masons from across the Province. The route was designed to be as accessible as possible to cyclists of all abilities and I feel the route, though challenging in places, met its aim. It was great to see a range of cycling abilities and although most cyclists chose to use road bikes, credit has to go to those who tackled, and completed, the ride on mountain bikes. If you are in two. Minds whether to take part next year, I would say do it. You can cycle one leg, two legs or the whole route. It's your choice. *Richard Legge, Royal Sussex Lodge of Emulation No. 355*
- It was an amazing experience I don't think I've ever cycled that far before [32 miles] as I only do 8 to 10 miles locally. Must get a road bike next time! The support I received was amazing it brought out the true spirit of Freemasonry. *Bob Ford, Downton Lodge No.9064.*
- A busy work/life schedule sometimes gets in the way of active Freemasonry. This was a good opportunity to do something different, and healthy. I am not as well travelled as I would like – and I was able to meet some old friends and make some new ones. This, fundamentally, is what I regard as one of the most important aspects of Freemasonry. As a now old soldier, my running for relaxation days are also coming to an end. I have been introduced to the social side of cycling – although I think I might avoid using a Mountain Bike in the future. I have been offered some top tips – as well as some traps to avoid. I now also know the location of four of our temples. This reduces my excuses not to visit in the future! *Dave Rees, The Border Lodge No.3129.*
- The event was very well organised with a great route, great support and great company from like-minded brethren. Nourishment provided was excellent and plentiful at the stops and I am sure we will all be there next year and looking forward to a new route. *Steve Hocking, New Temple Lodge No.8435.*

We are now gearing up for the Fellow Craft ride in 2024 - would you like to join us?



In touch > On line

The newsletter for all Wiltshire Freemasons



Images from a great day....



The Start Line



No prizes for guessing this stop!



Not necessarily the most familiar location - its Marlborough



Not everyone can be the leader



John and Simon met the team at Calne



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Coffee time is anytime and all the time...

Which makes The Perfect Ashlar Smooth Coffee a surefire winner for Wiltshire Freemasons. and thanks to Mark Newman and Paul Sharp you can experience the taste of this superb coffee at the annual meeting of provincial Grand Lodge on Thursday 5th October. Coffee, tea and biscuits will be available in the reception area of The Civic (by kind permission of The Civic management) who have agreed to let all profits from sales of The Perfect Ashlar Smooth Coffee to be used to promote the Wiltshire 2028 Festival and Teddies For Loving Care (Wiltshire). Please do support this fabulous initiative and enjoy a drink before the meeting.





Festival Jewels - have you got yours? asks Simon Leighfield...

Sometimes something is said that causes me to do a 'double take' and ask the question "Did you really actually say that?" The 'something said' was. "I've not seen anything about how to get a Festival Jewel". That caused me to stop and think about how many times the Festival and Jewel had been mentioned in the monthly newsletter, Across the Plain, Twitter, Facebook and on the front page of the Provincial website www.wiltshirefreemasons.co.uk . The pragmatist in me simply put the question to one side and concentrated on the solution to the problem.

The Wiltshire 2028 Festival Jewel has clearly captured the attention of many members of the Province, so much so that the Provincial Grand Master has commented on the number of Brethren wearing a jewel. It really is a nice jewel and if you are unaware of the qualifying process for a Festival Jewel, your Charity Steward is the 'go to person' as the face of the Festival in the Lodge.



- A Brother or Companion qualifies for the 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).
- Jewels are available from the Provincial Communication Officer - place your order by email to comms@wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk
- Please pay £10 per jewel by bank transfer to:
 - Provincial Grand Lodge of Wiltshire
 - Sort Code: 23 05 80
 - Account: 43153161
 - Reference: L xxxx **jewel** (the xxxx is your Lodge number).

Supporting the Wiltshire 2028 Festival....

There are so many ways that Lodges can support the Wiltshire 2028 Festival. Tony Ellis, Charity Steward of Lodge of Remembrance No.4037 meeting in Swindon thought a nice, enamelled lapel pin would be just perfect.

Lodge Secretary Dave Barrie presented a lapel pin to the editor and we are delighted to promote the lapel pin in this edition of In touch > On line.

If you have an 'idea' for raising funds for the Wiltshire 2028 Festival, all you have to do is discuss it with your Lodge Charity Steward who will undertake the necessary due diligence with the Festival Comms Team. As long as it's legal and doesn't contravene any of the protocols governing what can and can't be done there should be no problems.

Festival Chairman Simon Leighfield said "What a superb lapel pin. For many Freemasons it will be a great addition to their collection."





In touch > On line

The newsletter for all Wiltshire Freemasons



Have you booked for Christmas?

John Reid is looking forward to welcoming you, your family and your friends to a special **Carols at Christmas** service in the beautiful surroundings of Marlborough College Chapel. Join John and the whole Wiltshire Masonic family as they sing popular carols in the week before Christmas. Book online with the link tinyurl.com/bd7nwpxy and remember, please tell us how many children you will be bringing. Mulled wine and mince pies will be served after the service in the Marlburian Hall.



Wiltshire Freemasons
Invite you to join them for

tinyurl.com/bd7nwpxy

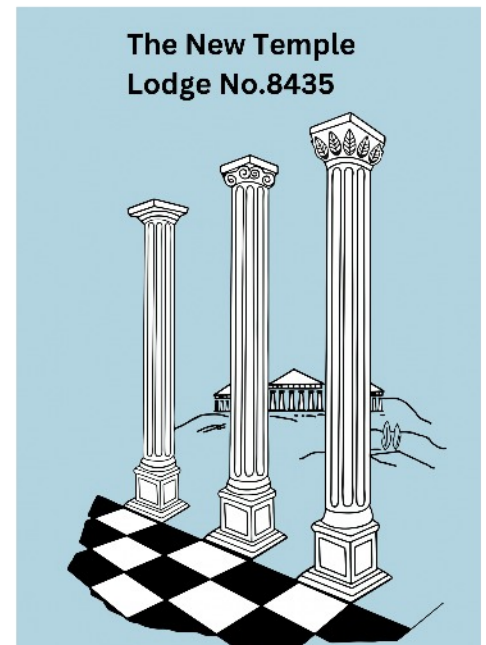
Carols at Christmas

Marlborough College Chapel
Sunday 17th December 3.00pm

Family | Friends | Children
Special guest appearance from Santa Claus

www.wiltshirefreemasons.co.uk

Thank you to the host Lodges for Provincial Grand Lodge 2023....





In touch > On line

The newsletter for all Wiltshire Freemasons



Is your Chapter in the Spotlight?

Wiltshire St Aldhelm Chapter No.2888 has joined St Aldhelm Lodge No.2888 in moving to a new home at The Masonic Hall, Emery Gate, Chippenham, SN15 3AU.

Royal Arch Communication Officer Comp David Clatworthy is keeping Companions across the Province up to date with where and when Chapters are meeting. Please do follow @PGCWiltshire on X (formerly known as twitter) To feature your Chapter please contact David: racomms@wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk



WILTSHIRE St ALDHELM CHAPTER No. 2888

Meets on the first Tuesday in February, May, October and November



The Royal Arch
www.pglwilts.org.uk/royal-arch



Centenary Chapter

Meeting at The Masonic Hall, Emery Gate,
Chippenham, SN15 3AU. Wiltshire



RAcommsWilts@outlook.com



@Wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk

Have you noticed a new email address for your Lodge and Chapter?

As part of the Province's standardisation initiative, Lodge Secretaries and Chapter Scribes are being asked to sign up to @wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk

Many Lodges and Chapters already use @gmail and some use @outlook to send and receive emails, while others use a personal email address (often the same one they use for all their correspondence). Using a distinctive @wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk address offers greater security, increased privacy and allows the Lodge/Chapter to transfer a unique email address to a successor in due time.

The Province does not have access to the content of emails sent and received using the email address @wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk and all emails are private and confidential.



Three great questions....

It's always good to meet with the Province's newest members especially as they are always keen to ask the questions no one else does. At the recent Finding Your Feet event held at The Planks, Swindon, three great questions were asked and I'm delighted to say they were also answered correctly.

After the event a Freemason of over twenty four years standing posted a comment on X (formerly known as twitter) that read "Attending the Finding Your Feet workshop for new Freemasons this morning. I'm 24 years a Mason and still learning more." This comment really does sum up the truth of what Freemasonry is all about. The Antient Charges (you can find them in the Book of Constitutions) point out that Freemasons assemble to work, and to instruct and improve themselves in the mysteries of the ancient science. The Learning and Development Team provides a forum for Freemasons at every stage of their journey to extend their researches and to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.

Question one was "What Lodge offices can be held by an entered Apprentice or Fellow Craft Freemason?"

The answer can be found by reference to Rule 145 BoC. This rule makes it clear that no Lodge may disqualify any member from holding office so long as he is not in default of his subscriptions, and Rule 104 (e) provides that The appointment of all Officers, except the Master, the Treasurer, and if elected the Tyler, is in the sole discretion and power of the Master. However, a wise Master Elect would be very cautious in selecting and appointing an inexperienced and unqualified Brother to hold an office for which they were clearly not ready. Common sense would and should rule the day.

Question number two was equally interesting. Where does the new Initiate sit after the ceremony? The answer to this question is not to be found in the Book of Constitutions but in the aptly named Information For The Guidance Of members Of The Craft and, less a Brother think this to be a lesser tome than the Book of Constitutions, let me refer them to the third paragraph on page one which confirms that the content of the 'little blue book' is "an edict binding on the Craft." Is this important? Yes it is as every Master upon taking office promises to support fifteen Charges and Regulations read to him by the Lodge Secretary. Number ten ends with a promise "strictly to conform to every Edict of the Grand Lodge."

The answer to the question is - In the north-east immediately to the right of the Senior Deacon.

Finally to question number three. "Who decides what procedures are practised in the Lodge - is it the Master?" For the answer we turn once more to the Book of Constitutions and Rule 155 and note that "The members present at any Lodge duly summoned have an undoubted right to regulate their own proceedings." However, just to make it clear that the right is not 'unfettered' the rule continues "provided they are consistent with the general laws and regulations of the Craft."

An excellent paper on the role and authority of the Master, written by Michael Lee, can be found in the Preceptor's Page on the Provincial website. "The Ancient Charge (No 5) read to him at his Installation is easily forgotten: 'that he will submit to the awards and resolutions of your Brethren in general Lodge convened...' (i.e. Their wishes prevail over his, not vice versa). Rule 154 develops this: 'The Lodge by resolution... may specifically refer any... matter... in open Lodge to such a Committee for consideration and report but no Committee may be invested with any general executive powers'. In sum, a Committee may recommend a change to Lodge practice but only the lodge members themselves can enact it.