



Looking forward...



When trying to put together some words to serve as a New Year message I am left wondering what should it include, and possibly more importantly what should it not include. Should it be a reflection on the past year or a look to the future? In the end I decided that both aspects must be included and I thought what better place to start than with the beginning of 2023 when we met in Swindon to launch the Wiltshire 2028 Festival in support of the Masonic Charitable Foundation. The event itself was well supported and enjoyed by everyone who attended, it will therefore come as no surprise that I am asking you to make a note in your diary that the second of our festival dinner dances will take place on Saturday 10th February 2024 at Bowood. Please do book your place as soon as possible using the online facility tinyurl.com/wiltsmasons I know that we have already sold half the places available.

The other event, of which I am equally proud was the Christmas Carol Service and this edition of **In touch>On line** is unashamedly a tribute to this event with lots of pictures that I hope you will enjoy viewing. Many thanks to Gary Dolphin who took over two hundred images on the day many of which the Communications team has used on social media.

If starting the year with the launch of the Wiltshire 2028 Festival was impressive then ending the year with another superb event that had everyone 'buzzing' with excitement can only be described as the icing on the cake. The quite magnificent Marlborough College Chapel was the venue for the first Provincial Carol Service, and what an inspired choice it turned out to be. The Provincial Chaplain the Rev Dr John Railton, assisted by the Rev Sandy Railton (how lucky we are to have a great husband and wife team) put together a wonderful service of popular Christmas carols, interspersed with appropriate readings which provided a real festive feel as we entered the week before Christmas. I was delighted to welcome His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire Mrs Sarah Troughton and her husband to the concert and I am pleased to say they thoroughly enjoyed the event.

From well before the start of the service I knew we were in for a treat, and it wasn't just the pleasant aroma of mulled wine and the sight of what were undoubtedly the best mince pies I have ever seen or eaten. The Provincial Organist Gary Cook ensured everyone knew Christmas was just around the corner with his pre-service selection of music and it was wonderful to see the chapel pews filling up with so many excited young people accompanied by parents, grandparents, family members, and friends. I was particularly pleased to welcome members of the Masonic Widows Association who I know enjoyed not only the service but also the mulled wine and mince pies.

The service began with a beautiful rendition of Once in Royal David's City with Alexandra Bamford singing the first verse, it was the perfect start and set the tone for the next hour. The congregational singing was magnificent with contributions from members of The Wessex, an award winning male voice choir; and ladies from the Thamesdown Ladies Choir. I'm sure you will agree with me that the three kings were suitably regal as they donned their crowns for We Three Kings Of Orient Are.

Thank you to everyone who has written to me telling me how much they enjoyed the event. In answer to the question of will we do it next year, let's wait and see.



In touch > On line

The newsletter for all Wiltshire Freemasons



In the programme or Order of Service, whichever you prefer, the penultimate page contained a small advertisement for **Teddies For Loving Care (Wiltshire)** I was delighted to be informed that donations received in support of this wonderful initiative totalled £1,600 to which there will be some gift aid applied. In 2023 the TLC team distributed 3,600 bears to Swindon, and Salisbury hospitals, this was an increase of 800 on the previous year and reflected the increase in children attending A&E Departments.

Charity is said to be the distinguishing characteristic of a Freemason's heart; in Wiltshire we believe that *charity is in a freemason's DNA*. Some might ask what is the difference? My response would be that one is affected by how we feel therefore it is governed by emotion whereas the other is more fundamental and unchangeable. I have certainly experienced the best and worst of when charity is governed by feelings, or a sense of wanting to do the right thing. The problem with allowing emotions to dictate matters is that it is possible to lose sight of the big issue and adopt a myopic approach to resolving a situation, at the same time having little, if any regard for the alternate view. Just because someone doesn't necessarily take or share the same view doesn't mean they are less caring, and that they don't understand or appreciate the problem. In my experience there are often many different ways to achieve the same end result, and it is always best to get that result 'the right way'.

As we start a new year I want to remind everyone that we are in festival - sadly some of our members incline to view that the festival has nothing to do with them. Today I want to make clear that it does. As Wiltshire Freemasons we acknowledge and support the work of the Masonic Charitable Foundation; we might not agree with every cause they support (believe me when I say that strong views are represented to the management of the MCF whenever we find ourselves at odds with their decisions) but we do have a moral obligation to support them.

By the end of the **Wiltshire 2028 Festival** we hope the level of our support will be one million pounds. Circumstances may result in that figure being a little lower than we would anticipate, equally, and who knows, it may be more. Time alone will tell. The Deputy Provincial Grand Master will continue to charge the festival team to encourage your active participation, as will the Provincial Charity Steward and your Lodge Charity Steward.

The easiest way to help is for every subscribing member of the Lodge to set up a **Regular Payment Plan (RPP)**. If you haven't done so already, I earnestly implore you to do so as soon as possible. I know you will have heard this before but it is worth repeating. To reach £600 per member over five years is £120 per year; or £10 per month; £2.50 per week; or 35 pence per day. To put this into perspective a national tabloid newspaper costs £1 per day. On page 3 Stonehenge Lodge No.6114 made a significant contribution towards their goal when they donated £10,000 to the festival.

Having mentioned the **Wiltshire 2028 Festival** let me also say that I continue to be amazed, and delighted at the level of giving by individual Lodges to local charities. When I visit Lodges I really am moved when I hear a Charity Steward reporting the members have given money to a small charity for whom £250 is so very important. Brethren, this Province will never direct you to stop doing this - it is your money and it is for your members to decide who should benefit from your charity.

Finally, I take this opportunity to wish the entire Wiltshire Masonic family a very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. May 2024 be everything you wish it to be.



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Supporting the Wiltshire 2028 Festival....

Join John Reid for the second dinner/dance in support of the Wiltshire 2028 Festival - it promises to be an evening to remember. Don't miss out, book today using this link tinyurl.com/wiltsmasons

Supporting the Wiltshire 2028 Festival....

Members of Stonehenge Lodge No. 6114 made a significant contribution to the Wiltshire 2028 Festival from their Charity Relief Chest. It's the way to do it, many thanks Brethren.





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THANK YOU FOR COMING ALONG
AND SUPPORTING CHRISTMAS CAROLS
FROM MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE



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Preparing for the Master's Chair....

Another opportunity to discover from experienced Past Masters what's in store for the new Master. Click on the image to reserve your place or follow this link <https://tinyurl.com/35fd6jxb>



 www.wiltshirefreemasons.co.uk

Preparing for the MASTER'S CHAIR

Saturday 13th January @ 10.00am

Masonic Hall | The Planks | Swindon

CONTACT | STEVE LEE
07825 713048
EDUCATION@WILTSHIREFREEMASONS.ORG.UK

Finding Your Feet....

Book your place to discover what you need to know about Masonic etiquette and more. Click on image or follow this link <https://tinyurl.com/2mp68hdc>



 EDUCATION@WILTSHIREFREEMASONS.ORG.UK

Finding your FEET

the start of a journey

Saturday 27th January @ 10.00am

Freemasons' Hall | Crane Street | Salisbury

Book Online | <https://tinyurl.com/2mp68hdc>

CONTACT | STEVE LEE
07825 713048



What is Archway and why is it so important?



ARCHWAY

Royal Arch Communication Officer Comp David Clatworthy has announced the launch of ARCHWAY, a new resource designed for Royal Arch Chapters. ARCHWAY'S purpose is to assist in shaping their future, fostering membership growth and enriching the experience of their members.

You can access the new ARCHWAY web page on wiltshirefreemasons.co.uk or by scanning the QR code.

If you are a Craft Freemasons and want to learn more about ARCHWAY please contact David Clatworthy racomms@wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk



@Wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk



@Wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk

The Communication Team has now completed the transition of all Lodge Secretaries and Chapter Scribes to the new email address @wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk All Provincial documentation and connectivity through social media will utilise the new address format that will be the letter **L** in front of the Lodge number, and the letter **C** in front of the Chapter number followed by @wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk

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, which incidentally we have already tested in a live environment.

We have appointed Vince Wheeler and Mark Newman to 'champion' the new email initiative and they are working with secretaries and Scribes to ensure a smooth and trouble free operation. We are happy to confirm that the Province does not have access to the content of emails sent and received.



Annual Subscriptions are now due....

A new year brings with it the inevitable reminder from the Lodge Treasurer that Lodge annual subscriptions are due. Most Lodge and Chapter by-laws state that a subscription is payable IN FULL : IN ADVANCE, by a single specified date. What does this mean in practice? In a case where a Lodge or Chapter does not insist on observing this requirement it is in violation of its own by-laws and is therefore behaving irregularly and the Brother or Companion is by default IN ARREARS.

A Brother who is paying his subscription by instalments during the current year IS IN ARREARS for the entire period until he has paid in full. (Rule 147). It is possible therefore that he could be in arrears for eleven out of the twelve months of every year. A Lodge/Chapter allowing this practice could also be making a nonsense of any provisions in their by-laws for exclusion on the grounds of arrears after a stated period of time.

Even in the case of a Lodge or Chapter where no such requirement is stated in their by-laws, the practice must be viewed as dangerous. It can render vulnerable the cash-flow of the Lodge or Chapter, as, should the number of Brethren delaying their subscription in this way reach a critical mass (and if it is permitted, presumably every member must have the opportunity of doing so), the Lodge or Chapter could be rendered unable to discharge its regular financial liabilities, unless it has sufficient reserves.

A Lodge or Chapter is always carrying a retrospective debt. Treasurers should be well aware that the most significant outgoings (dues to Grand Lodge/Chapter and to Province) are payable retrospectively. Thus sufficient funds have to be available at the appropriate time this year to pay last year's bills. Grand Lodge have made it clear in their model by-laws that they would not approve new or amended by-laws which omitted the requirement to pay subscriptions in full: in advance. One acceptable alternative is to pay a subscription by instalments during the previous year, so that it is paid in full by the due date.



Staying Safe Online is everyone's responsibility....

In the last quarter of 2023 a number of Brethren were targeted by cyber-criminals, so taking care of your online security helps to protect you, your friends, family, and your fellow Freemasons.

There's a lot of good advice available, including the following from the UK Government's cyber-crime prevention team: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/top-tips-for-staying-secure-online>

Please make one of your new year's resolutions to take action to be safer online.

Thanks to Leon Phillips of Vale of Avon Lodge No. 8432 for his input into this important subject.



Fighting Food Hunger With Food Waste....

Members of the Craft, Royal Arch and other Orders meeting at the Chippenham Masonic Centre donated over £500 worth of food to assist the local charity , Fighting Food Hunger With Food Waste. With a special mention to Kelly the Chef of All In One Catering who donated £200 pounds worth of food to this very worthy cause.



Gooch Lodge No. 1295

It is a tradition of Gooch Lodge No. 1295 to have a Christmas Initiate, you could even say it's a present from the Lodge to the Lodge.

At their 2023 Christmas meeting the Lodge welcomed Bro Alex Sutherland to Freemasonry in a wonderful ceremony conducted with great skill and sincerity by WM Phill Day.

Alex and the meeting attendees were treated to carols played by an ensemble provided by Lockdown Brass under the musical direction of Mary Martin. A wonderful conclusion to 2023.

