



SEPT 2024

In Touch > On Line

The newsletter for all Wiltshire Freemasons



September's a funny month.



One foot still in summer, the other in autumn and if like me you enjoy country pursuits and rural life the two seasons are difficult to separate in terms of which is my favourite. I'm guessing for many of our members the opportunity to enjoy a summer holiday at home with a reasonable amount of pleasant weather is a bonus for which to be grateful; and I trust you have made the most of what is often referred to as a break from Masonry.

I know that for many members of the Provincial team, the past few weeks have been anything but a break from Masonic activity. In particular the HERMES team has been liaising with Lodge Secretaries, and Chapter Scribes to make sure that the launch of this innovative system is as incident free as it can be. As with any new initiative there will be problems, some technical and some operational. The team, under Steve Lee have been very proactive in helping overcome the fears and handle the issues. If you are a Secretary or Scribe and you need help, please do not be reluctant to use the online tools to resolve any problems you may have. To those Secretaries, and Scribes that have not yet logged on to HERMES please let me remind you that ignoring the system and hoping it might go away is not going to cut it. HERMES is here to stay – please embrace it and use it.

As we enter September, seventy nine Brethren will be looking forward to October and in particular Thursday 3rd October as that is the day of Provincial Grand Lodge. The Summons to the meeting together with a list of Appointments and Promotions has been shared with your Lodge Secretary and I trust you will have received it in your email inbox. Please do make every effort to attend Provincial Grand Lodge. It is only convened once a year and provides a wonderful opportunity for Wiltshire Freemasons to meet in a superb environment and enjoy what I genuinely believe is a unique experience.

I am often asked "What do I have to do to get Provincial Grand Rank?" My answer is always the same. "Being awarded Provincial honours is not a measure of how high you have climbed, but a reflection of the positive difference you have made to the Province and to Freemasonry." I am reminded of the words of the late John Kennedy who said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." Perhaps, the real answer to the 'often asked' question can be found in a slight change to Kennedy's quote?

In reference to Provincial Grand Lodge, I have heard that Mark Newman and Tom Snell have put together a very special offer guaranteed to find favour among our members.

I am looking forward to **Carols At Christmas** in the amazing surroundings of the Marlborough College Chapel. Last year I was able to welcome over 600 members, their families, friends, and the Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire. From the comments I received, I know the event was a huge success and enjoyed by so many especially the younger members of the congregation who met our very own Father Christmas who gifted them a little 'thank you' for coming. I know that everyone enjoyed the mince pies and mulled wine - and I am assured you will not be disappointed this year. So, please do make an effort to attend, it's open to families, with or without children and your friends.

Finally, September sees many of our Lodges return 'from refreshment to labour' - and I wish each and every one of you the very best as you engage in the 'further despatch of Masonic business'.



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Provincial Grand Lodge of Wiltshire

of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of England



Save the date

RW Bro John C Reid
Provincial Grand Master

VW Bro Simon R Leighfield **PGSwdB**
Deputy Provincial Grand Master

W Bro Philip J Still **PSGD**
Assistant Provincial Grand Master

July 2024

Dear Sir and Brother,

By command of the Provincial Grand Master for Wiltshire the Annual Meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge will be held in the Lansdown Hall, The Civic, Trowbridge under the Banners of Gooch Lodge No.1295, Corsham Lodge No.6616 and Lodge of Brothers in Arms Lodge No.9540 on **Thursday 3rd October 2024 at 2.30 pm.**

All Present and Past Provincial Grand Officers, Masters, Past Masters and Wardens of the Province are summoned to attend. Master Masons are invited to be present.

Yours sincerely and fraternally

Robert J Evans

Provincial Grand Secretary

1 The Grove
Warminster
BA12 8QL

Telephone 01985 214 874

Brethren are to wear dark Lounge Suits or Morning Dress with full dress Regalia (no gauntlets) and are requested to be in their seats in the Lansdown Hall by **2.15 pm**. It is the wish of the Provincial Grand Master that members wear the Provincial Tie.

Lunch (11.45 am for 12) will be available in the Usher Suite for Brethren and their Masonic Guests, subject to seats being available. Lunch is £35 per head which includes wine. Bookings may be made using the online link <https://tinyurl.com/PGLAGM> and payments may be made to Sort Code 22-05-80, Account Number 43153161 (please use your Lodge number and name as a reference eg 1234Bloggs). Alternatively, bookings with remittance (giving name, initial, rank, Lodge number and any dietary requirements) can be sent to J H Deane Esq, 10 West Park Road, Corsham, SN13 9LN. Cheque to be made payable to 'Provincial Grand Lodge of Wiltshire'. Bookings must be made as soon as possible but no later than **Friday 6th September 2024**.

The **Provincial Committee** will meet at **The Masonic Hall, Trowbridge**, at **7 pm** on **Friday 6th September 2024** to receive the accounts of the Provincial Grand Treasurer, to consider the disposal of funds and to transact any other Masonic business.



Did you know that Provincial Grand Lodge is being held at Trowbridge?

Well, if you didn't you do now and we are looking forward to seeing you on Thursday 3rd October.



Did you know?

At a Quarterly Communication meeting of Grand Lodge the paper of business includes proposals for changes to the Book of Constitutions. At the September meeting, Brethren will be asked to approve some of the most far reaching changes covering disciplinary matters, and a number of other smaller changes many of which will hardly be noticed by the majority of the attendees. One change that is important is the decision to permit certain communications to a Lodge Secretary to be made by email and not only by letter.

The 2024 edition of the Book of Constitutions is available online. As a result of the introduction of HERMES a number of the rules have been amended to cater for some of the administrative changes affecting what Secretaries and Scribes have to do.

For the keen student (and yes there are some) the changes are printed in **red** type alongside the old rule. The catch is that some of the changes are only applicable to Provinces using HERMES. But don't worry the Comms Team will be happy to help and advise any Lodge Secretary who wishes to enquire about a Book of Constitution rule.



Teddies for Loving Care (Wiltshire)...

Teddies for Loving Care (Wiltshire) is a unique charity as it is managed and funded solely by Wiltshire Freemasons - you, me, and our friends in every Craft Lodge and Royal Arch Chapter.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR CHILDREN WILL BE ADMITTED TO SWINDON'S GREAT WESTERN HOSPITAL OR TO SALISBURY GENERAL HOSPITAL. **TEDDIES FOR LOVING CARE (Wiltshire)** PROVIDES A SOFT TOY FOR EVERY CHILD ADMITTED TO THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT. TO ENABLE WILTSHIRE FREEMASONS TO CONTINUE DONATING TLC BEARS WE NEED YOUR HELP TODAY.



Did you know?

All Lodge and Chapter by-laws state that a subscription is payable **IN FULL : IN ADVANCE**, by a single specified date. Subscriptions due to Grand Lodge and to Province are collected in advance by the Lodge and paid retrospectively, meaning that funds have to be available at the appropriate time of the current year to pay last year's subscription. So, if you haven't paid your subscription, now is a good time to make the payment.

#WiltshireRoyalArch
DISCOVER MORE
 Open Day
 Saturday 19th October 2024 | Chippenham Masonic Centre

Did you know?

We step off with the left foot when we perambulate or walk around the Lodge simply because that's what the rubric (the words in red) in the ritual Book tell us to do.

It is possible even probable that the practice originated from a desire to apply military standards of precision to the ceremonial of the Lodge; who knows, perhaps in times past the Lodge Director of Ceremonies was a retired army sergeant major. Unlike many other aspects of Freemasonry, there is no symbolical significance in stepping off with the left foot.



Cycle Ride 2024...

The 2024 Fellow Craft (FCs) route aims to start and finish in Chippenham and in order will visit the Masonic Halls in Corsham, Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge, Devizes, and Melksham.

The total Route length is around 49 miles and total ascent is just over 2000 feet. Overall ascent rate (42ft/mile) is just below that for 2023 therefore everyone who took part in 2023 should have no issue whatsoever in participating in this year's ride.

We start in Chippenham at 9.00am on Sunday 8th September. The Chippenham Masonic Centre and car park will be open and we will be able to use the facilities and car park at the start and end of the ride.

Please try to arrive at 8.30 am for a briefing on the route and the all important safety notices. We aim to end the ride back in Chippenham between 2.15 and 2.45pm.

Based on a 9.00am start we would expect to visit the other Lodge buildings at the following times:-

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Corsham
9.20 -9.30am | • Bradford-on-Avon
10.00 - 10.30am | • Trowbridge
11.00 - 11.30am |
| • Devizes
12.00 -12.45pm | • Melksham
1.15 - 1.35pm | • Chippenham
2.15 -2.45pm |

Vastern Lodge Online Lecture...



WILTSHIRE FREEMASONS
VASTERN ONLINE LECTURE SERIES
USING ZOOM

RITUAL
Its Origins
Use and
Importance

PRESENTED BY THE
PROVINCIAL COMMUNICATION OFFICER

MONDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER 7.00 PM

Be a part of the event - contact L8977@wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk for details

MAKING A DAILY ADVANCEMENT

VASTERN LODGE No 8977
CONSECRATED APRIL 1981

Editor's Note: Going on holiday? Intending to visit a Lodge? Remember, before travelling abroad make sure the Lodge you're visiting is recognised by the UGLE. Check with your Lodge Secretary before you go.



It's back to the Tyler...

In last month's InTouch>OnLine I outlined how the Tyler is a regular Officer of the Lodge - Rule 104 BoC, which means a Lodge must have a Tyler. However, the article did raise some very interesting questions from the membership.

The very first Regulations (the predecessor of the Book of Constitutions) stated that a Brother should be 'appointed' to attend the door of the Lodge; it was later on that he was referred to as a Tyler. The duties of the 'doorkeeper' included delivery of the summons to the members, and attending on the Master. Records confirm that Tylers were generally paid for their services.

The first edition of the Book of Constitutions published in 1815 (two years after the union of the two Grand Lodges) made clear that the Tyler was to be *chosen by the Members of the Lodge*. This phrase was changed in the 1940 edition of the Book of Constitutions when it read *elected by the Members*.

So, just like the Master, and the Treasurer, the Tyler is an elected Officer, unless the Lodge resolves (by a vote) that a subscribing member is appointed without emolument, in which case he is invested at the Installation meeting by the incoming Master. Incidentally, the election of a Treasurer is by ballot, whereas the vote for a Tyler is by a show of hands.

What is irregular, is for a Lodge to 'appoint' a Tyler by rotation - there is no such power afforded to a Lodge. There is equally no authority for the Immediate Past Master to be appointed Tyler as a 'reward' for his labours as prompter to his successor. The rule is clear, the Tyler is an important Officer in the Lodge and is elected to office.

Thinking of an ATTRACTION campaign?

Contact the Provincial Communication Team - we can help you prepare posters, social media images and offer advice on what you can and equally importantly what you can't do when promoting your Lodge or Masonic Hall. Avoid the pitfalls (many and various) and launch an ATTRACTION campaign

MEET THE DOWNTON FREEMASONS

About the Freemasons

We are a members' organisation which has thrived for over 300 years.

We have no political connections, we have members of all ages, races, religions, cultures and backgrounds.

Freemasons have met in Downton for over 20 years and currently meet at the Downton Football Club.

Our Principles

- Integrity
- Respect
- Friendship
- Service

L9064@wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk

wiltshirefreemasons.co.uk



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Are you attending the Prestonian Lecture?

The 2024 Prestonian Lecture recognises the role that Irish and Antients freemasonry has played in the transmission of Masonic and Enlightenment ideas across the globe, and in making English freemasonry as it is today. Put the date in your diary to meet the Prestonian Lecturer Dr Ric Berman when he visits Wiltshire as the guest of members of Methuen Lodge No.8692 on Tuesday 1st October at 6.15pm



METHUEN LODGE No. 8692

INVITE YOU TO THE

PRESTONIAN LECTURE 2024

The Second Grand Lodge : The Grand Lodge of Ireland, the London Irish & Antients Freemasonry

TUESDAY 1st OCTOBER
6.15PM



Dr Ric Berman FRHistS

Swindon Masonic Centre | The Planks | Swindon

Contact Ian Priest: L8692@wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk

Did you know?

- What do the Wardens' columns represent?

They are a 'miniature' representation of the two columns at the porchway or entrance to King Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem. Their relationship to Freemasonry is purely symbolic, and it is one of the features of making a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge that each of us finds a personal explanation of the symbols. It's also important that we recognise that not all symbols have a hidden meaning.

- Why do we raise and lower the warden's columns?

It's a question that probably never enters the head of a Brother as the action is normally accomplished before anyone has a chance to notice, and when it isn't you can be assured that someone from the the assembled company will go to great pains to see that it is. Simply stated, the position of the Wardens' columns indicate whether the Lodge is called on (open for business) or called off (closed for refreshment).

- Why do the columns have globes showing maps of the celestial and terrestrial?

Despite claims to the contrary there is no evidence the two columns had the celestial and terrestrial globes mounted on top. The simple answer is that as with much of our Masonic 'traditions' the globes are purely symbolic and are useful aids to reflect the universal nature and reach of Freemasonry.



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Gooch Lodge No.1295...



During the course of a year the Province receives a number of enquiries from Freemasons, students of history, and from the public for information relating to a family member who has discovered a Masonic connection. It's not always the case that we can provide the answers to every query, but we are fortunate to have Brethren that have an incredible in depth knowledge of Freemasonry in their Lodge, or Masonic area.

A recent enquiry by Bro Nick White, a Worcester Freemason was for some information on a former member of Gooch Lodge No.1295 meeting in Swindon which saw archivist Gary Dolphin consulting his extensive records in order to properly answer the enquirer. Sometimes the enquiry can be quite wide ranging, while on this occasion it was very specific as Nick was interested in information relating to his great grandfather.

Gary was able to assist Nick, but sadly he was unable to confirm that Nick's great, great, great grandfather was a former member of the Lodge. However, Gary did confirm that his great grandfather's father Richard Lewis White was indeed a Gooch Lodge member

Richard Lewis White was Initiated into Gooch Lodge No. 1295 on Monday 4th April 1870, Passed on Monday 2nd May 1870 and Raised on Monday 13th June 1870, quite a rapid progression from Initiate to Master Mason I'm sure you'll agree. The Worshipful Master at the time was the Lodge founding Master W.Bro. Henry Kinneir who Gary believes carried out the ceremonies. The witness's signature in the Signature Book was that of the Founding IPM, W.Bro. Alex Braid.

According to the archival records, Gooch Lodge No. 1295 had 11 Founders when the Lodge was consecrated on Monday 11th February 1870, Bro. Richard Lewis White was the 14th member of Gooch Lodge and was one of 5 who were the first candidates to be Initiated into the Lodge on Monday 4th April 1870. The other 4 were Bros. Joseph Armstrong, Horatio Dunn, Samuel Carlton, and James Haydon who were all Initiated, Passed and Raised on the same dates as Bro. Richard Lewis White.

Many members, even those of longstanding think that multi-candidate ceremonies are something only recently carried out, the records of Gooch Lodge No.1295 clearly proves that any such belief is founded in myth and not in fact. Imagine, if you will the Lodge Officers carrying out five Initiations in one meeting followed the next month by five Passings, followed finally by five Raisings the next month.

Incidentally, on Monday 2nd May when 'the five' were Passed, the Lodge also Initiated two more candidates, and for good measure on Monday 6th June, a week before 'the five' were Raised, yet another candidate was Initiated. Was this an exception to the rule? Read the snippet on page 10 and make up your own mind.

#DISCOVERMORE in the ROYAL ARCH

OPEN DAY INVITATION • SATURDAY 19th OCTOBER 2024

10.00am till 12.00pm • The Masonic Hall, Chippenham SN15 3AU

OPEN TO ALL WILTSHIRE MASTER MASONS



HERMES the next phase...



A huge thank you to all Lodge Secretaries, and Chapter Scribes that have now logged in to the live system.

Over 85% of our Lodges/Chapters have gone live within the first two weeks and anyone yet to access the system is encouraged to do so as quickly as possible.

Please remember, HERMES is not an optional extra, HERMES must now be used to manage all your Lodge meetings.

If you have any concerns about using HERMES please flag them with the team using the HERMES online facility.

Okay here's another hint, as if you need one...

You could be forgiven for thinking we're pushing water up a hill, but it's not in our nature to give in or give up and so this is another reminder that Provincial Grand Lodge meets on Thursday 3rd October at 2.30pm.

PROUD TO HOST PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE



**Lodge of Brothers In Arms
No. 9540**



**Gooch Lodge
No. 1295**



**Corsham Lodge
No. 6616**

Did you know?

That the Masonic Hall in Morris Lane, Devizes was formerly the Old Girls School and was purchased for the princely sum of £166 in 1881. The canopy, which is a feature of the East end of the Lodge Room, was erected in 1907, and includes oak from the tower of St Johns Church. It's also the case that Morris Lane Masonic Hall can justly lay claim to being the oldest Masonic Hall in the Province.

Note: Lodges are encouraged to review their By Laws and adopt the latest version of the UGLE Model By Laws under the guidance of the Provincial Communication Officer comms@wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk



It's Bigger, It's Better, It's Back On...

Yes, Downton Lodge No. 9064 is hosting an evening offering you the opportunity to bid for some amazing items in their AUCTION OF PROMISES to be held on Saturday 12th October at Freemasons' Hall, Salisbury.

Register your interest in attending or bidding online: <https://tinyurl.com/downtonauction>

For more information contact the organisers David or Richard.



DOWNTON LODGE NO. 9064 AUCTION OF PROMISES Saturday 12th October 2024



Browsing from 7:00pm : First auction from 8:30pm

Tickets only £10
including nibbles and a drink on arrival



Freemasons' Hall | Crane Street | Salisbury
Register today at <https://tinyurl.com/downtonauction>

For more information on LOT details please email

David Little: dlittle9064@gmail.com | Richard Noon: noon.richard@googlegmail.com

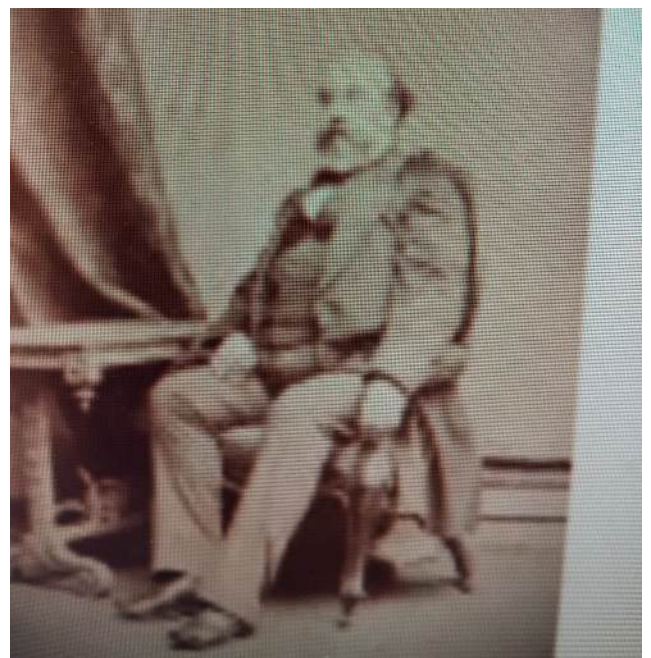
Wiltshire Lodge of Fidelity No.663

It's not the greatest of images but bear in mind it was probably taken sometime around 1856 .

Devizes archivist John Merrett loves delving into the history of Freemasonry in Devizes and just recently came across this photograph of Henry Weaver, the first Master of Wiltshire Lodge of Fidelity No. 663. He was born on 20th July 1816, died November 2nd 1886.

The Lodge was consecrated on April the 18th 1856 by Daniel Gooch the Deputy Provincial Grand Master.

On the day of the ceremony there were seven submissions for Initiation and a number of men were Initiated. After a short call off a Brother was Passed and twelve joining members were balloted for - a busy Masonic meeting.





Stonecutters Widows Sons...

South African born Vince Wheeler is really keen on barbecues and took charge of the cooking of Boerewors a traditional South African sausage made from coarsely minced beef (sometimes combined with minced pork, lamb, or both) and spices (usually toasted coriander seed, black pepper, nutmeg, cloves and allspice).

Fellow Biker Ian Lever was in charge of 'flipping burgers' and barbecuing traditional English sausages for his special hot-dogs, while it was left to Steve Keye to cook the 'veggie' options.

Clearly the fifty plus attendees enjoyed the day and contributed to the £750 raised for charitable causes.

If you are a motorbike rider and interested in joining the Widows Sons, you can visit their website at <https://www.stonecutterswsmba.org>



Did You Know?

In order to be eligible to become a 'Stone Cutter' you must first have been Raised to the the degree of a Master Mason. Until then you can only be a 'Cornerstone'. You also have to have a motorbike!



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Voting by ballot...

Voting, whether by the simple act of raising your hand, or casting your ballot may or may not yield the outcome you want, but without it, there is no democratic society. Instead of allowing decisions to happen, it is important that when you can, you take an active role in making them.

Voting is a key principle of Masonic life and the Book of Constitutions, and the by-laws of your Lodge both enshrine and protect that right. On some issues the Book of Constitutions requires a specific number of the membership to vote to be valid, while on other matters it requires only for a majority of those voting to achieve a result.

Members of a Lodge have it within their power to vote on a number of matters, the most obvious being the election of the Treasurer, the Tyler, and the Master. Invariably the outcome is one that triggers no complaint on the basis that there is no alternative candidate to be considered. Votes on charitable giving are passed in similar vein, although one wonders if there really is unanimity in the proposal as opposed to a fear of being thought as curmudgeonly if one opposed or questioned it.

The one time when trouble is apt to loom large is when a candidate for Initiation, or to become a Joining Member is not acceptable to one hundred per cent of the membership. Now, every Lodge member knows that it is a matter of etiquette to make their views known to the Lodge Secretary should they object to a candidate and by and large the practice is followed and action taken to make sure that no disharmony occurs in the Lodge. However, occasionally matters are not so easily adjusted and a candidate is presented with a high degree of risk that they will be rejected. Some members would argue that this should never ever happen, and while it would be nice if it never did, the reality is that sometimes it will.

The Book of Constitutions, Rule 165 and the Lodge by-laws determine that 'blackballing' is perfectly within the right of any member and is a legitimate use of a vote in a ballot. But the rule also recognises the seriousness of such a vote and rightly requires that three or more members must vote in this way in order for the candidate to be rejected. Amazingly, many Lodges choose to reduce the number of black balls to two, and occasionally even one. They then rail at the fact a candidate was rejected despite it being made easier for this to occur.

Graham Redman in his excellent book *Masonic Etiquette Today* wrote: "A Lodge is essentially a group of Brethren who meet together to enjoy Freemasonry and each other's company. It therefore exists primarily for the benefit of its existing members, who have an interest in preserving its harmony, and only secondarily for the benefit of those who seek to become members."

A ballot is not a mere formality and neither is it a rubber stamping exercise. It exists to provide a route for any Brother who has a well-founded, and genuine objection to a candidate or candidates joining the Lodge to register their objection. This privilege requires the nay voter to exercise their right in good faith, and not to abuse the right. If a Brother misuses his vote it is possible that he may himself have committed a Masonic Offence.

As Freemasons we obligate ourselves to an acceptance of all votes and resolutions passed by a majority of the Members in open Lodge. It therefore follows that any action to punish or penalise a member simply because they have a difference of opinion would also leave the perpetrator open to a charge of Masonic misconduct, as would any subsequent action that could be proven to hinder the progress and prosperity of the Lodge.



Wiltshire Freemasons
invite you to sing

Carols at Christmas

**Marlborough College Chapel
Bath Rd | Marlborough | SN8 1PA**

**Sunday 15th December 2024
3.00pm**

contact@wiltshirefreemasons.co.uk

