



OCT 2024

In Touch > On Line

The newsletter for all Wiltshire Freemasons



Welcome to Provincial Grand Lodge...



I am certainly looking forward to Thursday 3rd October when I expect to welcome over three hundred Wiltshire Freemasons, and their friends, and our guests to the annual meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge. One thing I can promise you is that we will not be emulating our friends at Freemasons' Hall in London and having a fire drill at the end of the afternoon's proceedings. The Grand Director of Ceremonies told the assembled Brethren that it had never been done before, and judging by the look on some faces I guess it will be another three hundred years before they do it again.

In reference to Provincial Grand Lodge, I have now heard that Mark Newman and Tom Snell have put together a very special offer guaranteed to find favour among our members. For the sum of £10 you can buy a raffle ticket and win a 'bottle' - the bottle might be a good bottle of wine, champagne or a spirit. The good thing is that you will walk away with a prize, you just won't know what you've won until you open the bottle bag. Your £10 - the whole of the ten pound will be going to charity. Half of the amount will be presented to Teddies For Loving Care (Wiltshire) while the other £5 will be given to the Wiltshire 2028 Festival.

I am really 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. This year we are fast approaching 500 booked to attend and with just over two months to go I'm sure we will achieve more than the numbers attending last year. 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; and everyone enjoyed the mince pies and mulled wine - both of which will be available this year. While the Province has to pay for the use of the College facilities, I believe it to be a worthwhile cost as it promotes Wiltshire Freemasonry, brings people together, and puts a smile on everyone's face. What more could we ask for? So, please do make an effort to attend, it's open to families, and your friends and they will be made most welcome with or without children.

I now return to the Quarterly Communication meeting of Grand Lodge at which the Pro Grand Master quoted the words of Frederick II, or the Great, of Prussia, an 18th Century Freemason, on Freemasonry. The King said his support of the Craft came from its objectives being, " the intellectual elevation of men as members of society and making them more virtuous and more charitable."

My understanding of the phrase is quite simply this. To be intellectual is to have the ability to think and to understand ideas and information." This implies that education was, and I believe should remain at the forefront of Freemasonry, in fact the function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. The second part of King Frederick's comment suggests that the development of the mind makes men more virtuous, the definition of virtuous being, developing and maintaining high moral standards. Again, I'm confident that all Wiltshire Freemasons would agree our members should be men of sound judgement and strict morals.

Finally, a huge thank you to the 'cyclists' who took part in the Fellow Craft Ride, and to the organisers Alan Colman, and Richard Legge who managed the event. Everyone completed the ride and apart from tiredness and saddle sores there were no 'crisis' moments. You can see a few of the pictures from the Cycle Ride on page 5 - and if you're keen to join the team, they will be delighted to hear from you.



Provincial Grand Lodge...

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 on **Thursday 3rd October 2024 at 2.30 pm.**



Did You Know?

The Risings are considered part of the Closing Ceremony and need not be included on the agenda as a separate item. The only words required are - **To Close the Lodge.**

If it is the practice of the Lodge to include them it is suggested that the following form of words be used:

- Risings:
- First** - To report the Proceedings of Grand Lodge
 - Second** - To report on matters concerning Provincial Grand Lodge and
to give notice(s) of propositions
 - Third** - To attend to any other business

As you will note, there is no need to have Any Other Business on a Lodge agenda, as it's covered in the risings



Grand Lodge Certificate...

Every Master Mason receives from Grand Lodge a certificate - which in the absence of any better name is aptly called a Grand Lodge Certificate. Companions also receive a Supreme Grand Chapter Certificate. In the bottom left hand corner is a number, your Grand Lodge number which is unique to you and which you should remember (if you can) or write down and keep in your wallet, just in case you are ever asked for it by a Lodge Secretary.




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



Did you know?

Every Freemason, but especially a Master of a Lodge agrees "strictly to conform to every Edict of the Grand Lodge", but what is an Edict? Simply stated, an edict is a formal command, or decree issued by a holder of authority. The 'holder of authority' in Masonic terms is UGLE and Provincial Grand Lodge.

In Masonic terms an edict can be issued by the Grand Master and by an Officer mandated by him, such as the Provincial Grand Master. Recently, Grand Lodge confirmed that the term 'Edict' includes an edict of the Grand Lodge from time to time reproduced in the most recent edition of **Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft**, that is the little blue book presented to every new Freemason on the occasion of their Initiation.



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Cycle Ride 2024...

On Sunday 8th September 2024, fourteen Freemasons from across the Province took part in this year's masonic cycle ride visiting 5 lodge buildings in the west of the Province.

Setting off from Chippenham Masonic Hall, the cyclists covered approximately 47 miles around the west of Wiltshire stopping in Corsham, Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge, Devizes and Melksham returning to Chippenham to end the round trip.

Brethren from lodges at Chippenham, Bradford on Avon and Trowbridge kindly opened their lodge buildings and provided much welcome refreshments and support for the cyclists. Our sincere thanks to those who took time to come along to support us, it meant a lot to the cyclists!

The forecast looked decidedly dodgy, to say the least, however we were pleasantly surprised to arrive at Chippenham for the start, in the dry. However we all expected to get rather wet during the ride, but this did not come to pass.....at least not for all of us. Leaving Bradford on Avon and heading for Trowbridge, a distance of only 4 miles, a lead group headed off and were able to speed along at around 19 mph to Trowbridge, however the second part of the group, when coming out of Bradford on Avon were caught in a torrential downpour for around 500 yards, and soaked to the skin when they joined the lead group in Trowbridge. We all had the remainder of the ride in the dry and many agreed perfect conditions for cycling, dry, warm and little wind.

The ride allowed us to spend much of our time riding along lanes and passing through delightful Wiltshire villages such as Neston, Keevil, Bulkington, Poulshot, Rowde and Sells Green.

Whilst there were a number of cyclists from last year's event returning to ride again, we had some new cyclists join us this year, great to see. Of particular note Dave Rees from Border Lodge No.3129 who last year said "I think I might avoid using a Mountain Bike in the future" once again turned up on his mountain bike to complete the ride! Dave has committed to use his mountain bike for the next two rides in 2025 and 2026, thus cementing his claim to be the Mountain Bike Masochistic Mason! Well done, Dave, a great example of the spirit of the event.

We were also joined on the ride by a non-Mason, Shirley Legge, wife of Richard; and she was really taken by the warmth and friendliness of the rest of the group. A great demonstration that we welcome anyone to join us on our rides.

We must extend our thanks to Tim Herrington from Royal Sussex Lodge of Emulation No.355 for stepping in at short notice to man the support vehicle for the ride, an essential role in case of emergencies.

Incidents were few and far between a broken spoke (Mitch Bryan) and a failed rear brake (Bill Wyatt), were the only things that required a bit of attention.

So, thanks to all concerned, supporters and riders, for making this year's event such a success and continuing to raise funds for the Wiltshire 2028 Festival.

If are interested in joining us next year please contact the organisers:

Richard Legge – richard@rlegge.com or **Alan Colman** – Alan@acolman.com



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On your bike...

Another great cycle ride supporting the Wiltshire 2028 Festival. If you're up for the challenge why not put your name into the hat and join the team in 2025.





Resignations...

If there is one subject that causes upset and concern to any organisation, and Freemasonry is not immune, it's when a member resigns. But why should this be so, after all having joined of his own free will it can only also be right that a member retains the right to terminate their membership of their own free will. Of course the real issue is not whether a member resigns, it's all about why.

The Provincial membership team keeps records on the reasons for resigning, but of course the reason given might not be the 'real reason' or it might be the member is reluctant to give an honest reason. As a result, and just like the work environment, we may never know why a Brother has chosen to end his association with a Lodge and even Freemasonry in general. The question that follows is 'does it really matter? After all what is the likelihood of persuading a member to 'change their mind'. Actually, in Wiltshire I'm pleased to report that the Lodge Secretaries, Almoners, Mentors and Membership Officers operate at the top of their game but our attrition rate is still not as good as we would like it to be and we could always 'do better'.

To the wider question of 'why' do members resign, the answers can be quite illuminating.

Following the introduction of HERMES, of which more later, it is no longer necessary for a member to resign 'in writing' - the resignation can now be made by email a point that I am sure will surprise many, as they probably thought that would be the normal route in the 21st century.

The option under Rule 183 to offer a resignation in open Lodge remains perfectly valid. However, the wording of the rule is quite clear in that the communication is to 'notify' the Lodge and not to use the opportunity to 'make a point'.

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



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?

One hundred years ago Masonic charitable support was administered by the Board of Benevolence and all petitions for ‘relief’ (the second of the grand principles on which Freemasonry was founded) were subject to examination under the guidance of some pretty strict rules.

The first qualification for relief was that a man had to have been a Freemason for five years, and have paid into the Benevolent Fund the proper ‘quarterly dues’. Other conditions affecting the provision of relief might by today’s less demanding standards seem hard and quite callous. However, a reading of the charge given by Thomas Dunkerley to the members of the Lodge meeting at the Castle Inn, Marlborough in September 1769 might help us to understand and appreciate how and why they did things differently in the latter part of the eighteenth, and the early years of the twentieth century.

Dunkerley outlined the difference between relief as given by the centrally controlled Benevolent Fund, and the particular donation given by private Lodges. He reasoned that *“charity was best distributed in small sums, that more may receive the benefit, than to give it in larger sums, which confine it to the few.”* What is notable is the inference that providing relief for Freemasons and their families was the main driver of charitable support. This, of course is illustrated in the words of the address to the new Freemason, when it is made clear that ‘such claim on his charity’ is made on behalf of his fellow members.



HERMES you have been superb...



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

All of our Lodges/Chapters have now gone live with the new system, and the overall feeling among the HERMES team is that the transition has been successful.

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

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

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



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@googlemail.com

You really should go to this event...

#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**



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Did you know?

The Lodge Warrant is the authority under which the Lodge is empowered by the United Grand Lodge of England, specifically The Grand Master to meet, make, pass, and raise Freemasons. It is therefore a highly prized 'instrument' and as such is entrusted to the care of the Master of the Lodge.

The Master must produce the Warrant at every meeting of the Lodge, without it the Lodge must not be opened nor should any item of business on the agenda be dealt with. *Rule 101 BoC., and a decision by the Board of General Purpose, adopted 13 June 1962 and published in Information For the Guidance Of Members Of The Craft.*

The task of making sure the Warrant is available in the Lodge is often delegated to the Tyler or the Director of Ceremonies, however, the ultimate responsibility rests with the Master. Rule 104 BoC confirms the Warrant is entrusted to the safe custody of the Master at his Installation, and that the Master must produce it at every meeting. To make sure there is no misunderstanding as to who is responsible Rule 114 BoC states, "*The Master is responsible for the due observance of the laws over which he presides.*"

In some Lodges the obligation on the part of the Master to produce the Warrant has been misinterpreted as a requirement to unfold and display it. The words often used are "Brethren, as required by Rule 101 Book of Constitutions, I display the Warrant of the Lodge." Interestingly while the Master is required to make sure the Warrant is available at the meeting, and in the Lodge Room, he is not required to display it before opening the Lodge. In fact the Warrant is only required to be displayed to a candidate on his Initiation, and to the new Master at his Installation.

So, what happens if a Lodge mislays and forgets to bring the Warrant into the Lodge Room? Thankfully, it's a rare event, especially as the Warrants of most Lodges are framed and hang on the walls of the Lodge Room. In the case of itinerant Lodges the unintended consequence of not having the Warrant to hand is simple - there can be no meeting, there is equally no punishment other than that of embarrassment.

The same cannot be said if the Lodge Warrant is sold or lost. In such a case the Lodge is liable to be erased from the register and the Members may be deemed to have committed a Masonic offence. If the Warrant is lost, a warrant of confirmation can be applied for and if granted the Lodge may meet. Whichever occurs, of one thing you can be assured - there will be a financial cost to replace the lost Warrant.

From the Lodge's point of view the other penalty may prove more galling. Having lost the Warrant and not being able to hold meetings, the Lodge will not be able to prove uninterrupted meetings, thereby endangering any hope of achieving a centenary award.

Great care therefore should be observed in keeping the Lodge Warrant safe and secure, something I am sure that every Lodge will do. If you do mislay your Lodge Warrant please remember to notify the Provincial Secretary without delay.

Lodge By-Laws...

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



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A desire of knowledge...

I have always held that there are three types of Freemasons (can you think of more?)

The first consists of those who made their application for initiation not from a thirst for knowledge, but from a keen desire to aid their fellow man by invoking the Lodge and its members to exercise that virtue which may justly be denominated the distinguishing characteristic of a Freemason's heart - I mean Charity.

The second type is the sociable Member who enjoys the company of his fellows, tolerates the slight inconvenience of having to sit through a sixty minute ceremony, and just loves the camaraderie or companionship of his fellow Freemasons especially at the festive board.

The third type can often appear to be tiresomely boring as their interest is in learning more about Freemasonry, its history, its symbols and above all the meaning within the allegory. Something often referred to as the 'esoteric' aspect of Freemasonry, but in fact is entirely able to be understood by the majority of men who seek to explore the nature of the fraternity they have joined.

Neither type is right or wrong, better, or worse. Different, certainly, but difference is perfectly normal, and not only is it absolutely acceptable, but I would also suggest it is essential. It is a more reasonable definition of diversity in Freemasonry than that promulgated by those who view Diversity, Inclusion, and Equality through an extremely narrow window of prejudice based on social, ethnic, gender or sexual orientation.

In this article I want to concentrate my comments on the third type of Freemason, the man whose application for admission was being prompted, as the ritual requires, "by a favourable opinion pre-conceived of the Institution, and a desire of knowledge." But what knowledge? We know from our ritual that the new Freemason is enjoined to study the liberal Arts and Sciences, but have you ever stopped to consider what this might mean?

The liberal arts, defined as literature, philosophy, languages, and history are intended to develop the mind in a general way rather than to give professional or vocational skills. It is by such a process that the new made Brother makes a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.

As soon as they are initiated, they see in the ceremonies through which they have passed a philosophical meaning worthy of inquiry, and they devote themselves to this inquiry. They obtain Masonic books, read Masonic periodicals, and they converse with well-informed Brethren. They acquaint themselves with the history of the fraternity and investigate its origin, and ultimate design. They explore the hidden sense of its symbols as they see the interpretation. They ask questions and seek answers.

Sadly, for many the answers are less than forthcoming as decades of indifference to the importance of Masonic learning has taken its toll, and the ability of even senior members to respond has been lost and forgotten. Debate, discussion, even argument has given way to a passive acceptance that sometimes the subject matter is too difficult to explain, or that it relates to a previous era and is not relevant for today. Such a dismissive approach is not the experience that the new Freemasons is seeking when he asks his question in his quest for 'light' or enlightenment. It is also the reason given by some Brethren for resigning their membership of the Craft. How often we see "it's not what I expected" or "I thought it would be much more interesting" and finally, "I was seeking something and you just don't provide it."

Perhaps we need to retrace our steps and rediscover the importance of education in Freemasonry.



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Not just any dogs...

These are very special dogs as they are all 'retired' guide dogs.

Colin Froude (L9540) and his wife Hilary have worked with guide dogs for eleven years and it's not unheard of for a new owner to ask them to look after a dog while they are on holiday. In fact Colin is sure the dogs love coming back home, more importantly Colin and Hilary really do enjoy having them around.

Stevie, a German Shepherd cross, is now enjoying retirement at the ripe old age of seven. Stevie re-homed with the lady who trained Colin and Hilary as volunteers, but he loves coming back when they go on holiday!

Striker, a Golden Retriever cross, is currently a working guide dog but being re-homed from Cornwall due to medical problems. He arrived five weeks ago, straight after another guide dog left. He is doing well and will be going to his 'forever home' very soon.

Willow, a Golden Retriever cross, her service user (those with guide dogs are not the owners as Guide Dogs retain them) died and it was decided to retire her a little early. Colin and Hilary first looked after her while they were deciding what to do. Willow now lives with Pie.

Pie, a Golden Retriever cross, another 'old friend' cared for by Colin and Hilary as she came to the end of her working life a few years ago





Victim Support and Wiltshire Freemasons...

Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal visited the charity Victim Support to celebrate the organisation's 50th anniversary having been founded by a group of volunteers - the country's first charity for victims of crime. The celebration took place at Bristol.

The Princess Royal has been the charity's President since 2001. She met staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to deliver vital support to victims of crime in England and Wales. HRH made a short speech before cutting the anniversary cake.

Victim Support helps around 140,000 people every year (including people in Wiltshire and Swindon), offering support across a vast range of crime types and delivering support to anyone bereaved by murder or manslaughter through their National Homicide Service.

Our Past 'Past' Provincial Grand Master Francis Wakem has been a volunteer with Victim Support for 36 years. Francis was honoured to assist with the celebration and was presented to HRH The Princess Royal. Francis was also interviewed by the BBC and ITV.

Francis, on behalf of Victim Support in Wiltshire, wishes to renew his thanks to members of the Province for the tremendous support given over many years, by reiterating his personal words ... words which come from his heart ... *"the invaluable and generous donations from the members of our Lodges and Chapters, their families and friends has conveyed considerable emotional support and encouragement to our staff and volunteer teams and through them to the members of our Wiltshire Community; to the family and friends and all those touched by the trauma - the distress - of the individual concerned"*.

33 Years of Victim Support in Bristol





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It's In and Out for Danny...

Swindon Freemason Danny Gibbons (L4037) a former Paratrooper made his final jump at the age of 88. Danny is partially sighted and 'jumped' in support of Blind Veterans UK.





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A Reminder...

Past Masters, and who have been presented with a Past Masters breast jewel are asked to remember that in this Province the wearing of Lodge specific jewels is restricted to the Lodge to which they apply; which means that when a member visits another Lodge he does not wear a Past Master's or a Centenary breast jewel in that Lodge.

If you invite a member of another Province to visit it is perfectly in order, and a courtesy, to advise your guest of this ruling. A Freemason will not be offended at being made aware of this and in most circumstances would be grateful for the notification. A similar principle applies when visiting a Lodge in another Province; please make enquiry of the policy of the Province and be respectful of their wishes.

WILTSHIRE FREEMASONS
learning never ends

DEACONS' WORKSHOP

<https://tinyurl.com/deaconsworkshop>

Masonic Hall
Yerbury Street
Trowbridge

Saturday 19th October
10.00am until 12 noon
Book OnLine

CASUAL DRESS IS JUST FINE

Are you a proposer or seconder...

No longer do you have to sign a Form P when you propose or second a candidate for membership of your Lodge or Chapter - it's all done online. HERMES has a very clever feature and sends the proposer and seconder two emails. The first is to advise that you must confirm that you are the proposer/seconder, the second has a password that you enter to confirm you are content to act as the proposer/seconder.

As Freemasons we are taught to be cautious, this two stage notification process is a perfect example of good practice, and for many members it will be instantly recognisable as something many organisations do to maintain secure communication.

It is important that you action both emails, and there is only a seven day window of opportunity to respond. If you miss the seven day window your Secretary/Scribe can send a second request, but they would appreciate that you give your soonest possible attention to the original request.

Finally, please do look in your 'SPAM' file - just in case the email has been quarantined by your system.



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