

Across the Plain

The magazine of Wiltshire Freemasons



Winter 2024
Online edition



Happy Christmas



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The Provincial Grand Master...



As I sat down to write my thoughts for Christmas I reflected on the past year with a real sense of déjà vu which is, as I'm sure you're aware is the feeling that you've experienced a situation before, even though you know you haven't. We approach the festive season of Christmas and a New Year with the real hope that next year will be better than the one we are leaving.

I was thrilled to join over 600 members, family and friends on Sunday 15th December in the glorious Chapel of Marlborough College to start Christmas with a family service of lessons and carols.

I was sure the singing would be as wonderful this year as it was in 2023, especially as our Provincial Organist Gary Cook was playing the superb Beckerath Organ for the service. We were also be treated to some fine singing by Kitty Pearson - I do trust you listened very carefully as she opened the service singing the first verse of 'Once in Royal David's City' - it really was a truly lovely start to the hour. Not to be outdone our very own Simon Grove perform The Three Kings by Peter Cornelius; if tyou have ever watched the Christmas Day servcie from Kings College, Cambridge you will appreciate what an amazing piece of music this is. Not to be outdone , and by popular request Peter, Andy and Jim reprised their roles as the Three Wise Men in the ever popular We Three Kings, and there wasn't a taxi, car or scooter in sight.

John Railton led Carols at Christmas and did a fine job particularly as Sandy was unavailable following a knee operation just a week ago. We wish her a speedy recovery and the hope she will be able to enjoy Christmas pain free and a with a little more mobility. The theme of Carols at Christmas is unashamedly 'family'. This is very much as it should be and as with last year's event it proved a success and was 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.

I was asked recently, what was the purpose of **Carols At Christmas**? I am very happy to confirm that it isn't just about promoting Wiltshire Freemasonry, it is also an opportunity to bring people together, and it puts a smile on everyone's face. What more could we or should we ask for?

I was particularly pleased to welcome the High Sheriff of Wiltshire Dr Olivia Chappell to the service and to announce that a part of the charitable donations made at the service will allocated to Horatio's Garden of which Dr Chappell is a Founder and trustee. Teddies For Loving Care (Wiltshire) will also be a beneficiary of your generosity. Among our other guests was the Mayor of Marlborough Cllr Kym-Marie Cleasby, and Mr Rodney Cleasby.

Finally, it was a great pleasure to welcome three Past Provincial Grand Masters, a Past Assistant Grand Master and a current Assistant Grand Master. I feel sure you will all be grateful that **Carols At Christmas** is not a Masonic meeting as it would take an eternity to do the salutations.

Christmas is a very special time for families and friends to gather and enjoy each other's company. It is also a time to reflect on the first Christmas and the message that has resonated through the centuries – 'Glory to God and on earth peace, and goodwill to all men.'

My wish for every member of our ancient and honourable institution is that peace and goodwill should be ever present in a Freemason's heart and in his Lodge and that by virtuous, amiable and discreet conduct we prove to the world the happy and beneficial effects of our Ancient Institution.

A very Happy Christmas to you all.

Wiltshire Remembers...



Steve Kirwan - Harry C Preater Lodge No.8204, and Matty Courtliff - Lodge of Remembrance No.4037 laid wreaths at the Swindon Cenotaph on behalf of Swindon and Wiltshire Freemasons, and the Submariners Association.

Wiltshire Freemasons are proud of their strong links to the Armed Forces, with the county being home to the largest training area in the United Kingdom and home to tens of thousands of service personnel and their families. The Province is a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant and offers support to members of the military community in various ways.

Lodge of Brothers In Arms No.9540 is the nearest we come to calling a 'specialist Lodge' and welcomes men from each of the three principal services, and the Royal Marines to join them.

If you have served or are serving today and are interested in joining a Military Lodge, contact Colin L9540@wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk



Laying a Remembrance wreath at the Calne memorial on behalf of St Edmund Lodge No.4714



Paying respect to the fallen at Royal Wootton Bassett on behalf of Vastern Lodge No.8977

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

A Huge Thank You...

Clive Emerson

Fundraising Manager, Rachel Fear was joined by Julian Roberts, Trust and Foundation Fundraiser and Kerry Rose, Support Worker to receive a cheque for £3,000 on behalf of the Devizes Alzheimer Support Group from Stephen Botham the WM of Wiltshire Lodge of Fidelity No.663.



Deputy Provincial Grand Master Simon Leighfield receives a 'bumper' cheque for £3000 for the Wiltshire 2028 festival from the newly Installed master of Vale of Avon Lodge No.8432.





As we enter year three of the Wiltshire 2028 Festival I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the effort you all have put in towards making years one and two such a great success. The latest figures suggest we are well on our way to achieving our goal (taking into account donations received and pledges made via Regular Payment Promises). This is great news but it leaves plenty still to do!

I am grateful to the Provincial Charity Steward who keeps Lodge Charity Stewards informed and updated on their Lodge's progress. I know they are always keen to keep their membership updated while trying to persuade them to part with another pound. At the beginning of October we were able to provide details of the position of each Lodge as at 30 September 2024. This only reflects the money that has made it (or been pledged via Regular Payment Plan) to the Wiltshire 2028 Festival Relief Chest (E2028). I am impressed at the work and all the effort that has been made so far and it is testament to the hard work undertaken by the Lodges that we are in such a good position with the Wiltshire 2028 Festival.

I also pay tribute to the work of my friend the Provincial Almoner Gary Dolphin who manages **Teddies for Loving Care (Wiltshire)**. It is amazing how many TLC Bears we distribute every year and I know that Gary is grateful for the work of John King and Ian Priest in storing, and distributing the bears to Swindon's Great Western Hospital, and Salisbury's General Hospital.

Your donations are essential in order for the team to make sure this wonderful work can continue through 2025 and beyond. This donation from Broade Forde Lodge No.8547 made possible by Simon Lunt and Bill Sharpley 'who raced the sun' is just one of the many we have received this year - THANK YOU.



THANK YOU



Broade Forde Lodge No.8547

£500

WE CAN BUY 200 TEDDIES FOR LOVING CARE





Deputy Grand Superintendent.... Simon Ellingham



I was delighted to present the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent with a donation of £10,000 towards the Wiltshire 2028 Festival.

In accepting the donation, John Reid spoke about the unique relationship that exists between the Craft and the Royal Arch. We are not only bound by the indissoluble link as expressed in the Preliminary Declaration found on page one of the Book of Constitutions, but also by the simple stated truth that we are on one journey as one organisation. That journey includes a shared understanding that as Wiltshire Freemasons we support those institutions that provide help and support to our membership irrespective of the regalia they wear or the particular part of Pure Antient Masonry they choose to support. Charity is in every freemason's DNA.

In making monetary donations or undertaking charitable work Freemasons do so with enthusiasm as we demonstrate the good Freemasonry can bring to those whom our donations and efforts touch. In his recent address to Grand Lodge the Pro Grand Master outlined the work of the Grand Master's Council Charity Committee stating that it was the most comprehensive review of our approach to our engagement in our communities in at least fifty years and it has been undertaken with a thorough and comprehensive consultation at all levels of our organisation.

The Pro Grand Master believes that the use of the word Service is appropriate as part of the statement of our values as it captures the breadth of what Freemasons do within and for the communities in which they live and work. It is rather more than just making donations of money, as important as that is, and we should not be reticent to make the point to our friends, neighbours and families.

Some Companions may ask what has this Craft initiative to do with The Royal Arch? - to which my response would be - everything. As every Companion is first and foremost a Freemason, and the Royal Arch is an indissoluble part of pure Antient Masonry it must logically follow that the words spoken by the Pro Grand Master echo the thoughts of the Pro First Grand Principal, after all they are one and the same person: occupying the highest office in an organisation that sees itself as being on *One journey as One organisation*.

The Provincial Grand Master and his executive team will review the recommendations of the review and it is envisaged that we will be in a position to advise members of the Provincial strategy in the first quarter of 2025.

This year has been a very exciting time for the Royal Arch with a significant number of Exaltees being welcomed into our Chapters. I have been especially pleased to witness increased attendances across the board. In addition, the Provincial Officers have once more proved to be a great support to myself and the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent. It will come as no surprise to hear that many of our near neighbours are justifiably envious of the attendance of so many Officers at Installation and Exaltation meetings. A really big thank you from John and myself.

All that is left is for me to wish a very happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

A key cornerstone of our work around the Royal Arch is the Pro Grand Master Jonathan Spence's determination that the Craft and Royal Arch work in tandem with one another. He says:

'The Craft and Royal Arch need to work seamlessly together. We must get better at explaining why the Royal Arch enriches the Craft experience of members, how valuable it is and how it is the natural next stage after becoming a Master Mason.'



"As you have heard me say before Companions, Pure Antient Masonry under the English Constitution is unique. I am not just saying this because we have the First Grand Principal of the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland with us today, although I am sure it does no harm! The Royal Arch has always been an integral part of Pure Antient Masonry and will remain so. The Royal Arch is not an independent, standalone order, as it is in other Constitutions, but a coherent part of the whole structure. It is a very distinctive part of Pure Antient Masonry, and deserves to preserve that distinctiveness, but it is integral to it and so we must ensure the organisation operates coherently and effectively.

We try to demonstrate this point practically by the Royal Arch and Craft Rulers working as one team. I know many Provinces, even where there are separate Grand Superintendents and Provincial Grand Masters, are increasingly working with joint meetings of Provincial Rulers and their teams and there are also combined Executives.

This is also why we have taken steps to ensure that unnecessary impediments to the smooth functioning of Freemasonry as a whole have been removed, with changes to both the Royal Arch Regulations and the Book of Constitutions in order to align practices. The coherence of the explanation of the key place of the Royal Arch within Pure Antient Masonry is to be improved with the essential tools within the Members' Pathway for the Craft being revised to be harmonised with the tools contained within Archway and I could go on.

This is what we mean Companions by "One journey, one organisation". This is probably best expressed by saying, "Pure Antient Masonry has four ceremonies. Three are worked in Craft Lodges which point the way to the fourth ceremony worked in a Royal Arch chapter". That fourth ceremony will be done at a time and in a chapter which suits an individual candidate.

Companions, you will realise from what I have just stated this clearly does not mean that the Royal Arch will be subsumed into the Craft in some kind of complete merger, that is not what "One journey, one organisation" means. Companions, there remains much for us to do. With your continued enthusiasm and engagement, I am enthusiastic about our future and I have no doubt you will ensure we will succeed and remain a thriving organisation."

This message (abridged) was delivered (in full) by the Pro First Grand Principal at the Supreme Grand Chapter convocation on Tuesday 12th November 2024.

Fred and Charlie talk about....

'When of mature age, a man travelling a long journey seeks the company of a congenial companion...'

Fred and Charlie could be accused of many things but being uncongenial was certainly not one of them. They had accepted the kind invitation of a friend in a distant Province and a very long journey home awaited them. Ceaseless banter in the car was situation normal but the late hour and a generous host was perhaps too much for the senior of our pair. Eyes were heavy and home was seemingly further distant than the welcoming land of Nod.

Somewhat inevitably calm was disturbed however. The driver spoke. *'Fred, why are we called Companions? The Constitutions say that Pure Ancient Masonry consists of three degrees including the Royal Arch. We are known as Brothers in those first three. Why not in the Royal Arch as well?'*

An irritated grunt was apparently the limit of Fred's eloquence. Quickly surfacing he recognised it was in fact a very good question. It probed into the very heart of Freemasonry.

He reflected *'Speculative Freemasonry, Charlie, is really just a basic system of social morality. Using an analogy of shaping stones to build a temple, in three short stories the Craft encourages all men to become even stronger through a greater concern for those around them, by developing their own 'god-given' talents and also quietly contemplating their own spiritual nature.'*

'But why 'Companion,' Fred?'

By now fully engaged Fred continued without missing a beat. *'The size of any temple depends on how much work's put into its construction. How much effort do we choose to put in, Charlie, reflecting (or 'speculating') on the moral lessons those Craft Degrees have to offer.'*

'Fred, listen, where does the word Companion come in?'

'Have a bit of patience, lad. The basic stone is shaped within the Craft from a rough to a smooth ashlar. Our Master Mason is then better equipped to continue on Life's journey, both morally and socially '.

'How come, Fred?'

'How come, Charlie? Because he can set off with a renewed confidence and purpose. He need never be alone again. By joining a Chapter he'll have around him the company of like-minded Brothers with similar values (smooth ashlar all). We could call them a Brother's travelling companions through Life. Let's just say 'Companions''

'Life's travelling companions? Yes, I see that'. Charlie paused before adding 'But then how does the Royal Arch story actually help us, Fred?'

'It sets out the benefits along Life's journey of living in harmony with others. It does so in an allegory, still using the Craft's story-line of Solomon's Temple but now as seen through the eyes of three stone-masons ('The Three Sojourners'). They were sent from Babylon to help re-build it. Their two month journey along the Euphrates and Damascus would almost certainly have forged a very close bond between them. This is mirrored by our Companions during their long Masonic journey together attending their Chapter's ceremonies and social events.'

Charlie thought for a moment. *'Our Sojourners were first set to work amongst the old Temple's foundations. How can that possibly help us?'*

Fred enquired wryly: *'And what then happened...?'*

'They discovered a darkened crypt. Fred.'

Fred added: *'Exactly so...and they were at first frightened to face it. Companions today can also encounter their own dark spaces. They may be times almost impossible to face after, say, the loss of a loved one, news of cancer or a career redundancy. And in this darkness what did the Sojourners find, Charlie?'*

Charlie thought for a moment and suggested: *'The Sojourner who explored the crypt found a scroll, some letters and other symbols on an altar. It was too dark though to make any sense of them. What does that tell us, Fred?'*

Fred smiled. *'Quite a lot, Charlie, quite a lot. The rope round the waist reminds a Mason that, when in need, a close Companion can always become his life-line. The unreadable scroll is a reminder that for want of light we are often unable to discover the meaning of problems that face us. They perhaps only make sense when we discuss our problems, our worries, our fears out loud with another. The light of his advice then so often helps us see our own solution.'*

'But what about those letters, Fred?'

'Yes, Charlie, I hadn't forgotten. The first condition of admission into our Order has always been a belief in the Supreme Being. Those letters on the altar are a gentle reminder of this. Our darkness of spirit can be lightened by prayer and the knowledge we're never really alone.'

'So how do the three Principals come in to it?'

'Powerfully, Charlie. They confirmed that those letters hinted at the ever present nature of our Supreme Architect, even in the darkest of times. They then explained how He could be reached.'

'I didn't realise all that when I was Exalted, Fred? Why?'

Fred raised an eyebrow. *'The Sojourners were each given a small and apparently insignificant word or syllable. Its true value was only revealed when they united together ('Sharing the Word')'. Those three small syllables then formed something immensely valuable – a name representing their Creator, the TTALGMH 'to whom they must all submit and whom they ought humbly to adore.'*

'So today, Charlie, our Companions are reminded that however gifted we may or may not be, we can't survive Life's journey on our own. To reach our true fulfilment we need to unite with the companions around us – for their friendship, their guidance, for comfort, for prayer. Brotherly love, mutual dependency and a trusting companionship are all that really matter.'

'Could we say then, Fred, that while Brotherhood develops the Man through Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth (or, today, perhaps we'd say friendship, charity and service), we also need this special Companionship to complete Life's journey.'

'We could, Charlie, we could.. so may I now go back to sleep?' A gentle whiffling sound from the passenger drowned out Charlie's reply...

Note from the Editor: The musings of Fred and Charlie were introduced into Wiltshire Freemasonry by Bro Michael Lee who during a long and illustrious tenure as preceptor of Stonehenge Lodge No.6114 sought to make learning as enjoyable as it could be; especially for the new Brother to whom the finer points of our ceremonies could so easily be lost in the explanation.

The principles of Freemasonry are taught through the medium of allegory, that is simply a story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral one. For example, John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress is an allegory of the spiritual journey. Michael Lee has used the characters of Fred and Charlie to tell a story and we trust you will discover the 'not so hidden meaning'

I Appoint You Deacon of the Lodge...

It would be difficult if not impossible to think of our Lodge ceremonies being carried out without the Deacons distinguished by their wand of office, a dove bearing an olive branch. Yet the Office of Deacon is of fairly modern origin in Lodges warranted by the United Grand Lodge of England.

In the early Scottish and Irish Lodges Deacons were important officers as far back as the early eighteenth century, but were virtually unknown in English Lodges. Indeed, it wasn't until December 1809 that the Lodge of Promulgation resolved that '*Deacons being proved on due investigation to be not only ancient but useful and necessary Officer, be recommended.*' Prior to that moment, Deacons had not been considered either useful or necessary which might suggest that the ceremonies of Making, Passing, and Raising a Freemason must have been of a pretty basic form, with very little of the ceremonial work we see undertaken in our Lodges today.

In today's 'modern' Lodges it surely cannot be denied or challenged that there is no more important role than that of the Deacons. The work they undertake can literally make or mar any one of our ceremonies. The Master may well be word perfect and conduct himself with great aplomb, but if his Deacons perform their part of the work in a hesitant or lacklustre manner the whole ceremony is blighted. If the Master's work is imperfect the performance of the Deacons can throw a pleasant glow over the entire proceedings.

After all, the Deacons are the stars of the show for one clear reason, they are in charge of the candidate who is the very centre of the Lodge's interest and attention. Without efficiency on the part of the Deacons it is no stretch to suggest that our beautiful and indeed solemn ceremonies would have a lesser effect on the candidate that they should have.

For this reason every Deacon should have a clear understanding of what is required of them in every ceremony of the Lodge, his familiarity with the ritual should be pin sharp, so much so that he knows what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. If learning ritual is challenging, the choreography of the rubric can be equally daunting. But isn't it true that every hobby has at its core the desire to achieve a degree of excellence, and isn't it the case that improvement or success is a reasonable measure of how we make progress? For the Deacon the smooth flow of the ceremony is testament to the way in which they 'make things happen'. Book today for the Deacons' Worksop Contact ldo@wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk



DEACONS' WORKSHOP

Learning never ends



Swindon Masonic Centre
The Planks
Swindon

Saturday 11th January 2025
10.00am - 12noon
Refreshments provided

www.wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk

A Short History of The Deacon...

Having previously declared that the Lodge Deacons are the 'stars of the show' it is necessary to examine their bona fides in relation to modern Freemasonry, after all they were not always considered useful or indeed necessary.

This short piece cannot possibly be considered an exhaustive examination of the history of Deacons and neither should it be considered the only interpretation of the role. Masonic writers, researchers and students of its rich history continue to make new discoveries leading them to the conclusion that Freemasonry truly is a 'peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols'.

Freemasonry without education in its proper role can quickly devolve into a mere social club that is a shell of its original self

The Ancients (Atholl) Lodges, many deriving from Irish Freemasonry, had Deacons while the Moderns Lodges had Stewards but by and large they did the same jobs. On that basis you would think it would be easy to distinguish which camp a Lodge belonged to by whether it had Deacons or Stewards. But that would be far too easy as there were Lodges with both. If they were Ancient the Deacon was the more senior, if Modern, the Steward was the senior.

The word deacon is a derivation from a Greek word which in translation means attendant or servant, and among the Greeks the term was applied to those who served the tables, - i.e., who we now call Stewards.

In 1813, In preparation for the Union of the two Grand Lodges the Lodge of Promulgation recommended formal adoption of the office stating '*Deacons being proved on due investigation to be not only ancient but useful and necessary Officer, be recommended.*' Interestingly they referred to Stewards not as Officers but as 'appendages' which is definitely not a term we would use today to describe these important functionaries.

With the Steward now being given the task of caring for visitors at the Festive Board the office of Deacon which had been introduced into some of the Atholl, or Antients, Lodges as assistants at the table, mainly for help with eating, drinking or bearing messages from the Master, was now amended and the incumbents given the duty of attending on candidates a task which had previously been discharged by the Wardens. Little wonder the Deacons of the day valued their more important appointment.

Today, in English Lodges there are two officers referred to as the Senior and the Junior Deacons. Their primary duty is to conduct the candidate during degree work. However, it was not unknown for a Deacon to fill the role of Inner Guard an office that has a place in English, Irish and Scottish Lodges, but is unknown in most American Lodges where it is the Junior Deacon, acting under the commands of the Junior Warden, that admits Brethren, and has a special responsibility for Candidates and visitors.



The caduceus

The Deacon carries a wand as a badge of his office, but it wasn't always a wand? In the early Speculative period the Deacon's wand was surmounted by the caduceus, but towards the latter part of the 18th century Christian influences were instrumental in substituting the dove bearing a leaf from the Olive tree as more appropriate to Biblical concepts of the messenger than the pagan symbols of Mercury (Roman) or Hermes (Greek). **n.b.**, The Deacons of Lodge of Rectitude No.335 meeting at Corsham use wands with Mercury and not the Dove. Whatever surmounts the wand it cannot be denied that the use of a wand adds to the theatre of our ceremonies.

Horsing around with a purpose....

Wiltshire is pretty much regarded as a mainly rural county with two large centres Swindon in the North and Salisbury in the South dominating in terms of population. However, there are many small to medium areas such as Trowbridge, Chippenham, Marlborough, Malmesbury and Devizes (to name but a few) which host a significant number of Wiltshire residents.

It will therefore come as no surprise that equine pursuits form a considerable part of the leisure activities in the county, or that one of the foremost charities supported by Wiltshire Freemasons is the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA). Wiltshire has six centres recognised as local RDAs and they are situated at Lockeridge, Marlborough, Bradford-on-Avon, Trowbridge, Warminster and Salisbury.

Riding for the Disabled Association groups across Wiltshire have horses suitable for riding by people who have a disability. It is acknowledged that riding is a challenging and stimulating experience, which builds confidence and works on muscle strength, balance, coordination and general fitness. It also provides the opportunity for users and carers to socialise in a friendly environment.

One aspect of the work of RDA is 'Equine Assisted Learning' - this offers the opportunity for adults and children with neurodiverse conditions to spend quality time with horses in ways other than riding. These sessions aim to give the space needed to experience and develop a relationship with a horse more fully. The experience aims to contribute to enhanced wellbeing and a sense of personal discovery. Equine Assisted learning has been used as a complementary therapy for mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression.



Left to right are Sue Bacon, W.Bro Mike Wilson (WM), Jane Kimber RDA secretary, and W. Bro Derek Phillips Charity Steward

Have your say!

Have you a question to ask or is there something you want to know about Freemasonry. Maybe you just want to express a view or make a comment, Whatever it is write to the Provincial Grand Master at contact@wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk

PLEASE NOTE

All letters and emails are subject to editorial control. Regrettably due to space not all letters can be published

Is this for you?

Would you like to play a part in promoting Freemasonry in the Province, can you write media copy? Contact The Team comms@wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk

Wiltshire 2028 Festival



The Provincial Grand Master
Invites you to make a personal
donation to the
Wiltshire 2028 Festival



Q. Does the Province have a policy on reading ritual? I ask as it seems to be occurring more frequently.

A. It's a question I am asked more often than I like, but it's also one that I am very happy to answer. However, my answer comes with a caveat.

Historically, Masonic ritual has been performed without the use of a book in hand, very much like what you would see if you attended a theatre to watch and hear a play being performed. While I'm sure that many a thespian has struggled to learn their lines, I would be amazed if the audience would be happy to attend a performance that had the actors reading from a script,

Our ritual and the several ceremonies associated with Freemasonry are often described as being 'playlets' - that is short, condensed dramatic pieces of work presented in a theatrical style. I think that's a good description, uncomplicated and easily understood.

I mentioned actors learning their lines, I could just as easily cite the singer that learns their song, and It is against this background that I hold to the view that learning Masonic ritual should be the default position for every aspiring Freemason.

By the way, it's not only professionals who apply themselves to studying the pieces they perform, amateur performers also take incredible personal pride in 'getting it right'.

I am also told that 'times have changed, and the pressures of modern day life negate the opportunity to learn ritual'. Such a view ignores the fact that Freemasons of a different era had a busy job, or a young family, together with the pressures of normal everyday life. In every generation there has been those who found learning ritual easy, those who found it difficult and those who just couldn't master the task - nothing different to any learning experience.

I would hope that every Mason wishing to become Master of their Lodge would be prepared to learn the ritual required of them in the seven or eight years of working his way to the Chair. For some the process might require an extra year or even two - there is nothing wrong in having to bide your time.

But, and here's my caveat. We all understand and appreciate that the ability to learn can be more difficult for some members, it is for this reason we do not expect everyone to be able to perform the larger bodies of work - they can quite properly be handed over to a more able Brother.

Friends Together...

All Freemasons are Initiated into a Lodge - there is no other way to gain admission into the 300 year old society of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of England, and it is the Lodge, your Lodge, that should be recognised as your Masonic home. Your fellow members are not just acquaintances to be met with six, seven or eight times a year, they are your Brothers in Freemasonry and what better way to show your commitment to the Lodge and your fellow brethren than to share an evening together outside of the Lodge. That's exactly what members of Harry C Preater Lodge No.8204, Lodge of Remembrance No.4037, Highworth Lodge No.9009, and Vastern Lodge No.8977 did when they held curry nights at two different locations but with one aim - to celebrate friendship.



Masonic Bikers kick start Christmas....

It's probably the case that not one of the modern motor bikes ridden by members of the Stonecutters Widows Sons MBA even has a 'kick start' but every biker will know exact what one was.

Together with members of Juno Company, Wiltshire Army Cadet Force the Stonecutters held their Christmas Toy Run supporting Julia's House Children's Hospice on Saturday 30 November 2024.

The Christmas Toy Run has become one of the Stonecutters most important events as not only do they support the young people assisted by Julia's House, it also provides an opportunity to support the Army Cadet Force which is a charitable organisation in its own right.

Army Cadets, like the Scouts, are encouraged to take an active role in serving their local communities and working with Wiltshire Freemasons, and the Stonecutters enables the cadets to complete their 'Cadet In The Community' syllabus. while they help us deliver the toys donated and collected for Julia's House Children's Hospice and the amazing young people who they support. The Stonecutters wish to thank all the Brethren, families and businesses who kindly donated toys to support such a worthwhile cause.



Did You Know?



Scottish Freemasons, in common with the Irish, normally wear the apron tied **under** the jacket/coat. Not so long ago this was actually the Law on the matter, but with the advent of double-breasted suits the Law now reads, 'Aprons shall be fastened preferably under the coat and worn so that the flap is visible'

However, English Freemasons wear the apron tied **over** the jacket/coat and while there are any number of explanations for this distinction between the three Constitutions, there is nothing in the Book of Constitutions resembling the 'Law' of the Scottish and Irish fraternity. In the absence of a Law, etiquette rules.



In this edition of **Across the Plain** we celebrate the season of Christmas with the Provincial Rulers encircled in festive wreaths.

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I was intrigued to read the Provincial Grand Master's answer to a question that is often asked with regard to reading ritual in a Lodge Meeting. The question (see page 13) was in reference to reading ritual in Lodge meetings. My being intrigued wasn't because the question was being asked but rather the reasoning behind it.

I often hear Brethren making the case for reading rather than learning the script - generally the claim is that there isn't time in a busy life to learn the words. Sometimes, the reason given is one of not being able to digest and remember large tracts of text, and occasionally the issue of autism, ADHD or Asperger's is mentioned.

I empathise with anyone who has difficulty in learning our ritual, which for a number of reasons is not easy to master. I know just how much I struggled to perform the very basic stuff, and it didn't help that I was a member of a Lodge where good ritual was regularly practiced.

What made the difference for me was the way in which the members coached me and helped me to attain a level of competency that qualified me to move through the offices of the Lodge. After all isn't it the case that promotion/progression and what the Book of Constitutions refers to as preferment is based on merit **and** ability only.

On a slightly different but allied note, I recently read a piece on actress Dame Judi Dench - M of James Bond fame, or Jean Hardacre in *As Time Goes By*. Having turned 90 years of age a few days ago she can still recite the whole of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* a work of some monumental proportion. I mention this as Dame Judi makes clear that learning her lines whether for a play or the big screen was not easy, in fact it was fear of failure that made her apply herself to the task in hand. Her satisfaction was in triumphing over the fear. A lesson for us all - maybe?

Note from the editor: Articles appearing in the Monthly Newsletter or *Across the Plain* have a number of purposes, including to inform, to educate, to entertain and to challenge. Not every piece written will meet with universal approbation, but neither are they intended to offend. The editor is delighted to receive your views on any article appearing in the

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Hearing Aids will only be as good as the Audiologist who programmes them

One of the great privileges attached to the office of Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies is being able to talk with my Lodge colleagues and discuss ways in which our profoundly beautiful ceremonies can be enhanced.

During my time as one of the two deputies I was often asked for my view on a point of detail as to how something should be done, or could be done a little better, or a little smarter. It won't surprise you to know that the main stumbling block to changing anything was to be found in that often used phrase 'We don't do it that way' or 'The Founders wanted it done like that' and sometimes, 'The committee won't like it if we change'. All perfectly reasonable in their way, but do such sentiments really dictate and control how we do things today, particularly in this Province?

As a Director of Ceremonies I value 'tradition' - I also welcome innovation and I recognise that many so-called traditions were themselves once considered innovations. Their timelessness cannot be measured as existing 'from time immemorial' neither can they be classified as immutable.

I never cease to be amazed at the fact that a simple action such as saluting (especially in the First Degree) in the proper prescribed manner can produce such an assortment of waves, grabs, flicks and other strange movements. After all, a reading of the eighteen words in the ritual appear to be very clear, with absolutely no mention whatsoever of a wave, grab or flick, and yet.....

I do understand and appreciate that some Lodges have customs and traditions which are unique to the way they operate and it is the undoubted right of any Lodge to regulate their own proceedings, provided they are consistent with the general laws and regulations of the Craft. However, it is always best to ascertain from the Province as to whether any supposed tradition is an Alteration or Innovation in the Body of Masonry. Something which is not allowed.

Part of my role, and that of my team, is to assist a Lodge Director of Ceremonies as they seek to make sure the ceremonial of the meeting, which includes the actions printed in red in the Ritual Book, is conducted to the highest possible standard; it is not normally the Lodge Director of Ceremonies task to concern himself with the words of the ritual used or to act as a prompt.

It is also a part of my duties to see that Brethren observe certain rules and protocols as required by the UGLE and the Province.

Which brings me nicely to a topic close to my heart- the wearing of breast jewels. The Provincial Grand Master has noticed that there have been instances where Brethren have worn their breast jewels in the incorrect sequence.

In this Province the correct order is as follows:

1. Royal Arch jewel (one of three)
2. UGLE Tercentenary jewel.
3. Provincial Festival jewel.
4. Past Master's jewel.
5. Lodge Centenary jewel.

Lodge jewels which include a Past Master's breast jewel (item 4) may **only be worn** in the Lodge to which they apply and were issued.

(The wearing of any jewel is subject to qualification)



Supporting Teddies for Loving Care....

The Provincial Grand Master John Reid is a great supporter of Teddies for Loving Care and it will come as no surprise that he chose to allocate donations made at the Christmas Carol Service to helping the Province to continue providing lovable teddies to the accident and emergency departments of the county's two main hospitals in Swindon, and Salisbury.

A hospital visit can be a frightening experience for a young child, especially in an emergency situation. Giving a child a Teddies for Loving Care bear is a way of providing much-needed comfort to children in A&E departments, helping to reduce the shock and distress of their experience.

The bears are used to calm children down, reward them for being brave or to demonstrate procedures. Often the bears are used to distract children so nurses and doctors can get their jobs done quickly and efficiently. Doctors and nurses recognise a Teddies for Loving Care bear to be an invaluable tool for medical professionals.

Thanks to John King (Tisbury Lodge No.8718) and Ian Priest (Methuen Lodge No.8692), the storage and despatch of Teddies to the two centres is carried out with the minimum of fuss and bother - a phone call from the hospital is all that it takes for John and Ian to jump into action and make sure that no location is ever without a supply of cuddly teddies.

The work of the team to supply teddies is totally dependent on Freemasons making regular donations to Teddies for Loving Care (Wiltshire). Your Lodge can play its part in supporting Teddies for Loving Care (Wiltshire) by holding one raffle every year and donating the proceeds to this amazing initiative.



The core aim of Teddies for Loving Care is to provide cuddly teddy bears to distressed children admitted to the Accident & Emergency department at either of Wiltshire's two general hospitals located in Salisbury and Swindon.

Most of the money raised for 'Teddies for Loving Care' comes from within the Freemason community through Lodge donations and fundraising activities.

The TLC Wiltshire scheme operates under the umbrella of the Provincial Grand Lodge with all donations ring-fenced to support the purchase and distribution of TLC Bears.

SUPPORT YOUR T L C APPEAL

TLC Wiltshire now has its own unique Relief Chest which makes giving so much easier and allows you to Gift Aid your donations

One Hundred Years...



1. To all our guests from near and far
a welcome from the Brethren here.
And from this Pleydell Lodge member
hope tonight you'll well remember.



One hundred years ago Swindon was home
to three Lodges, but such was the interest in
Freemasonry that a new Lodge was formed
to be known as The Pleydell Lodge No.4687.

2. I'm sure in Lodge you saw tonight,
our workings carried out so right
by officers who know the answers,
for in the Craft they are Past Masters.

The Consecration meeting was held at the
Mechanics Institution which was quite apposite as
many of the members of the new Lodge were
employees of the Great Western Railway.

3. While looking round in Lodge we saw
some Brethren who had been before,
and this is what we know is best
it proves our friendship's passed the test.

The new Lodge shared a home with Gooch Lodge
No.1295 meeting at The Queen Royal Hotel at the
Swindon Railway Station. Both Lodges
subsequently moved to Old Town joining The
Royal Sussex Lodge of Emulation No.355, and
Lodge of Remembrance No.4037.

4. Some faces in the Lodge are new,
a special welcome here to you,
we hope you all will come again
you'll find the welcome still the same.

The Lodge was kept extremely busy, in that during
the first four years when there were 27 meetings,
which included 13 Initiations (24 Candidates), 12
Passings and 13 Raisings, a total of 37 ceremonies,
a number of which were double ceremonies within
27 meetings.

5. And now our Festive Board is ending,
to all our guests we each are sending
our wishes that you leave contented
Masonic friendship well cemented.

The words of the Visitors Toast is a monologue
composed and first proposed on 26th March 1968
by Bro Frank Hinchliffe (89) who Frank was
Initiated into the Lodge on 26th October 1965 and
became its Master on 26th November 1979.

6. From when we meet so happily,
to when we part in harmony,
thoughts of tonight we hope you'll treasure,
to have you here has been our pleasure.

The toast was reprised by Frank on the occasion of
the Centenary meeting and was welcomed with
cheerful acclamation.

7. So Pleydell Brethren rise and stand
and raise your glasses in your hand,
let's show our guest a perfect host,
and drink to them a bumper toast.

Most people think the famous climbing phrase 'because it is there' was first uttered by Edmund Hillary when he and Tenzing Norgay conquered Mount Everest in 1953. Sadly, it's but an urban myth as actually George Leigh Mallory, three decades earlier, said it as he prepared to scale the world's highest peak.

Your editor was thinking of this famous quote when he received details from Derek Gibbens (Lodge Elias de Derham No.586) of a planned charity trek scheduled for September 2025 to raise funds for the Wiltshire 2028 Festival. Derek, who has just returned from a charity trek to the Everest Base Camp is inviting any Wiltshire Freemasons who have an adventurous spirit to register their interest in being a part of this incredible experience.

The charity trek involves flying to Morocco as part of a closed group of friends led by experienced guides to trek Mount Toubkai the highest peak in the Atlas Mountains.

A slow meandering climb up to the high refuge will see you pass through ancient villages, dominated by an enormous Kasbah, and meet hospitable Berbers who may treat you to refreshing drinks and show you beautiful crystals found in the mountain. You will want to stop to marvel at the mountain scenery as it opens up around you, and wind your way through rocky paths and, depending on the time of year, snow, to reach the peak where the Atlas range opens up before you. The silence is remarkable, the High Atlas utterly unforgettable.

A trekker said of a previous trip *'It is a great introduction to trekking, a real physical and mental challenge, and you can experience a very different culture without travelling too far. The highlights were the amazing scenery, the challenge, sense of achievement, amazing scenery, banter, making friendships, experiencing local culture. The expedition was challenging, fulfilling, exciting, and profound.'*

There is a cost, but it's a snip at only £1,100 per person. The planned date is 8th September 2025 for 5 days, 4 nights. Derek is looking for at least twenty trekkers to join him and Simon (the chairman of the Wiltshire 2028 Festival) is looking for a minimum of £5,000 to be raised for the Wiltshire 2028 Festival. Interested ? Contact Derek by email derek.gibbens@btinternet.com

Is there a catch? We want this event to raise lots of money for the Wiltshire 2028 Festival and you can do this do by getting sponsorship from family, friends and even the milkman (well maybe not the milkman) but start with family and friends. The funds raised should be in addition to Lodge or Individual targets.



Trekking with Derek and friends
Enjoy the sights and sounds of
Morocco, and the beauty of
Mount Toubkai.

A Family Occasion...

It was a truly family affair for the 'Sansums' when brothers Roger, and Roy were joined by Alex - Roger's Son, and the Deputy Provincial Grand Master Simon Leighfield to celebrate Roger's 50 years membership of Freemasonry, and his being a stalwart supporter of The Royal Sussex Lodge of Emulation No.355 that meets at the Swindon Masonic Centre. Roy was Initiated into the Lodge in 1972, Roger in 1974 and Alex in 2016. A wonderful trio of Freemasons.



⋮

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The Freemason's Apron....

There can be no doubt that today's Masonic apron was developed from the apron worn by operative masons in the middle ages. The few surviving examples show that the operative apron was fashioned from the skin of an animal, most likely sheep and that it was large enough to cover the wearer from the chest to below the knees.

Its flap or bib was held by a leather cord, which passed around the neck. Cords were attached to each side. This enabled the stonemason to tie the apron around his waist ending up with a tied bow at the front. The bottom had rounded corners. The use of this rough apron continued to be used for many centuries.

It is thought possible that in the 1730s some Speculative Masons were experimenting with fabrics other than leather for their aprons. We do not know when the very long aprons went out of use, however, pictures show them still in use in 1754. The early fashion of wearing the bib or flap up soon fell into disfavour. The bib was either cut off, or worn turned down. On our aprons today, we refer to this as the flap.

From 1731, onwards leather gave way to softer fabrics, silk, satin, velvet, linen, and chamois leather. The flap, when retained, was either cut to a triangular form or in a semi-circular line. The lower part of the apron was sometimes squared off, but generally, the corners were trimmed to give a semi-circular line, and the leather cords were replaced by ribbons or strings.

Between 1740 and 1790, elaborately-painted or embroidered aprons came into fashion, and continued to be favoured, until the Union of GL's in 1813. Many of these aprons were homemade. The most popular designs usually included the Square and Compasses, the All-Seeing Eye, the Pillars, Working tools, and the Mosaic pavement. As time went on the apron size grew smaller and smaller.

Grand Lodge Officers first edged their aprons with light blue silk but by 1750 they changed the colour to purple. Soon after the Master Mason's aprons were edged in the light blue. In the Minutes of 17 March 1731, Grand Lodge we read the following:

'...that all those who have served in the Grand Offices shall wear their white leather aprons lined with blue silk. That those brethren who have served as Stewards shall wear their aprons lined with red silk, and the Master and Wardens of Lodges shall wear their aprons lined with white silk'

This is the earliest mention of the colour blue in connection with Masonic clothing, but we do not get any indication of the shade of blue until 1734, when on the authority of the Deputy Grand Master an order was given for Masonic clothing. This was described as:

'Two Grand Master's aprons lined with Garter blue silk and turned over two inches, with white strings; two deputy Grand Master aprons turned over one inch and a half, ditto,'

In 1815, the new United Grand Lodge enforced a standardized apron. The specified apron dimensions were as follows:

The Apprentice apron, without a flap, is to be of white lambskin, with white strings attached at the top for tying. It is to be 14-16 inches wide, 12-14 inches deep, and square at the bottom. For the Fellow Craft apron, add two sky blue rosettes at the bottom. No Flap; and for the Master Mason apron, this time with a flap, add a third sky blue rosette to the flap, plus sky-blue edging of one and a half inches in width.

For the next 150 years, there was little change. Today it is ruled that the apron of the Apprentice must have a 'flap', that the two rosettes of the Fellow Craft must be attached 'to the lower corners' of the apron, and that the aprons of Master Masons are to be edged with sky blue ribbon of 'not more than two inches in width', that 'silver tassels' must hang over the face and that the tie strings must also be 'sky blue'.

The Distinguishing Badge...

Next, we come to the tassels. These evolved from the waist-strings being tied at the front and hanging down over the apron. The ends of the ties were edged, usually with gold fringe, so that when tied at the front the fringed ends have the appearance of a pair of tassels. It is impossible to say when the silver tassels made their first appearance as standard decoration for the M.M.'s apron. While they were probably in use sometime before 1841, the first recorded evidence shows up in the Book of Constitutions of that same year. There appears to be no record of when the silver rope tassels gave way to two strips of ribbon on which are attached seven chains. The seven chains themselves are full of symbolic meaning and represent various Masonic allegories such as the seven liberal Arts and Sciences, the number of Masons required to make a Lodge perfect, the number of years it took king Solomon to build the temple, etc. The two ribbons and chains represent the pillars of B. and J.

The origin of rosettes is also unknown. It is probable, however, that their original purpose was purely ornamental. The origin of the word 'rosette' comes from the French language and means 'little rose'.

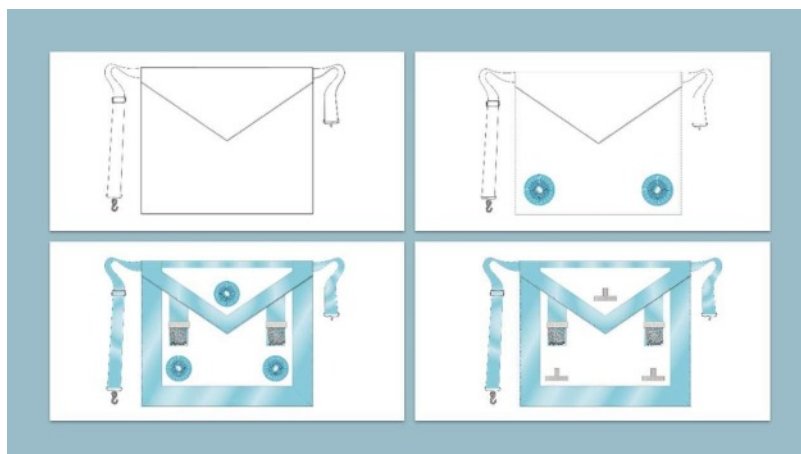
There appears to be no official name for the squares or levels which decorate the apron of a Master or Past Master. The 1815 Constitutions described them as 'perpendicular lines upon horizontal lines, thereby each one forming two right angles'. Originally, they were to be of inch-wide ribbon. Today the emblems are of silver coloured metal. They were designed only for the purpose of distinction..

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One opinion is that in 1813 when the Emulation ritual and new Constitution was written, the equally newly formed United Grand Lodge of England reverted back to how the operative masons wore their aprons. That being on the outside of their clothing as protection from the rough stones that they handled.



A Little Knowledge....

The basic principle of Emulation is, and always has been, that the ritual as approved cannot be altered in any way, it is patently clear that many Lodges throughout the Fraternity have adapted the Emulation ritual to what can best be described as a personal preference.

In many Wiltshire Lodges words and indeed whole sentences have been removed, while others have been added and some simply ignored. The same applies to the 'rubric' or actions associated with the ritual. Do the changes make the ritual less 'Emulation' - the answer can only be yes; but does it really matter? If you are a purist, of course it matters, but as the Notes on Ritual and Procedure (to be found in the opening pages of the Ritual Book) state, 'There are many other systems of working the Masonic ritual.'

When Moonraker Lodge No.8747 was formed out of Wiltshire Lodge of Fidelity No.663 there was a great debate as to what ritual format was to be used. The choice was between Taylor's or Emulation - the ballot proved in favour of Emulation. This completed an interesting local relationship with the Emulation Ritual as in 1816 Bro Sampson Samuel, of Lodge No.319 visited Wiltshire Lodge of Fidelity No.663 and proceeded to demonstrate and instruct the Brethren in the 'new system'. I'm not sure the current members practice their ritual in accordance with Bro Samuel's directions, but it's probably close.

One aspect of the Emulation Lodge of Improvement is its insistence that the ritual be delivered from memory and not read. To some this may seem a stretch, after all they would claim, 'we are busy men'. Such claims may have some truth, but were our predecessors 'not busy men' also? Did our forebears not have demanding employers, and family commitments?

What they didn't have was the benefit of technology that enables the 20th century Freemason to listen and learn anywhere, anytime. Consider this, in the opening of a Lodge the Master has only twenty one questions to ask, most of which consist of seven words or less.

Perhaps the answer is to attend the Lodge of Instruction where it is hoped 'the Master and his Officers will become efficient in every detail of their manifold responsibilities' (Emulation Working - Explained 1929)

The Letters AL...

The letters 'AL' evident on contemporary certificates, according to United Grand Lodge of England, stand for Anno Lucis ('The Year of Masonic Light'). Interestingly those letters did not appear on any Lodge certificates until 1780 and it was not until the 'St. Pauls' certificate design issued from 1810 that they became a consistent feature on certificates.

The first Grand Lodge certificates were usually dated with the words 'Anno Domini' and 'Year of Masonry'. The initials 'AL' first came into Masonic existence (but not on Lodge certificates) in 1725. At the time, they probably stood for 'Anno Latomorum' rather than 'Anno Lucis'. The Latin word 'Latomorum' is derived from Greek meaning 'of Stone-cutters' or in modern parlance, 'of masons'. The letters 'Anno Lat' were first discovered on a set of three jewels presented in 1732 to Dr. Richard Rawlinson of Castle Lodge.

The first Masonic reference to 'Anno Lucis' however was not made until 1772 when Preston in his tome, 'Illustrations of Masonry' referred to a Lodge banqueting hall door which bore an inscription which included the date 'Anno Lucis 5765'.

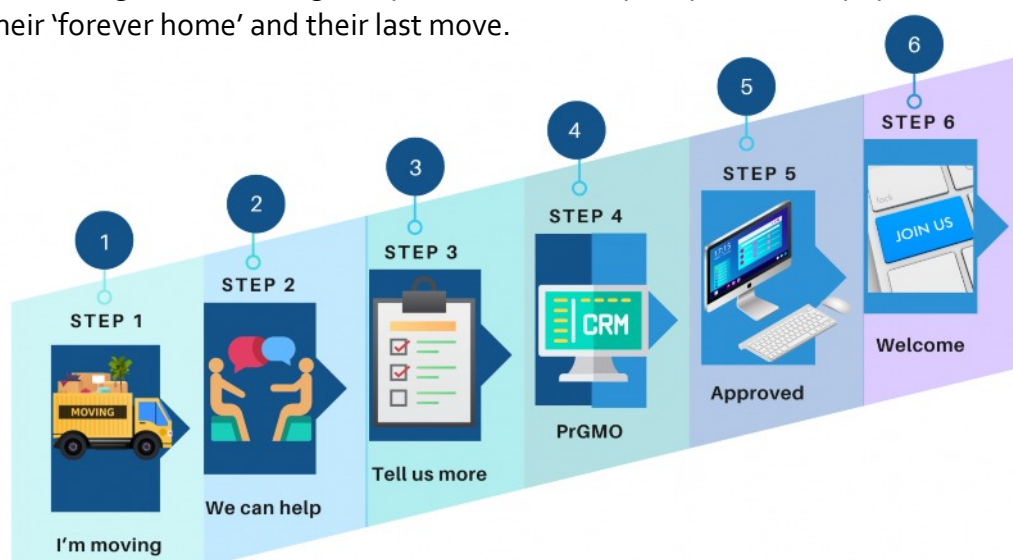
United Grand Lodge obviously now considers 'AL' to stand for 'Anno Lucis', but is there anything in their history to confirm this? No, there is not. In the Articles of Union, the date given is as the 25th day of November, in the Year of our Lord, 1813, and of Masonry, 5813'. No 'Anno Lucis'- and indeed no 'AL'. Nevertheless, with a little imagination, the modern interpretation of 'AL' and 'An Lat' (i.e., 'the Year of Masonic Light' versus 'the Year of Masons') are broadly similar.

Attracting new members, as we all know, is an important aspect of the Membership Officer's role within the Province. A task that is less well known and appreciated is that of assisting a member who for many reasons may be leaving the area covered by the Province and moving further afield or moving into the area from another Province or District. Both elements, attracting, and assisting are equally important.

As a Province with strong connections to the military, especially the army it won't surprise you that Wiltshire has a great deal of knowledge and experience in supporting our members who serve in the Armed Forces and who are liable to be posted or deployed, often at short notice and with little if any knowledge of how to connect with the membership team of the area they are moving to. However, it's not just the military who are required to move with their job.

The Province has employers who are not just national companies but also international, plus Swindon is the centre for the seven research organisations under the umbrella of UK Research and Innovation. While staff from organisations and companies are given first class support in finding somewhere to live, advice on schools, doctors, dentists, churches and even the location of local leisure facilities, there isn't any help to find the nearest Masonic Hall. That's where the membership team comes in.

The other tier of movers are those who are retiring and moving to be closer to family members, and some who are downsizing and relocating to a part of the country they have always promised themselves would become their 'forever home' and their last move.



Step 1. Inform the Secretary. If you're moving or you know a member is moving - tell your Lodge Secretary.

Step 2. Start the Member Moving Process. Once the Lodge Secretary is informed that a Brother is moving, explain what the Member Moving Process is and ask the member for permission to start the Member Moving Process.

Step 3. Use the online form to kick start the Member Moving Process. The Member Moving Process is started by filling out an online form.

Step 4. Send the form to the Provincial Membership Officer.

The online Member Moving Process form is sent by a single click of the 'submit' button to the Provincial Membership Officer.

Step 5. The Member Moving Process form is assessed. The Provincial Membership Officer assesses the form and forwards it to his opposite number in the receiving Province.

Step 6. The receiving Provincial Membership Officer takes over. The receiving Provincial Membership Officer allocates the 'moving' member to a Lodge in the Province.



Hugh Douglas-Smith is the Chief Information Officer for UGLE and he recently introduced a major leap forward in our digital transformation - and if that introduction didn't make you sit up and take notice, we're not sure what will.

In Hugh's own words, Portal is an exciting new chapter in how we connect as Freemasons. Portal is your gateway to an enhanced and seamless Masonic experience.

Portal is much more than just a system - it's a personalised doorway to the future of Masonic membership, much more so as it's YOUR doorway and you will have the key to open it and to store your personal data. Portal will transform how you interact with your Masonic journey, giving you easy access to all the information you need and empowering you to take control.

The design of Portal has been based around the experiences of over 500 users and we incorporate many of their suggestions, although it can't make a cup of coffee! The results of the team listening and implementing many of the ideas has resulted in clean, mobile friendly screens that are easy to navigate and a delight to use.

Security and privacy are features that everyone quite rightly demands and you will be pleased to know they have been built into the very foundation of Portal. You, as the owner and user of your data will be in complete control of your personal information. Its accuracy will be entirely dependant on the quality of your input and it will also be your decision who sees the information on the system.

So, what personal information will be controlled by you? As you would expect, the information to be held will include your phone numbers:

- Your addresses.
- Your phone numbers.
- Your email contact details.
- A profile photo image.

Using the flexible privacy tiers, you can select the level of visibility with which you're most comfortable:

- Private (this will allow only you and the administration team access to your details).
- Unit level (this will enable fellow Lodge /Chapter members to view your details).
- Provincial level (this will provide a view of your details to Freemasons within the Province).
- Public level (this permission will open your details to the wider Masonic community).

But this is only phase one, there's more to come.

Future phases are already being worked on and will include the provision of support to Provincial, Lodge and Chapter Secretaries.

To make sure you can access Portal (when it comes online) it is important that your email address is up to date with UGLE. One of the advantages of HERMES is that your Lodge Secretary, and Chapter Scribe E can help by updating your email address - it's always worth checking with them that they have the right details.

Carols At Christmas 2024...



Carols At Christmas 2024...



Carols At Christmas 2024...



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