



January 2025

A Very Happy New Year to you all...



While Christmas for some will be a distant memory, for others it will not be over until the 6th January sometimes referred to as Three Kings' Day. One of the abiding memories of Christmas for me was being able to join over 600 Freemasons, their families and friends in the Marlborough College Chapel for **Carols At Christmas**. Last year's event was a huge success and judging from the comments I have received over the past two weeks I think it fair to say that the 2024 event was equally good. What I do know for a fact is that the mince pies were outstanding a point endorsed by none other than Assistant Grand Master David Medlock. I'm really pleased to confirm that the team has already booked the College Chapel for Sunday 14th December 2025.

I was particularly pleased to inform the High Sheriff of Wiltshire Dr Olivia Chappell that Wiltshire Freemasons would be donating £750 to Horatio's Garden of which Dr Chappell is a Founder and trustee. Our very own Teddies For Loving Care (Wiltshire) will also receive £750 which I know will be used to replenish the Province's stock of bears. In 2024 the team distributed 3,200 bears to the Accident and Emergency Departments at Swindon's Great Western Hospital, and Salisbury General Hospital.

The Learning and Development Team will be holding two events this month. The first is a **Deacons' Workshop** on Saturday 11th January at 10.00am and is being held at the Swindon Masonic Centre. The second event is **Preparing For The Chair** at Trowbridge on Saturday 25th January. It's the ideal course for a Lodge Warden but current Masters are always welcome to attend. You will be amazed at what you learn about being the Master. Wiltshire leads the field when it comes to providing clear instruction to new members, guidance to Brethren looking to advance through the ranks of the officers, and support for those who aspire to reach the Chair. The emphasis on 'excellence' can be a little daunting at first, but having a clearly defined level of expectation certainly concentrates the mind and sets a standard for which to aim.

Many of you will have either heard or read David Wootton's thoughts on the Third Pillar and its link to service, more explicitly service to local communities. His views were endorsed by the Pro Grand Master Jonathan Spence who in his recent address to Grand Lodge said, *"The Third Pillar of the Strategy for Freemasonry, is concerned with our engagement with the communities within which we live and work. It is essential we do so, and do so with enthusiasm as we demonstrate the good Freemasonry can bring to those whom it touches, whether they are members or not."*

I do not believe the Brethren of this Province need any reminder whatsoever of the importance of engaging with local communities, as I am confident Members will acknowledge the words spoken at the North East corner to every Initiate - *"no doubt it has often been felt and practised by you."* Equally important in the words spoken in the piece Members often refer to as the Charity Charge is the clearest indication of where a Freemason's first duty lies, it is to his fellow Freemasons and by default to their dependants.

In the December newsletter I mentioned the importance of engaging with the membership by holding curry nights, clay shoots, pub visits, skittles events, and other social events. It is so important that any engagement includes as many members of the Lodge as possible, as it is by fostering a spirit of participation that Members will feel included and an integral part of the Lodge family. Something I feel is an essential part of being a Freemason. With that thought in mind I close 2024 with a wish that we will all enjoy a healthy and prosperous New Year.



Just how important is **Teddies for Loving Care?**

Sometimes the answer can best be given by referencing a real life issue and this is a true story of the transforming power of a **Teddies for Loving Care** bear.

The young lady referred to is Brooke and at the age of twelve she lost her mother, thankfully Brooke had good friends and family members who loved and cared for her but how can anyone begin to imagine let alone know what was going on in her mind.

It's no surprise to discover that Brooke retreated into her own protective shell, after all why wouldn't she? There was so much to process and she was only twelve. More importantly the person she needed to help her understand, her mum - was gone.

By chance a friend spotted a **Teddies for Loving Care** bear (in a Masonic Hall) and in an inspired moment thought this may just be the thing to help heal Brooke's heartache, and sure enough it was.



A TRUE STORY RECEIVED THIS WEEK

"I recently was passed a TLC bear to give to my friends daughter.

Unfortunately my friend gave up her battle with life, she left a 12 year old daughter. As you can imagine her world came crashing down and she has struggled with any form of communication.

I passed her Nan the bear, and she explained to her what it was for.... She grabbed the teddy and hugged and hugged it

I had a message from her Nan earlier today telling me that she has not let the bear leave her side since she was given it.

I just want to thank you all for the wonderful thing you do. Your bear has made a difference to this young lady. It won't replace her Mum, but it has given her something to hug as tight as she wants to."

YOUR GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

www.wiltshirefreemasons.co.uk



January 2025

Education is the bedrock of Freemasonry...

One of the primary functions of a Masonic Lodge and the Craft is to train its members to a proper understanding of the truths its ritual and ceremonies are intended to teach. The truth of this statement is supported by no less an authority than the Book of Constitutions and can be determined by reference to the third of the Antient Charges, a summary of which every Installed Master is required to give his 'unqualified assent' and to support. The Charge reads: "*A Lodge is a place where freemasons assemble to work and to instruct themselves in the mysteries and antient science.*"

As you might expect, the learning or education process starts very quickly following a candidate's initiation with the presentation of the working tools, in particular the chisel that points out the advantages of education, by which means alone we are rendered fit members of regularly organised Society.

The speculative Freemason is encouraged from his first day as an Entered Apprentice to make himself acquainted with the principles of Moral Truth and Virtue and is recommended to study more especially such of the liberal Arts and Sciences as may lie within the compass of his attainment. The purpose of the study is also made clear; it is to enable the new Freemason to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.

A distinguished Mason, once observed, "*The lack of educational work in the average Lodge is the principal reason for the lack of interest and the consequent poor attendance in Masonry over which spokesmen have been wringing their hands for at least a century.*" This quote should cause us to pause and think about the importance and value of Masonic education within the Craft, It should also persuade us to think about why this important aspect of Freemasonry has been so badly overlooked.

As you can imagine there is no easy answer. As a Fraternity, we have reached the point where few of our members, especially new members, have even the faintest idea of why they are Freemasons, let alone, have any factual knowledge about our history, heritage, purpose, and even the allegory of our ritual. The truth of the matter is that we have come to depend on the practise of ritual as the basis for Masonic knowledge and while ritual has a place, it is no substitute for education.

The purpose of education is not merely to prepare the Freemason for Lodge Office, nor is it to turn him into an automaton capable of reciting copious tracts of ritual of which he has little if any understanding; it is to prepare him for life. Masonic Education should challenge him to think critically, to engage with complexity, to understand his place in the world, and yes to reflect on his mortality and receive instruction on how to die.

However, let's not diminish the importance of ritual, our meetings would be poorer for its absence; but learning ritual is not the same as studying the history and meaning of Freemasonry. As a result we tend to be far more comfortable in working the degrees (words and actions) than in teaching the new Freemason what our beautiful Craft is all about. Has this always been so? The answer, of course, is no, but we might have drifted so far away from true knowledge within our Fraternity that now it is going to be difficult to turn the tide. But we are going to have to do that very thing if we are to reverse the trend of diminishing numbers of Freemasons as opposed to a loss of members.

Freemasonry did not evolve overnight into what we enjoy today – it took several generations of members to bring that about, and I believe it will take several more generations of Freemasons to effectively reinstate what has been removed from our fraternity.



January 2025

Annual Subscriptions are now due....

It's **January** and that means Lodge Annual Subscriptions are now due to be paid and all Lodge and Chapter by-laws state that the annual a subscription is payable **IN FULL : IN ADVANCE** by a single specified date.

Apart from the few instances where the Lodge subscription year is not the 1st January, it really is the case that a Brother who has not paid his annual subscription at 1st January is overdue.

A Lodge or Chapter is always carrying a retrospective debt. Treasurers being fully aware that the most significant outgoings, dues to Grand Lodge/Supreme Grand Chapter and to Province are collected in advance and paid retrospectively, meaning that funds have to be available at the appropriate time of the current year to pay last year's bills. Additional costs such as the fees to Masonic Halls and meeting venues must also be collected and paid at the appropriate time.

Please help your Lodge Treasurer to keep the Lodge accounts upto date by making your payment on time.

Deacons' Workshop...

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 how the Deacons perform their part of the work will make all the difference to the ceremony.

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 you want to discover more about the role of the Deacon in your Lodge this event is designed with you in mind. Don't wait - Book now to get a place at the DEACONS' WORKSHOP on Saturday 11th January 2025. Yes, you read it right - 2025. Why not make it a New Year resolution to attend this workshop? Just click the link, it's easy and quick to do <https://tinyurl.com/Deacons-workshop>

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 Reminder...

Past Masters 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 or joins another Lodge he does not wear a Past Master's or a Centenary breast jewel of another Lodge 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 yourself aware of the policy of the Province and be respectful of their wishes.

St Patrick's Lodge No.295 (IC)...



Our friend John Torley, secretary of St Patrick's Lodge No.295 (IC) that meets in the Masonic Hall, Warminster, has advised that the Royal Dragoon Guards have been deployed in Estonia on operations until mid March 2025; as a result the Master has taken the very difficult decision that no meetings will be held during this time. The next meeting will be on Saturday 26th of April and will be the Installation Communication starting at 1200hrs. John will provide more details of that meeting in due course.

The Lodge Membership Officer...

Are you a Lodge Membership Officer or the Brother designated to assist with attracting new members to the Lodge? If you are then Colin Cheshire will be delighted to welcome you to Trowbridge Masonic Hall on Saturday 8th February for the first of the New Year's Membership Officer seminars. Book you place on line today: <https://tinyurl.com/LMO-Feb2025>

WILTSHIRE FREEMASONS

Attracting Members | Growing Lodges



The Membership Officer

Saturday 8th February
10.00am until 12.00pm

Masonic Hall
Yerbury Street
Trowbridge

www.wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk



January 2025

Portal is coming to Wiltshire...



Portal is a personalised doorway to the future of Masonic membership, 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. And it's coming to Wiltshire this month.

The design of Portal has been based around the experiences of over 500 users and incorporates many of their suggestions. 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 address.
- Your phone numbers.
- Your email contact details.
- A profile photo image (totally optional).

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 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.

Steve Lee and his team will be contacting you with more information including help with how to sign in to the system - check Portal out and be in control of your data.



January 2025

Who's meeting where and when in January 2025?

Thanks to Paul Robinson - you only need look at the January diary to discover who's meeting when and where in January 2025. Paul's diary also tells you what the Lodge or Chapter is doing, all you need to do is book in with the Secretary/Scribe and enjoy the moment.

WILTSHIRE LODGE AND CHAPTER MEETINGS FOR JANUARY 2025

Date	Lodge/Chapter Name	No.	Ceremony	Location
2	Clarendon Lodge	L5908	Lecture	Trowbridge
3	Calley Lodge	L7525	3 rd Degree	Swindon
6	Downton Lodge	L9064	3 rd Degree *1	Downton
7	Chapter Of Agriculture	C9090	Exaltation	Corsham
8	Lodge of Friendship and Unity	L1271	1 st Degree	Bradford on Avon
8	Longleat Lodge	L1478	Installation	Warminster
8	Stonehenge Lodge	L6114	3 rd Degree	Salisbury
9	Lodge Elias de Derham	L586	3 rd Degree	Salisbury
9	Border Chapter	C3129	Exaltation	Ludgershall
10	Royal Sussex Lodge of Emulation	L355	Installation	Swindon
10	Chapter of Harmony	C663	Exaltation	Devizes
13	Lodge of Concord	L632	Installation	Trowbridge
13	Harry C Preater Lodge	L8204	1 st Degree	Swindon
14	Lansdowne Lodge of Unity	L626	Lecture	Chippenham
14	Lodge of Loyalty	L1533	2 nd Degree	Marlborough
15	Gooch Lodge	L1295	3 rd Degree	Swindon
15	The Border Lodge	L3129	2 nd Degree *2	Ludgershall
15	Vastern Lodge	L8977	2 nd Degree	Calne
15	Chapter Elias de Derham	C586	Exaltation	Salisbury
15	Chapter of Friendship and Unity	C1271	Demo Exaltation	Bradford on Avon
16	Corsham Lodge	L6616	1 st Degree	Corsham
16	Gooch Chapter	C1295	Exaltation	Swindon
17	Lodge of Fidelity	L663	Demo 3 rd Degree	Devizes
17	Highworth Lodge	L9009	2 nd Degree	Highworth
18	Wyvern Lodge	L8620	3 rd Degree	Warminster
20	Chaloner Lodge	L2644	3 rd Degree	Melksham
20	The City Lodge	L5955	Burns Night	Salisbury
21	White Horse Lodge	L2227	3 rd Degree *1	Westbury
22	Radnor Lodge	L4451	2 nd Degree	Salisbury
22	Moonraker Lodge	L8747	1 st Degree	Devizes
23	New Temple Lodge	L8435	2 nd Degree (PM)	Swindon
24	Highworth Chapter	C9009	Exaltation	Swindon
27	Lodge of Good Fellowship	L8388	3 rd Degree	Marlborough
28	Pleydell Lodge	L4687	2 nd Degree	Swindon
28	St Edmund Lodge	L4714	2 nd Degree	Calne
29	George Duke of Kent Lodge	L8788	2 nd Degree	Swindon
31	Lodge of Agriculture	L9090	Demo 3 rd Degree	Corsham

*1 = Degree By Request *2 = Double Ceremony

To contact any Lodge or Chapter Secretary/Scribe, simply add @wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk after the letter and number of the Lodge or Chapter shown above.