



APRIL 2025

It's always a pleasure...



To celebrate the achievements of others and to join in congratulating them on receiving the just reward for their efforts; and so it is that I am delighted to have been able to announce the Grand Rank Promotions and Appointments conferred on Wiltshire Members. In the words of the Provincial Junior Grand Warden, spoken at every Installation "... and you Brethren, I am sure, are of too generous a disposition to envy their preferment. I therefore trust that we shall have but one aim in view, to please each other and unite in the grand design of being happy and communicating happiness". It should be obvious to every Freemason that an attitude of brotherly love and affection should ever distinguish us as men and as Masons.

Sadly, there are some in our ranks who covet the supposed advantages of rank to the point they are moved to to express critical and unkind comments, designed to hurt the recipients of honours and cast doubt on the decision of the MW Grand Master's judgement. Brethren, let me be clear that I will not stand idly by when such comments are reported back to me; I will challenge those who seek to make mischief and I will invoke disciplinary procedures when justified.

Last month I asked Members to sign up to Portal. I am repeating this request and would advise that it is easy to use and it is a real benefit to your Lodge Secretary. This month alone it became apparent that Brethren had changed mobile phone numbers but had not advised the Secretary. Added to this, there have been a number of Members that have de-listed their land line numbers - if you fall into this category, please do sign up to Portal or/and let your Lodge Secretary know of the changes.

I have booked into Swindon for a PSA blood test, have you? The Loganberry Trust, founded by the late Kevin Logan will be pleased to welcome you to The Planks on the 12th April, all you have to do is book a time and pay £10. Prostate Cancer is a major cause of male deaths in the UK, and that an early diagnosis is crucial. The PSA test is just one way in which you can be tested. One in eight men will develop Prostate Cancer in their lifetime. How do you feel about these odds? Please do take advantage of the opportunity to have a test - it's one test where a low score is a good score.

Did you know that it was in 1775 that Colonel Sir Thomas Fowkes was appointed the first Provincial Grand Master for Wiltshire and that this year is the 250th anniversary of Wiltshire freemasonry? To recognise this auspicious date I am pleased to confirm that we will be holding a very special, and different anniversary celebration on Saturday 18th October at Bowood Hotel and Country Club. The evening will be a fine dining experience with musical input from an extremely talented team of singers including Harry Apps who recently played Marius in Les Miserables in the 2019 UK and Ireland tour, and again at the Sondheim Theatre in 2020. It promises to be a wonderful evening and I am looking forward to welcoming you to Bowood, a venue well known for the quality of its cuisine and service. Places are limited to 120 and early booking is recommended.

I do trust you will enjoy reading about the past life of Bro Mike Platt, a Member of Wiltshire Lodge of Fidelity No.663 who was not only a Milky Bar Kid in 1960 he was also a Rowntree's Fruit Gum Boy. To many of our younger Brethren this will probably be a little strange, however back in the sixties such innocent advertising was the norm. The editor has featured Mike on page two of this edition of [InTouch>OnLine](#) I do hope you enjoy it as much as I have.

Finally, if you're a gin drinker perhaps the content of page three will entice you to splash the cash.



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The things you learn...

If you ever have trouble learning a little piece of ritual then this is one is for you, but only if you're a child of the 50's and 60's. Can you remember the tune that these words were sung to?

*The Milky Bar Kid is strong and tough,
and only the best is good enough,
the creamiest milk, the whitest bar,
Nestles Milky Bar.*



**Win all the toys you want –
up to £50 in value**
in the great Milky Bar Kid competition
Take your entry leaflet now!



I can certainly remember my first Milky Bar and I always thought the Milky Bar Kid was one dangerous hombre. It came as a surprise to discover that a member of Wiltshire lodge of Fidelity No.663 was one of the Milky Bar kids. Furthermore he has just completed fifty years in the Craft.

Mike Platt, Wiltshire Lodge of Fidelity No.663 was not only a Milky Bar Kid in 1960 he was also a Rowntree's Fruit Gum Boy. He starred in other TV ads, on the West End stage and in films after becoming a professional actor at 12 to get out of school, which he hated.

Born in Cyprus, Mike's childhood was spent in Trinidad and a little in Nairobi, Kenya as his father was in the airline industry.

His angelic looks and blond hair got him parts in twenty commercials as well as modelling knitting patterns for Woman's Weekly.

Mike's career included starring on the West End stage with Bernard Miles in Galileo, and Peter Pan with Donald Sinden. He appeared in pantomime with Julia Lockwood and the legendary Juliet Mills. Film parts included The Lord of The Flies in which he ran naked on the beach in Puerto Rico.

Mike claims he started proper work at 18 working in places like 'Dead Filing' for BOAC which he says was as good as it sounds. After a spell with Varig Brazilian Airways and then British Caledonian being based both in the UK and in Zambia, Mike returned to the UK and went into the travel agency business ending up as Sales Director and latterly Managing Director of Hogg Robinson Business Travel. Mike's biggest 'claim to fame' was having 1200 people working for him and winning the £300,000,000 plus MOD business.

Mike followed his father into Freemasonry when at the age of 27 he was Initiated into Westcliffe Lodge No.2903. As you might expect he was also a Member of a Lodge in Kitwe northern Zambia when a meeting was interrupted by armed local police who forced their way past the Tyler into a meeting - Interesting times. (So much for a sword!)

Just in case you wondered, Mike tells me he ate so many Milky Bars as the 'Kid' that he made himself sick and has not eaten one since; so don't be surprised if Mike doesn't say - **"The Milky Bars are on me"**



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Supporting the Wiltshire 2028 Festival...

Following the success of our previous Gin promotion the festival team just couldn't resist the opportunity to launch Three Degrees Dry Gin, especially as it is produced by local distillery Ten Hides based in Melksham. Their award-winning gin is inspired by the rare flowers of Salisbury Plain its vast chalk plateaus, rich wildlife and rolling views across the barley fields. Wiltshire freemasons are pleased to work with Ten Hides Andrew Wilson and launch Three degrees Dry Gin in, yes, you've guessed it, three flavours. Alongside a delightful traditional dry gin there will be Orange Gin, a confection of sweet and bitter citrus notes, and Pink Gin, a blend of classic London Dry Gin with a hint of strawberry, creating fresh top notes against the juniper and citrus, all wrapped up in the essential pink hue.





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The Pro Grand Master...



It is customary for the Presiding Officer at the Quarterly Communication Meeting of Grand Lodge to remark on what is happening across the whole spectrum of activity in Grand Lodge, and the Provinces and Districts. This is an edited version of the Pro Grand Master's remarks to Grand Lodge in March. To read the full article please follow this link. <https://tinyurl.com/ProGM2025>

The tackling of the Membership Challenge is one to which The Grand Master pays particular attention and he thought it essential you should be aware of the progress we have achieved so far and with your continued support and enthusiasm what we can and will achieve.

Despite the significant progress we have made in implementing the Strategy over the last two years, there is much more still to do. I would like to give three examples of progress in different aspects of it.

Firstly, we have initiated the roll-out of Portal. I have registered and I know your Provincial Grand Master and his executive have too. As we seek to deliver a strong foundation from which to grow our organisation and deliver a thriving membership, it is essential all Members register and use this new system when they are invited to do so.

Secondly, you are now very familiar with "One journey, one organisation" and the practical steps that have been introduced to give tangible effect to the Craft and Royal Arch being a seamless journey. The removal of a separate Royal Arch joining fee emphasises this message. In addition, The Board of General Purposes, together with The Committee of General Purposes, has brought the necessary alignment of the Book of Constitutions and the Royal Arch Regulations to ensure the organisation based here at Freemasons' Hall can work as effectively and efficiently as possible. This is integral to delivering a coherent organisation.

And thirdly, there is the Third Pillar review. Most of the Working Parties required to take those recommendations forward have started their work. Community Engagement is hard wired into what we do in Provinces, Districts, and many Lodges and Chapters and this pillar is essentially continuing and enhancing what already makes us so relevant to our local communities.

However the Membership Challenge is, and will remain for at least the next three years, the absolute priority focus for our efforts to ensure Freemasonry under the United Grand Lodge of England thrives. We have concentrated on attraction and there has definitely been success in attracting new members.

It is noticeable that those Provinces where full and enthusiastic use is made of initiatives, such as Members' Pathway, have made greater progress in addressing their membership challenge than those that have not made full use of the available tools. The Province of Wiltshire is making good progress in meeting the goals set. There is a need to maintain the momentum and keep up the good work and with your enthusiasm and dedication I have no doubt you can and will succeed.



The Meaning of “Private Lodge”

At the March Quarterly Communication meeting of Grand Lodge the Board of General Purposes expressed their concern at the increasing number of reported instances of Brethren asserting that theirs is a **Private Lodge** and that it is no concern of Masonic authority how the Lodge’s affairs are conducted. The Board is in no doubt that such a view is mistaken and that it has come about because of a shift in the way that the word “private” is used since the expression “Private Lodge” first came into use. In the context of a Lodge, “Private” was originally used to distinguish it from a Grand (or Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand) Lodge, because meetings of ordinary Lodges are deprived of many of the elements that make a Grand Lodge.

The usage was obsolescent at the time of the last revision of the Book of Constitutions in 1940, and is now the subject of considerable misunderstanding. With the exception of four Lodges, every Lodge under this Constitution works under a Warrant from the Grand Master, and every Lodge, without exception, is subject to the Rules in the Book of Constitutions, which lay down the framework within which all Lodges must operate.

The only extent to which a Lodge is private in its commonly accepted sense is laid down in Rule 155, which provides: “The members present at any Lodge duly summoned have an undoubted right to regulate their own proceedings, provided they are consistent with the general laws and regulations of the Craft; but a protest against any resolution or proceeding, based on the ground of its being contrary to the law and usages of the Craft, and for the purpose of complaining or appealing to higher Masonic authority, may be made, and such protest shall be entered in the Minute Book if the Brother making the protest shall so request.” The Board considers that those words are clear and leave room for no doubt as to their meaning.

Grand Lodge endorsed that view. As a result It is expected that in the revision of the Book of Constitutions at present in progress the expression “Private Lodge” will cease to be used. The Provincial Grand Master is sure that Wiltshire Lodges will no longer assert the primacy of their Lodge over that of the Provincial Grand Lodge, and the Grand Lodge.

A change to Rule 163...

Paragraph (c) of Rule 163 has been amended to read: Before the ballot is taken the candidate must produce to the Secretary of the Lodge his Grand Lodge Certificate, and the Secretary must satisfy himself that the candidate is in good standing in each of the Lodges of which he is a member and that all dues have been paid; he must also ascertain whether the candidate is indebted to any Lodge of which he has ceased to be a member and (unless he shall have resigned in good standing) the circumstances in which he left such Lodge, and whether at that time all dues were paid, or have since been paid.

The change is quite straightforward and will relieve the Lodge Secretary from having to confirm sight of a “clearance certificate” from every Lodge of which a Brother is, or has been a member. The Lodge Secretary will only be required to demonstrate that prior to the ballot he had taken all reasonable steps to satisfy himself that the Brother was not at the time of the ballot indebted to any Lodge.

The responsibility is placed on the joining member to make a declaration regarding whether he is indebted or not to any other Lodge rather than to have to produce a certificate. Any false declaration would be covered by the disciplinary offence that already exists under Rule 164 (a.) (iii).



**Keep in touch.
Stay informed.
Participate.**



Wiltshire Freemasons

General Information

WhatsApp group

**Scan the QR code with
your mobile to connect
with the Wiltshire Freemasons
WhatsApp group.**



SIGN UP TODAY TO BE A PART OF THIS EXCITING PROJECT



Your insights shape the future - Your participation ensures success by City



Discover More...

The Royal Arch welcomes enquiries from Master Masons wishing to Discover More about the Masonic journey they have entered upon.

Having been Raised to the sublime Degree of a Master Mason a Brother is able to search for and discover that which was lost which by the Master's instruction and our own industry we hope to find.

You are invited to scan the QR Code and Discover More.



#WiltshireRoyalArch
Discover More Booklet

Q-Code Download

Portal is the way to go...

Portal is probably one of the best initiatives UGLE has introduced. It's so easy to sign up to and to use, just as importantly it puts you in control of your personal data and means your Lodge Secretary is always up to date with your address, email, and telephone numbers.

PLAY FOLLOW MY LEADER...



- Manage your Masonic profile with ease.
- Never miss a Lodge meeting again.
- Keep in touch with Members of your Lodge
- Chart your Masonic journey.
- Let others know what you can do.

Use this link to access Portal on your desktop computer:
<https://desktop.portal.ugle.org.uk/>



"As a Visiting Officer I often ask the Lodge Secretary for information to allow me to contact a Member. portal is the ideal online way to keep your personal details updated".

Mark Whitmarsh - Visiting Officer L9009



Scan here with your mobile to begin your digital Masonic journey.



Mark Whitmarsh - Visiting Officer L9009

SIGN UP TODAY TO BE A PART OF THIS EXCITING PROJECT

Enhance your Masonic experience for years to come.



In Touch > On Line

The newsletter for all Wiltshire Freemasons



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Appointments to Grand Rank...

The Most Worshipful Grand master His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent has been pleased to honour the Province of Wiltshire by the appointment to Craft and Chapter Grand Rank of the following Brethren.

W Bro Steve Lee	Past Junior Grand Deacon	PJGD
W Bro Robert Evans	Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies	PAGDC
W Bro Barry Jordan-Davis	Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies	PAGDC
W Bro Alan Colman	Past Assistant Grand Standard Bearer Past Grand Standard Bearer	PAGStB PGStB
W Bro Ian Lever	Past Assistant Grand Standard Bearer	PAGStB
W Bro Richard Wright	Past Assistant Grand Standard Bearer	PAGStB



Steve Lee **PJGD**



Robert Evans **PAGDC**



Barry Jordan-Davis **PAGDC**



Alan Colman **PAGStB**



Ian Lever **PAGStB**



Richard Wright **PAGStB**

Wiltshire Freemasons

Invite you to a **PSA** screening event on

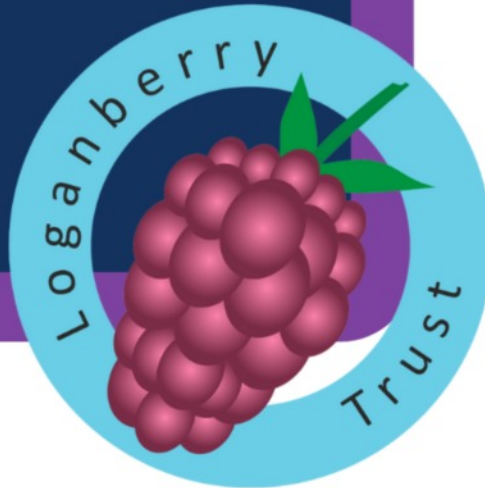
Saturday 12th April 2025

at **Masonic Centre**

The Planks

Swindon

By Appointment Only



WHEN BOOKING YOUR TEST PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU COMPLETE THE APPLICATION CORRECTLY INCLUDING MAKING THE APPROPRIATE PAYMENT OF £10. PLEASE DO NOT MAKE ANY OTHER OPTIONAL PAYMENTS.

IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE A PAYMENT CONFIRMATION YOUR APPLICATION AND BOOKING WILL NOT BE COMPLETE AND YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO BE TESTED.

Invest a few minutes of your time taking a test that could change your life.

When: Saturday 12th April 2025

Where: Masonic Centre

The Planks | Swindon | SN3 1QP

Cost: £10.00

Book Your Test Now



SWINDON

For more information visit: <https://gfct.mypsatests.org.uk/>

Tel: 01926 419959 - E: info@psatests.org.uk



A BROTHER WHO HAS SERVED FOR A FULL YEAR AS MASTER OF A LODGE MUST WEAR THE COLLAR AND JEWEL OF A PAST MASTER AT ALL CRAFT MEETINGS UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THEY RECEIVE PROVINCIAL GRAND RANK.

IF A PAST MASTER HOLDS AN OFFICE IN HIS LODGE HE MUST WEAR THE OFFICER'S COLLAR OVER HIS PAST MASTER'S COLLAR.

**DID YOU
?
KNOW**





JOIN US FOR A
250th
Anniversary
Celebration

| DINNER |

OCTOBER

18th

AT 7.30 PM

LIVE MUSIC FROM

HARRY APPS Marius - in Les Miserables

CHRIS WALSH

MATILDA WALE

CHARLOTTE JOHNSON

BOWOOD HOTEL & COUNTRY CLUB
CHIPPENHAM

TICKET £65 PER PERSON

