In Touch > On Line
The newsletter for all Wiltshire Freemasons
OCTOBER

One of the most successful Provincial Grand Lodge meetings…



And that really is not an exaggeration - the annual meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge was a great success in many ways.

At 9.00am on the morning of the meeting Director of Ceremonies Richard Wright and his team finalised putting officers through their paces and it was plain to see that everyone was anxious to do their very best and to demonstrate that all the practice was worth it; as indeed it proved to be so.

Ian Lever and his team had set up what was generally acknowledged to be one of the very best of the many displays he has produced over the years (see page 4). It attracted many comments and quite a few 'envious looks' from other Provinces - we are so very fortunate to have such expertise as provided by Ian in creating such professional graphics and I really can say it was an incredibly impressive display.

Mark Newman's shop staffed by Mark's parents (thank you Tony and Linda) did a brisk trade throughout the morning and afternoon, gloves and ties were snapped up and customers were treated to samples of the three gins on offer.

In the hall, music was once again provided by Provincial Organist Gary Cook and as ever the singing of the National Anthem by the 250 attendees was quite inspiring. If you didn't attend this year can I remind you that next years Provincial Grand Lodge meeting will be held at Trowbridge on Thursday 7th October 2027.

In my address to Provincial Grand Lodge I referred to my long term advocacy for sharing work in Lodges and in Chapters. It is quite understandable that some Members find it difficult to learn large tracts of work and the wise preceptor will recognise the limits of individuals and make necessary adjustments. However, accepting an office in the Lodge does come with a responsibility to perform the duties of the office and it is important that every Brother is aware of what those duties are, and to be very clear, they are not necessarily what a well intentioned Brother or committee determines them to be. Brethren and Companions - let us do our very best to eliminate the need to have copious notes strewn across the pedestals of the principal officers.

We are approaching that time of the year when our thoughts turn to honouring the dead of two world wars and many other conflicts. The connection between Freemasonry and the military is long-standing, and Freemasonry particularly in Wiltshire has always counted many serving personnel and veterans among its members. The United Grand Lodge of England, and the Province of Wiltshire has signed the Armed Forces Covenant and strongly encourages acknowledgement and recognition of those who have served in His Majesty's Armed Forces, It is for this reason that the Provincial Grand Master encourages the attendance of Members at Remembrance Sunday events, however, it is important that Brethren observe the rules and etiquette regarding the wearing of Masonic regalia on such occasions. While the Province applauds the sentiment that the wearing of Masonic regalia might result in some interest from other participants and the general public, our presence at such events should be such that it does not detract in any way from the solemnity of what is a civic occasion.

Finally, if you haven't done so please do book in for Carols At Christmas on Sunday 20th December 3.00pm at Marlborough College Chapel. We will be joined by the High Sheriff of Wiltshire and other guests. It really is quite a magical event and I can guarantee three things, the music will be inspiring, the company fun, and the mince pies just superb.

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The Centenary Hall Stone Appeal…

Almost one hundred years ago, our predecessors made a bold decision to invest in the future of Freemasonry by re-building Freemasons' Hall. The financing of the work required an appeal to the generosity of the membership at a time of national austerity

In 1919 the Masonic Million Memorial Fund was set up to rebuild Freemasons' Hall and the present building, the third Masonic Hall on the site, was constructed between 1927 and 1933 as a memorial to the 3,000 members who died on active service in the the First World War known as the Great War, and was for many years known as the Masonic Peace Memorial.

Like any buildings, especially those with such strong historical ties, Freemasons' Hall requires continual investment. As expectations change alongside new regulations Freemasons' Hall must be maintained and where appropriate modernised and improved to make sure they remain welcoming, accessible and sustainable for future generations.

For this reason and to recognise our responsibility for the future of Freemasonry Wiltshire is supporting the UGLE wide initiative Centenary Hall Stone Appeal. The funds raised will help support Masonic buildings throughout England and Wales and Wiltshire Masonic centres will be able to apply for grants from the Centenary Building Fund (CBF) and the Community and Heritage Building Fund (CHBF).

The CBF is a ring-fenced fund within UGLE which will support projects that contribute to the day-to-day operation and long-term viability of halls, including upgrades that make a building usable and sustainable in modern times. The CHBF is a charitable fund intended to support works with specific community or heritage attributes, such as the preservation of historically or architecturally significant elements and projects that deliver significant public benefit.

Wiltshire has been set a fundraising target of £1.6 million over the next ten years. While at first glance that might appear quite daunting, when shared across the total membership and considered against the ten year timeline it becomes an achievable challenge.

As part of the Centenary Ha;ll Stone Appeal, there will be an opportunity for individual Brethren to achieve recognition by way of breast jewels based on those worn as part of the Masonic Million Appeal.

Awards will be known as **Centenary Building Jewels**.



Silver jewel
Light blue ribbon
£600 over a ten-year period



Silver gilt jewel
Dark blue ribbon
£1,200 over a ten-year period



Silver gilt jewel
Dark blue ribbon
£3,000 over a ten-year period

As part of the Appeal, a Lodge will be able to become a Centenary Hall Stone Lodge , with an associated Centenary Hall Stone Jewel to be worn by the Worshipful Master, as part of his Craft regalia.

A Chapter will be able to become a Centenary Hall Stone Chapter, with an associated Centenary Hall Stone Jewel to be worn the First Principal, as part of his Royal Arch regalia.

To ensure compliance with charity law, Lodges or Chapters cannot make donations from Relief Chests or other charitable accounts to support the Appeal. Only members of Lodges and Chapters under the United Grand Lodge of England and Supreme Grand Chapter may donate to the Appeal.

Extracts from the Provincial Grand Master's address to Provincial Grand Lodge…

Brethren, as we celebrate with those I have just had the pleasure of appointing and promoting, I must first acknowledge and thank those Provincial Officers who are stepping down today for their support and commitment during their term of their office. None more so than our retiring Assistant Provincial Grand Master, Worshipful Brother Steve Lee, WBro John Badger PrGReg and WBro Sandy Steele-Davis PrGSuptWks, between them they have a total of 32 years of active service to this Province. Brethren I thank each of them for their contribution to the smooth running of our Province over those years.

As always, I congratulate all those I have had the pleasure of appointing and promoting this afternoon. With the expectation that they will continue to support and encourage our newer members so that they may better understand their masonic journey from Initiation to Exaltation. Remembering that a Brother's journey does not end with the three Craft Degrees, but includes a fourth element, the natural progression into the Royal Arch, the completion of a journey that is Pure Antient Masonry always remembering we are One Journey - One Organisation offering other opportunities that exist within the wider Masonic family.

To the Active Provincial Officers I would simply say that active office means active service. As a Provincial Officer, you must have a visible presence, be approachable, and be supportive not only in your own Lodge, but across the various Provincial activities. By strengthening the links between the Province and Lodges, you will only then fully appreciate the importance and privilege of the position you now hold. Brethren I very much look forward to your valued support in the year ahead.

I warmly welcome the newly appointed Assistant Provincial Grand Master Worshipful Brother Mark Whitmarsh to the Provincial Executive, he is well known to us all and I am sure you will give him your full support and wish him every success and enjoyment in his new role.



"Sharing ritual work, helps maintain ceremonial standards, and promotes membership engagement."

John Reid
Provincial Grand Master

Brethren, I do not support the reading of our beautiful ritual in open Lodge, but I am, and always will be, an advocate for sharing work, in whatever form it may take. We are a fraternity and thereby a caring organisation that should be willing to assist every member with their engagement in Masonic activities, including sympathetically assisting those members who may find learning and the delivery of ritual difficult. It is much more rewarding to see a short piece of ritual delivered well from someone who has taken whatever time they need to learn, than witness pieces of paper being shuffled around the Master's pedestal.

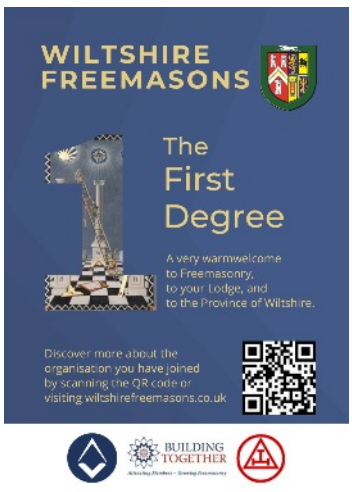
We are members of a team; so, I ask myself why am I seeing an officer of the Lodge wearing two or three collars? Where does it say in the BoC that every office has to be filled? It does not, the regular officers yes, the Master may then appoint, additional officers (if necessary). We must assist in supporting each other as working in isolation and over burdening an individual is unacceptable. We must demonstrate our masonic values in everything we do, show respect for one another, support our fellow members while creating the kind of environment in which people feel valued. Our shared experience will offer encouragement and ensure every Brother can discover the full richness of Freemasonry, which will translate into our wider community.

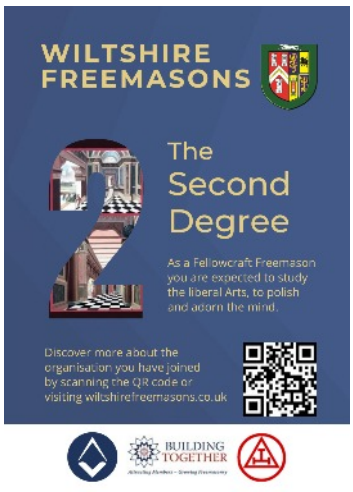
Brethren putting off a candidate's Initiation and carrying them over into the following year does not help the Membership Challenge that runs January to December, then resets for the following year. By holding back Candidates, our membership is flat-lining year on year. My plea to you all, is to please treat potential Candidates with the urgency they deserve. I fully support my Membership team when they challenge Lodges where it seems that initiations are not being carried out promptly.

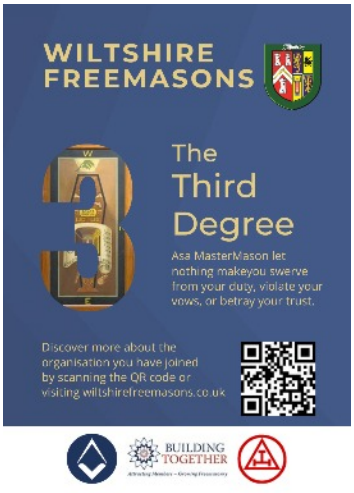
Brethren we are now a little over halfway through the Wiltshire 2028 Festival and I thank those Brethren, Lodges, Chapters, and Orders that have supported the festival thus far. A special thank you to our intrepid cyclists, family and friends, all with varying physiques, abilities, and bicycles to match for completing their 4 rides, visiting each masonic hall in the Province, a distance totalling just over 193 miles, and raising well over £5,000. I also extend my gratitude to W Bro Mitch Henderson-Bryant for donating a framed replica of the 1966 World Cup winners football shirt as worn and signed by Sir Geoff Hurst, the lucky recipient of this iconic framed shirt is W Bro Andy Botha. Downton Lodge No.9064, organised an hilarious Horse Racing evening, consisting of huge foam dice and six hobby horses, a sight to behold, but importantly great fun, raising upwards of £2,000. My special thanks to W Bro Kevin Tedd for donating the beautiful Poppy Pin which raised £500 for the Wiltshire 2028 Festival. RW Bro Byron Carron drew the winning ticket and the winner was none other than our new Assistant Provincial Grand Master Mark Whitmarsh. Once again - I urge all members who haven't done so already to sign up to a regular payment plan in support of the festival. The MCF, the Freemasons Charity, is your charity.

Brethren for those of you who received and have read the 5th of June's issue of First Rising will be aware there will be further demands on our giving in the years ahead, particularly the Centenary Building Fund, and Community and Heritage Building Fund. The former will support projects that contribute to the day-to-day operation and long-term viability of masonic halls, while the latter is to support works with specific community or heritage attributes. (Page 2 has more detail) - and we will provide further information in due course.

Brethren, W Bro Ian Lever exceeded his own high standards in the production of the display boards in the foyer. Each one represents the progression in the candidate's journey, from initiation through to exaltation. The cards are part of a project to increase awareness of the journey the candidate is undertaking. The text on the reverse of the cards will provide helpful context to the candidate in order that he might understand his journey of discovery as a Freemason. During the coming weeks Lodge Secretaries, and Mentors will receive more information on how we would like the Progress Cards presented to the candidates.









Your Events promoted here…

Members are reminded that Lodge Funds from a charity account or general account cannot be used in support of a Lodge Ladies Festival or similar event, in particular Lodge funds cannot be used to cover any deficit that might occur. However, a Lodge may establish a fund specifically for an event but Rule 153(e) BoC must be followed. The editor will be pleased to promote a Lodge event in **InTouch > OnLine** (restrictions may apply)





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Have you had trouble following your Lodge or Chapter meeting? Help yourself and help the 2028 Festival by booking a hearing consultation with Reeds who will provide you with expert advice and guidance, while you contribute their normal fee (£85.00) to the 2028 Festival. Reeds Hearing Care cover everything to do with hearing, tinnitus, wax removal and can provide help, support and advice for all issues. Reeds is a professional, independent, family caring business based in Swindon. e.mail: reeds@reedsear.co.uk or text 07585525993.

Membership Attraction…

The Provincial Membership Team in conjunction with the Communication Team is always keen to support Lodge initiatives. In order to make sure that any advertisement complies with UGLE and Provincial guidelines Lodge Membership Officers, and Lodge Secretaries are asked to submit any proposals to the team before placing material on social media or commissioning printing.









WILTSHIRE FREEMASONS



CAROLS AT CHRISTMAS

Marlborough College Chapel

Sunday 20th December

3.00pm

SCAN ME

Family | Friends | Children

www.wiltshirefreemasons.co.uk