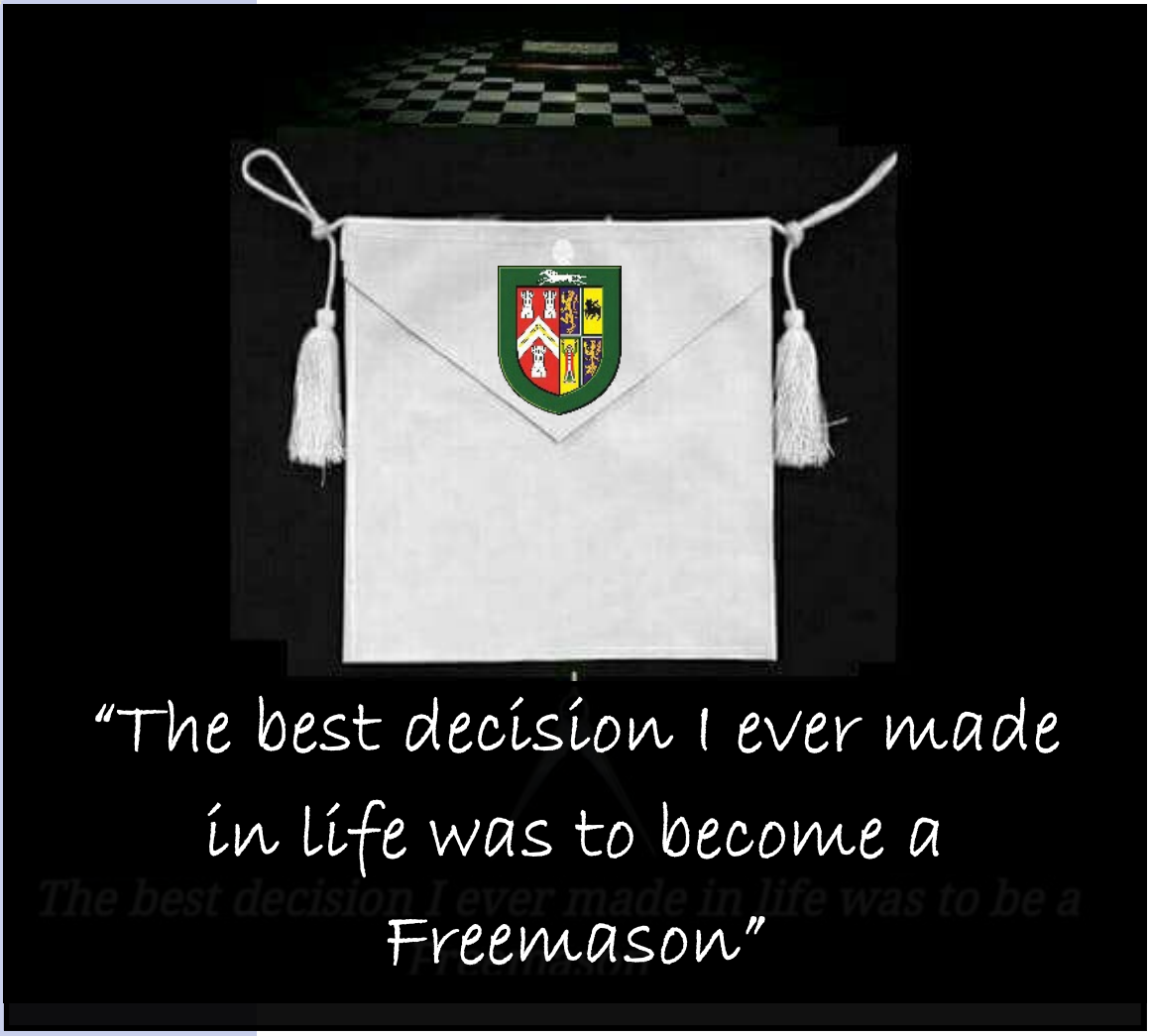
Now you are a Wiltshire Freemason



What you need to know..

And some things you need to do…

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John Reid
Provincial Grand Master

Now you are a Wiltshire Freemason

A very warm welcome.

The word 'Initiation' means beginning and having been initiated into your Lodge you are at the beginning of what we are sure will be a long and enjoyable Masonic journey.

Much of what you have experienced may seem slightly mystifying and even strange. However, let me assure you that every Freemason has undergone the exact same ceremony as you have, and at the time were probably just as puzzled as you were.

In the next few days, weeks and even months you will almost certainly have many questions about your Initiation, and judging from past instances you will want to know more about the structure and organisation of Freemasonry. In order to assist you the Provincial Mentoring Team, and the Learning and Development Team has produced this booklet which will answer some of the questions you may have.

It is important to point out that while much of what happens is similar in every Lodge; occasionally there are some differences in the ceremony and the words spoken. The variations, often so slight as to be indiscernible, reflect the traditions of individual Lodges.

Please do take time to discover what, if any, differences are practiced in your Lodge.

This booklet has not been designed to answer every question that you may have. It is intended to assist in providing the foundation of your Masonic knowledge.

Your daily advancement will depend on individual study, your regular attendance at Lodge meetings, and your own desire to learn more about Freemasonry.

Many of your questions can be answered by your proposer and seconder, while others may be answered by senior members of the Lodge. Please take time to get to know them, I promise you they will not bite.

From time to time you will probably see members of the Provincial team; please do introduce yourself as we would like to welcome you as you continue your journey in Wiltshire Freemasonry.

YOUR LODGE.

The Lodge you have joined is referred to and known as your *Mother Lodge,* it being the Lodge you were Initiated into. You may at some future date join another Lodge (even several) but your Mother Lodge will, Masonically speaking, always be very special.

PREPARING FOR A LODGE MEETING. On receipt of the Lodge meeting summons.

- Make a note of the date/time and add it to your calendar.
- Staying for dinner also called a Festive Board? – inform Dining Secretary by email/phone.
- Note cut-off date/time, and always reply to the Dining Secretary in good time.
- Ask to be added to the permanent dining list (if your Lodge has one) which will ensure a place is always reserved for you.

Before you leave home.

- Wear a dark suit, white shirt, black socks, black shoes (always polished), black, Provincial or Grand Lodge tie.
- Bring your white gloves

Note – your own Lodge may have a specific member dress code regarding suit and gloves. Ask your Proposer, Lodge secretary or Lodge Mentor for guidance.

BASIC ETIQUETTE. In the meeting.

- Individuals are addressed either as “Brother [surname]” or “Worshipful Brother [Surname]”.
- Lodge officers are addressed as “Brother Secretary”, “Brother Treasurer” etc.
- It is always “Worshipful Master”. When addressing him the appropriate sign (salute) is always used.
- Pay attention, listen, watch and learn. Do not chat inappropriately, particularly when another brother is speaking. It’s discourteous and you may well miss something of importance.

In the bar and at the festive board.

- You are encouraged to use first names, after all you are not just talking to a friend, he is your Brother.
- It is polite to address the Provincial Grand Master by his title, not his first name, until he invites you to do so.
- Discussions of a religious or political nature are to be avoided.

ATTENDING YOUR OWN LODGE MEETING. What to do on arrival and before you enter the Lodge Room.

- Print your name in the Signature Book in the Members section. The book will be situated in a prominent place, usually in or near where the Brethren are putting on their Regalia (aprons and collars). This is often referred to as The Robing Room.
- Wear an Entered Apprentice apron. Check whether the practice in your Lodge is to wear the apron flap up or down. Put on your white gloves and take your seat in the Lodge.

Entering the Lodge room and where to sit.

- Walk into the Lodge room and take your seat.

Some Lodges ask Entered Apprentices (that's you) to sit in the front row in the North (near the Senior Deacon and often the Secretary). If in doubt, ask your Director of Ceremonies, or an experienced member of your Lodge, to show you where you should sit. Never be afraid to 'ask'.

What do you do during the meeting?

If you attend your Lodge rehearsal night you will be better prepared and informed as to what happens. If you are uncertain of any action keep your eye on the Director of Ceremonies and, delaying what you do, follow his example. In your early meetings you will not usually be expected to do anything on your own, you will simply do as your fellow members do. Mostly this involves:

- Standing to give the Entered Apprentice salute. Remember, before you salute to take a small step with the left foot , heel to heel. If a lack of space makes this impossible to do, simply take a step on the spot.
- Voting on propositions – traditionally given with the right hand extended horizontally, with the palm of the hand facing downwards, with the thumb in the form of a square.
- Alms (for Lodge use) may be received either during the meeting or at the festive board. Please ensure you have some money available. Donations are made privately usually via an Alms bag that is carried around the Lodge or at the festive board.
- Singing the Opening and Closing Odes. Your Proposer or the Lodge secretary may have provided you with the words, if not you will find them on the inside back page of this booklet. While you will learn the words very quickly, never be embarrassed to read them. Your Lodge may have different versions.

If you are unable to attend your Lodge meeting always send your apology to the secretary and cancel any dining reservation.

THE FESTIVE BOARD or DINING.

At the end of every meeting it is customary for the Brethren to have a hearty supper. Sometimes it will be referred to as a Festive Board or just 'dining' - more frequently you will simply be asked whether or not you are dining. The cost of dining varies from Lodge to Lodge and depends on many variables. The Lodge Summons will often have a tear off slip or an additional Dining Form which will display the menu and show the cost. If you do commit to dine on the night of the meeting, please remember that this creates a liability on you to pay for the meal you have pre-booked. Should you be unable to dine (after booking) always let the Secretary know in good time as it may be possible to cancel your meal and you may not incur a cost.

Check your allocated seat on the seating plan posted in the dining room. Please do not be tempted to amend the seating plan as this will have been carefully put together by the dining steward with the aim of accommodating Brethren with disabilities, hidden or otherwise, and to assist the caterer's serving staff to identify special dietary requirements. Dining is a wonderful way to make new friends.

- Get your drinks as soon as possible and be in the room, standing behind your chair when requested by the Director of Ceremonies.
- Grace may be sung before you sit for the meal. The secretary will have provided you with the words or they may be on a card on the table.
- When the gavel is used it is expected that you cease any conversation and pay attention to the announcement that is made.

- There will be a number of toasts, some of which are followed by Masonic Fire. Please ask your Proposer or Director of Ceremonies to explain what this is, and to show you how to do this prior to the meal. Don't worry if you don't get it right 'first time' as there are many opportunities to improve.
- Use first names, other than when addressing anyone in their official office – e.g. "Worshipful Master", "Brother Senior Warden"

ATTENDING A LODGE REHEARSAL.

Your Lodge will meet for 'rehearsals' in the weeks preceding each meeting. The summons will state the date and time. Your attendance is encouraged and strongly recommended.

- Most Lodges are quite happy to allow an informal and even casual dress code.
- This provides an opportunity for you to meet Brethren of your Lodge in a relaxed atmosphere.
- You will be guided and instructed in 'what to do' in your Lodge meeting.
- A very important part of the Lodge Rehearsal is that it gives you the chance to ask questions and as for guidance on any aspect of Freemasonry (not only ritual) that remains a puzzle.

If you are unable to attend your Lodge Rehearsal.

Send an apology to the Director of Ceremonies and/or Lodge Preceptor.

VISITING A DIFFERENT LODGE.

You may be invited to attend a different Lodge by a member of that Lodge or via a member of your own Lodge. It is recommended in your early months in Freemasonry that you are accompanied by a senior, or more experienced, member of your own Lodge. One very basic check you should make is that the Lodge you are visiting is conducting a ceremony which you can attend from the start to the end, otherwise you will be asked to leave for a short while while certain elements of the ceremony are conducted.

Visiting other Lodges is one of the nicest aspects of Freemasonry. It not only affords you the opportunity to meet and make new friends, it also allows you to see how other Lodges perform the ceremonies which occur in your own Lodge. Do keep your eyes and ears open as you may see and hear some little differences in what is said and done. Please do ask your hosts if you do not understand something, and always remember there is no such thing as a silly question!

If you are asked to respond to the visitors toast, do not be afraid to say "no thank you."

Prior to your visit.

This is almost the same as when you attend your own Lodge.

- Confirm you are booked in to dine. Ask your host in the Lodge you are visiting, or the member who you are accompanying. If you are a guest, it is tradition that your host pays for your meal and you then invite him back to one of your Lodge meetings, where you repay his hospitality.
- Follow the guidance given for "Preparing For A Lodge Meeting"
- It is preferable to bring an Entered Apprentice apron from your Lodge. The Lodge you are visiting may be able to provide you with one, but it is not guaranteed.
- Remember to check with the Lodge Director Ceremonies whether the Lodge requires Entered Apprentice Freemasons to wear the flap up or down. You follow the custom of the Lodge you are visiting.

On arrival.

- Follow the guidance given for "Attending Your Own Lodge Meeting"
- Print your name in the Signature Book in the Visitors section – enter your rank as EA, for Entered Apprentice, your Lodge name and number, and the name of your host.
- Be prepared to 'prove' yourself on arrival. This is very rarely undertaken as you will be known either to your host, or by being vouched for by the member of your own Lodge who is accompanying you.

Proving or identifying yourself usually involves giving the word and grip of the First Degree. Don't be unduly alarmed if you have forgotten, it does happen and the Brother 'guarding the door' will confirm your being a Freemason by other means.

During the meeting.

- Relax and enjoy the meeting.
- The Entered Apprentice salute will be the same as you have practiced in your own Lodge. The Opening and Closing Odes are usually the same and invariably there will be an Alms collection.
- Propositions and voting – as this is not your Lodge you **do not** participate in any votes.
- Greetings – close to the end of the meeting, some Wiltshire Lodges take greetings from Visiting Brethren. If you are accompanied by another member of your Lodge (highly recommended), he will give greetings on behalf of your Lodge. When the time comes you will stand with him, salute as an Entered Apprentice, hold the salute until he has spoken, then discharge the salute and sit down.
- If you are asked to give greetings, simply stand, salute, and say Worshipful Master I bring you warm and fraternal greeting from the *name and number of your Lodge.* Drop the salute and sit down.

After the meeting.

- This a great opportunity to mingle, but do get your drinks as soon as possible and be in the dining room standing behind your chair when requested to do so by the Director of Ceremonies.
- Grace may be sung before you sit for the meal. The words are normally available on the table.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

When you became a Freemason you were asked for certain fees. All Lodges levy an annual subscription on each of its members. It is a matter of courtesy to pay any subscriptions as they become due. It saves the Lodge Treasurer an enormous amount of work if a Brother pays promptly.

CHARITY

You will doubtless recall that a call was made on your charity, and you will have been told by your Proposer and Seconder into Freemasonry of the importance attached to giving freely as our circumstances in life fairly allow. If you have any concerns or questions please speak to the Lodge Mentor.

For the Freemason, giving is not confined to putting money into the alms collection or buying a raffle ticket at the Festive Board; it also includes giving time to helping a friend or Brother in time of need.

Should you wish to know more about Masonic charity and making a regular contribution to your Lodge Charity Chest please speak to the Lodge Charity Steward who will be delighted to give you more information.

OTHER ORDERS.

You may be invited to join other Masonic Orders at some stage in your Masonic journey. The advice given by the Province is that you should not feel under any pressure to join any Order beyond the Craft (the Craft being the Institution of which you have recently become a member). In time (after you have taken your Third Degree) you will be invited to join The Royal Arch (more commonly called 'Chapter'). Every Master Mason is encouraged to join a Royal Arch 'Chapter' when they feel ready to do so.

MUSIC AT THE MEETING

Music is an important part of Masonic ceremony and you will always be invited to sing the opening and closing odes. In addition, it is common practice in Lodge meetings to sing the first verse of the National Anthem.

Opening Ode or Hymn
Verse 1
Hail, eternal! By whose aid
All created things were made;
Heav'n and earth,Thy vast design;
Hear us, architect divine
Verse 2
May our work, begun in thee,
Ever blessed with order be:
And may we, when labours cease,
Part in harmony and peace
Verse 3
By Thy glorious Majesty
By the trust we place in Thee
By the badge and mystic sign
Hear us, Architect Divine
So mote it be.

Closing Ode or Hymn
Verse 1
Now the evening shadows closing,
Warn from toil to peaceful rest,
Mystic arts and rites reposing,
Sacred in each faithful breast.
Verse 2
God of light! Whose love unceasing
Doth to all thy works extend,
Crown our order with thy blessing,
Build; sustain us to the end.
Verse 3
Humbly now we bow before thee,
Grateful for Thy aid divine;
Everlasting power and glory,
Mighty Architect! be Thine.
So mote it be

WHAT NEXT?

It is often said that 'you will get out of Freemasonry in proportion to what you put in to Freemasonry' and in many respects that is perfectly correct. Of course you currently know very little about Freemasonry beyond what your Proposer and Seconder have told you. There is much to learn and discover, not only about what Freemasonry is, but also about what Freemasons do; how they are organised and why. Please refer to page 8 which advises you where you can obtain 'More Information'.

You will hear unfamiliar terms, and when you do please do not hesitate to ask a more experienced Brother for an explanation. Whenever possible you will be given a full and clear explanation, when this is not possible the Brother will make sure your question is passed on to a more senior Brother and an answer to your question will be provided. A good point of reference for any questions is your Lodge Mentor.

Every Lodge has a group of officers, the most senior of which are referred to as The Principal Officers. They are the Master, and the Senior and the Junior Wardens. With very few exceptions every Brother starts his Masonic journey of discovery by being appointed a Steward of the Lodge. In time you will be invited to hold that office. While doubtless a great honour to be asked to serve the Lodge, never be afraid to suggest that you feel a little more time on the 'back benches' might be useful to you. Sometimes it takes more courage to say no, than it does to say yes. The Brethren of the Lodge will understand and accede to your wishes.

Wiltshire Freemasons

Wiltshire Freemasons
Useful Contact Information

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This pamphlet is recommended to you by the Provincial Mentoring Team, the Provincial Membership Team, and the Provincial Learning & Development Team who would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Every Freemason must belong to a Lodge, and you have been welcomed into your Lodge by its members, who are now your Brothers in Freemasonry. The Lodge, your Lodge, is where you will learn about the duties you owe to the Craft, and is the place where you will discover what makes being a Freemason so special. Make time to get to know your fellow members , and never be afraid to ask for their help and advice.

Your Lodge Mentor is the person who will guide you as you take your first tentative steps in your journey.

All Freemasons are encouraged to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge. Some Freemasons do this through their own research, while others are happy to ask for help and assistance. As a new Freemason we recommend you visit https://www.pglwilts.org.uk/news/preceptors-notes

www.wiltshirefreemasons.org.uk

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