



The Cambridgeshire Mason

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Cambridgeshire link for new Pro Grand Master

For the first time in our organisation's 305-year history, a new Pro Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, and Assistant Grand Master were installed on the same day.

Brethren from Cambridgeshire were among those who witnessed the once-in-a-lifetime event, including the investiture of Jonathan Spence as the Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master at Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London, on 14th September.

Places were limited to ensure attendance from throughout the country, with the new Pro Grand Master, himself a Cambridgeshire Mason, keen for 'Light Blues' to be part of the major event. Fifteen Brethren from the Province gained some of the sought-after places and enjoyed a dinner afterwards at the adjacent Grand Connaught Rooms.

When the Grand Master is a member of the Blood Royal, he may appoint a Pro Grand Master to be his principal adviser and to act in his stead on occasions when, due to Royal engagements, he is unable to be present. MWBro. Spence succeeds MWBro. Peter Lowndes.

Born in 1960, Jonathan was educated at the Mathematical School, Rochester, and Trinity College, Oxford. After a career in banking, from which he retired in 2006 as chief executive of a London bank, he is now the Bursar of Queens' College, Cambridge, but maintains his interest in business with a number of non-executive director appointments.

Jonathan became a Freemason in October 1982 when he was initiated into Sir Joseph Williamson No. 4605, in the Province of East Kent. He is a member of other lodges, including, in Cambridgeshire, Alma Mater Lodge No. 1492, Isaac Newton University Lodge No. 859, as well as Apollo University Lodge No. 357.



Appointed Grand Director of Ceremonies in 2003, he served in that office until his appointment as Deputy Grand Master on 11th March 2009. Jonathan was appointed Pro Grand Master on the 14th September 2022.

Richard George

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A time of change and renewed engagement

Change heralds the start of the new masonic season for us as citizens and Freemasons. We learned in early September of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth who had been a constant in our lives for 70 years and for many of us, all our lives. Whilst the last few weeks have been very sad, as we reflect on her wonderful reign, amazing dedication and service, we now have a new King who I think has started strongly. I wrote to him on behalf of the Province to send our condolences. I am sure all Cambridgeshire Freemasons wish him a happy and successful reign. Long live the King!

The period of mourning coincided with a much happier event. A number of us were pleased to witness the investiture of the new Pro Grand Master, Jonathan Spence, a Cambridgeshire freemason, a new Deputy Grand Master, Sir David Wootton, and a new Assistant Grand Master, David Medlock. The new team will, I am sure, invigorate freemasonry and inspire us as a new seven-year strategy is unveiled later this year. Our congratulations and best wishes as they start their new period of office and I know they can count on all our support. Publication of our Yearbook was temporarily delayed to include a profile of the Pro Grand Master but is now available.



We are also entering our last year of Festival 2023 in support of MCF and are tantalisingly close to our target of £900,000 with funds raised and committed of nearly £800,000. It has been a difficult journey with Covid depriving us of some 15 months of fundraising, but we are in sight of our goal and I urge the whole Province to make one last push. In September next year, at the Queens' College banquet, it would be so good to say yet again that "Cambridgeshire always rises to the occasion and punches above its weight".

On 16th November we shall be celebrating Gray Lodge's Centenary and on the 9th December we have the Festival of Carols at Ely Cathedral where we hope to raise some £25,000 in support of Maggies and the Cathedral. Please do join us, but tickets are selling fast, and I am confident it will be another sell out. In early 2023 we hope to be able to consecrate Hutchinson Masters Lodge, a daytime lodge for Installed Masters. I would urge anyone who has not seen a consecration ceremony to come along to enjoy this lodge becoming number 33 in Cambridgeshire.

The National Digital Marketing initiative is already starting to produce men interested in freemasonry and I urge all lodges who are passed possible candidates to follow these up promptly. Whilst each lodge is ultimately responsible for its own pipeline, this new source has produced some great initiates and I am sure will continue to do so.

The Membership team, under its new Provincial Membership Officer WBro. Ed Williams, is there ready to assist as is required or necessary, as is our new Provincial Mentor WBro. David Fountain.

I am looking forward to meeting you over the coming weeks and months at lodges and chapters, as are VWBro. Pat Kilby and EComp. David Blair, my two excellent deputies. I am sure as freemasonry and our meetings resume we shall see meetings return to the levels we enjoyed pre-Covid. We should always be mindful of those who remain concerned about the virus and respect their fears, but we should be equally, if not more concerned for those brethren who are yet to return. Let us encourage them back. They will enjoy it, we shall enjoy their company, our lodges will be stronger and freemasonry as a whole will continue to flourish.

Enjoy the resumption and renewed engagement with your friends and may the Great Architect watch over you and your families always.

Bin David 2.

INUL Brother becomes Junior Grand Warden

Not only is the new Pro Grand Master a Cambridgeshire Mason, but he will be supported by another Brother from the Province as Junior Grand Warden. RWBro. Simon d'Olier Duckworth, a member of two lodges in the Province, was appointed to the role of Junior Grand Warden at the annual investiture in April.

Simon grew up in London and moved to Cambridge to study theology and history as an undergraduate in 1986. He worked as both a researcher and charity executive for several years before building a portfolio of roles based in London, focussing on policing, law enforcement and security, including the National Olympics Security Oversight Group, the Serious Fraud Office, and establishing Police & Crime Commissioners across the country for which he was awarded an OBE in 2014. He has been a senior member of the City of London's local government for more than a decade and is the City's Chief Commoner 2022/23.

Simon is married to Caroline, a banker, and they divide their time between homes in central London and the Hampshire/Wiltshire border. A keen Army Reservist, Simon is a Colonel on the General Staff, one of HM's Lieutenants for the City of London and a Deputy Lieutenant in Greater London.

A sixth-generation Freemason, Simon was initiated into St. George's and Cornerstone Lodge No. 5 in 1985, joining Isaac Newton University Lodge No. 859 the following year, where he was Master in 1990. He then served for many years as Director of Ceremonies, before a stint as Secretary. He was exalted into The Chapter of St James No. 2 in 1988.

He is also a member of the Grand Stewards' Lodge, Britannic Lodge No. 33, The Lodge of Unity No. 183, Guildhall Lodge No. 3116, Cambridgeshire Installed Masters Lodge No. 7429, and City of London Lodge of Installed Masters No. 8220, as well as membership of a number of other Masonic Orders.



Simon received his first appointment to Past Provincial Junior Grand Deacon in 1994, becoming a Grand Steward the following year. He was one of the earliest officers of the Metropolitan Grand Lodge, and has served as a MetDepGDC, MetGDC, AssMetGM, and lastly as Deputy Metropolitan Grand Master between 2016-21. He was promoted to Past Junior Grand Warden in 2016 and to Junior Grand Warden in 2022.

VWBro. David Staples, who is standing down as Grand Secretary, has been promoted to Past Junior Grand Warden. David is a member of various lodges, including Stone Cross No. 6704 based in March

Richard George

Library & Museum

Want to find out more about the future plans for the Province's Masonic Library and Museum?

You can discover more by attending its organising committee's annual general meeting on Wednesday 2nd November at Freemasons' Hall, Cambridge. The meeting starts at 8pm.

Brian Elliott



David Sowman - Second Provincial Grand Principal

Born in 1949 in Peterborough, David was educated at the Fletton Secondary Modern. On leaving school he worked for two local companies before joining Perkins Engines where he worked for 37 years mainly in production managerial roles. After taking early retirement in 2005, a second career as Resident Quality Liaison to Perkins for a number of overseas companies means he has been associated with Perkins for over 52 years.

David was initiated into St Andrew Lodge in 1990, served as Master in 2003, and now holds the rank of Past Provincial Grand Registrar. He is also a founder member of the Provincial Grand Stewards' Lodge.

Exalted into St Andrew Chapter in 1993, David was installed as First Principal in 2007. He was appointed Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies - a position he held for four years before being promoted and losing the "Deputy" tag.

During his five years as the Province's Director of Ceremonies, he received Supreme Grand Chapter Rank of Past Grand Standard Bearer. He considers the ProvGDC role to be the "best job in Province". David was invested as Second Provincial Grand Principal in 2020



David married Jan in 1972; they have two children, Helen and Matthew, and three grandchildren, Brendan, Hollie and Lily. Outside of Freemasonry David's other interests are cricket, Formula 1 Grand Prix, the family allotment and cooking - which Jan taught him many years ago; the upshot of which is that he is now the family's resident cook!

Michael Hinton - Third Provincial Grand Principal

Michael was born in Whittlesford in 1966 and educated at the Cambridgeshire College of Arts & Technology. After a year of working and travelling in Australia he started work in the Neurobiology Department at the Babraham Institute near Cambridge. Public interest in the department's research on animal physiology and behaviour, particularly in the areas of face recognition and memory, led to frequent appearances at national science and agricultural exhibitions. These laid the foundations for subsequent roles in print & web design, public relations, and award-winning public engagement projects with schools across the UK as well as in Europe.

Michael was initiated into Scientific Lodge No. 88 in 1994, first served as Master in 2005 and was Secretary from 2008 until 2016. With a first appointment as Provincial Grand Registrar in 2012, he was appointed Provincial Grand Communications Officer in 2019, having for several years contributed to Provincial newsletters and social media channels. Exalted into the Chapter of Pythagoras No. 88 in 1997, Michael served as MEZ in 2016 and is currently Director of Ceremonies. He was appointed Provincial Assistant Grand Scribe Ezra in 2018 and promoted to Provincial Grand Registrar in 2021.



COVID prevented Michael from being invested as Third Provincial Grand Principal at the Annual Convocation in June 2022.

Michael has lived in Fulbourn since he married Sarah in 1991 and they have two children. Outside Freemasonry Michael enjoys reading, especially science fiction, and cryptic crosswords. He has been a qualified Cub Scout Leader for over 30 years.

Night of 'Ukes' helps Master's charities

Over 60 guests, including members, friends and family of St Andrew Lodge No. 4087 were entertained by the fantastic Upwood Ukuleles on 3rd September. The 'Ukes' entertained everyone with their humour, audience participation and new and old renditions of well-known songs. A feast of baked potatoes was prepared by WBro. Tim Smith.

WBro. John Down, the Master of St Andrew Lodge, reported that this and earlier events had raised £505 for his two charities, FND Hope UK and Peterborough's Young People's Counselling Service, bringing the total raised to more than £5,000. FND Hope UK promotes awareness and support for individuals and carers affected by Functional Neurological Disorder. YPCS provides free and confidential help to those aged between 11 and 18 in emotional difficulty.

John Down



Courtyard Project completed at Cornwallis Court

A new Mediterranean central courtyard at Cornwallis Court in Bury St Edmunds, which will provide better access for the care home's residents who use wheelchairs, was officially opened in August.

The Friends of Cornwallis Court (consisting of Freemasons from Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk) and a number of residents had a small celebratory garden party to mark the completion of the project.

The central courtyard originally consisted of an elevated lawn planted with trees and some flowers but access was by steps so wheelchair users were unable to access it. Consequently, as the majority of residents have mobility problems, it was never used.

During the first Covid lockdown, the committee decided to make changes, but it was not straightforward due to restricted access. However, the plan to turn it into an accessible area in the style of a Mediterranean courtyard went ahead.

Thanks go to Des Bliss for doing the building work, Andy Gentle for the tree removal and Peter Davis, who managed the finances and oversaw the project.

The new courtyard is a resounding success and the summer weather this year has resulted in residents getting outdoors more often and easier than before. New tables, chairs and umbrellas have been provided, much of the cost paid for by lodges and individual donations.

At the official opening, there were about 60 people in attendance, mostly residents, Freemasons and their wives. A celebratory ribbon was cut by the two oldest residents, Jean Wood and Dorothy Crane, both 102, followed by a short opening speech by chairman Peter Green and a reply from manager Denise O'Brien.

Peter Green



How we process Un-sponsored Candidates

Now that the Masonic Season is starting to resume, I would like to formally introduce myself to you all as the Provincial Grand Membership Officer. Many people will not know what that is, so I thought it would be helpful to give you a brief introduction and to explain how I am available to you all to help your Lodges grow and succeed.



Each Lodge has its own Lodge Membership Officer so my job is to work with that team to bring in new members and support existing ones, especially the New and Young Masons that are so vital to our future.

A large part of my role is to be a first contact for unsponsored candidates who approach us as a Province, and to help direct them to the most appropriate Lodge to suit their needs once I have established they are a good fit for us. This is a hugely growing area and where I see the future of Freemasonry very much heading.

I thought it would therefore be useful to explain to all of our members how we as a Province handle unsponsored candidates and most importantly how we can work together to get more of these candidates to your Lodges.

Not everyone who wants to join Freemasonry knows an existing member and this is when they come directly to us, most commonly via the Provincial Website, UGLE website, social media, adverts or via events. As Provincial Grand Membership Officer, a large part of my role is to make contact with these unsponsored candidates, get to know them and process their applications with a final goal of passing them onto a Lodge that will be the best fit for them.

An enquiry will come to me to start with, so my first step is to email the potential candidate to introduce myself and to explain a little more about our organisation and Province. I also ask them to fill in an unsponsored candidate membership enquiry form which provides me with their details, asks some basic questions and generally enables me to gauge their level of interest.

Most people will want to join a Lodge close to their home or place of work, so I am instantly able to filter down which Masonic Centre will be most convenient and sustainable for them. I can further filter it down based on what days of the week they can and cannot do. This tends to leave us with anywhere between two and four Lodges that will suit the candidate and this is where your Lodge Profiles come in.

Every Lodge has a Lodge Profile. This is a document that each Lodge has prepared over the past few years to give candidates a snapshot of the history, personality and culture of the Lodge. I send our unsponsored candidates the Lodge Profiles for any Lodge that meets their requirement of venue, day etc and they then decide which Lodge feels like the best fit for them.

Once they have chosen a Lodge, I make an introduction to the Lodge Membership Officer by forwarding their application form and all communications. It is then over to the LMO to make contact within seven to ten days and to arrange to meet in person to ascertain the suitability of the candidate for their Lodge. This should then be followed by an informal social meeting to include some other members of the Lodge where you can really start to get to know the potential candidate. Inviting the candidate to your Lodge socials at this stage will also be hugely beneficial as it all helps foster the relationship.

The final step should be to start your formal interview process once you have ascertained that you wish to proceed as a Lodge with the candidate. If for any reason you do not, just pass the candidate back to me and the process can start again but we do try and get this right early on as I do my best to weed out any unsuitable applications well in advance. It is however down to each Lodge to do their own due diligence with any unsponsored candidate and to make sure that he is a good fit for you.

The main thing for all members to understand is that the candidate chooses the Lodge that they want an introduction to. This decision is always based on their criteria and the Lodge profile that stands out to them the most.

I therefore urge you all to review your Lodge Profiles and discuss them in your next Officers Meeting as the more appealing the profile, the more likely candidates will want to choose your Lodge. It is important that I do not interfere with this process by funnelling candidates to any one particular Lodge, as the process needs to remain impartial and fair. Therefore the power lies with you all to optimise your profiles however you feel fit which in turn will attract more unsponsored candidates.

I am always on hand to advise Lodges with their profiles or any other steps in this process so if I can be of any assistance at all please do not hesitate to get in touch with me membership@pglcambs.org.uk

Ed Williams

Festival update

Our Festival 2023 campaign for the Masonic Charitable Foundation is steadily closing in on the £900,000 target with the total on 31st August standing at £785,213.

With just one year left to go, you can help the Province achieve the target figure by making regular payments or envelope donations at lodge or chapter meetings or by organising a social event to raise money for the Festival. We're nearly there.

Peter Crussell



Putting out the message

The Province's publicity unit has been out and about during the summer, with the most recent event attended being the Armed Forces Day on 4th September at March, which attracted more than 12,000 people to the town's park.

Staffing the stand on the day were Bros. Andrew Wilson, Josh Harris, Chris Sennitt and Freddie Lawes, with WBros. Dave Atkinson, Jeremy Pallant, Bob Steer and David Watson.

Andrew Wilson



Birthday boost for cancer charity

A birthday celebration for WBro. Les Mills, who is secretary of two lodges, raised £1,530 in aid of Cancer Research. Les, who was 70 in July, shared his birthday event at March Cricket Club with a friend, Dave Kenning, who was 60. They were both overwhelmed by everyone's generosity. WBro. Mills is secretary of Caldwell Lodge No. 3201 and Fenland Meridian No. 9858.

Les Mills



An Ancient Masonic Order...

In 1889 a Masonic Order came to prominence known as the Royal Order of the Knights of the Scarlet Cord. On 21st July 2010 the Order we know today as the Ancient and Masonic Order of the Scarlet Cord was inaugurated at a splendid ceremony held in the Grand Temple of Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London. Here we look at what happened to the original Order and how the present incarnation compares.

To begin at the beginning, we have to delve even further back into history; to documents unearthed in the archives of Amsterdam Freemasonry, dating to the early 18th Century.

You may know that the Order of the Secret Monitor also has origins in the Netherlands and is inextricably linked to the Scarlet Cord.

His Honour Judge Frederick Adolphus Philbrick KC is the man credited with masterminding the 1889 Order and many of his cohorts in the master plan are names familiar to those who enjoy Masonic research, including Dr Issachar Zacharie, founder and primus Grand Supreme Ruler of the OSM; Col. Shadwell Clerke, Grand Secretary of the Craft; and Charles Fitzgerald Matier, Grand Secretary of the Mark to name a few. Other representatives came from across the world, chiefly India, South Africa and Burma (Myanmar).

The Order was established to recognise those who had given considerable amounts to the OSM Fund of Benevolence and to encourage them to continue to do so. Comprising six degrees (known as Grades), there were also three "wings" or funds, concentrating on old age, sickness and education; plus nine steps of membership. Progression to each step came at the price of a further donation to the OSM Benevolent Fund.

The original Order was rather complex. However, with the intervention of the First World War the Order went into abeyance and, despite a revival in 1919, in 1929 it fell into desuetude when a resolution was passed that "All ceremonial work in connection with the Royal Order of the Knights of the Scarlet Cord should cease".

In June 2001 Peter Glyn Williams, Most Worthy Grand Supreme Ruler of the OSM, delivered an address to Supreme Rulers' Conclave No. 123 at Mark Masons' Hall outlining the history of the original Order. The research for this address provided the foundation for his vision of bringing the Order back into mainstream Freemasonry.

Committees and sub-committees were formed, rituals were developed, Scarlet Cord Conclaves were established within the Order of the Secret Monitor in which to work the Grades so that, by the time of the 2010 inauguration of the Scarlet Cord as an independent Sovereign Order, there were 64 Scarlet Cord Conclaves and in excess of 2,500 members. Michael Guest was elected to be the first Grand Summus (Grand Master), with Brian Wareham as his Deputy and Andrew Sweeney as his Assistant.



Today, the Order comprises 133 Consistories (note: no longer called Conclaves) working within 22 Provinces and five Districts overseas; ranging from Hong Kong and South East Asia, through India, up into the Mediterranean, Western Europe and Scandinavia and then across to the Caribbean Islands.

Due to the passage of time, it is rare to find a Masonic Ruler who was responsible for writing much of the ceremonial ritual of his Order but the present Grand Summus, Most Distinguished Companion Ian Stanley Currans, recalls penning the first draft of the address to the newly-installed President of a Consistory (Master) somewhere over the Atlantic Ocean on a flight from Washington to London.

True to the original concept it comprises of six Grades:

First – Ostiarii or Doorkeeper: This Grade tells the story of how in Jericho, Rahab assisted the escape of Israelitish spies, and it is during this ceremony that the Candidate is invested with the Scarlet Cord, the significance of which is detailed in the ritual. Rahab's good deed ensured the safety of her family during the sacking of Jericho by Joshua and she would go on to give birth to Boaz.

Second – Lectores or Reader: Here, the focus is on the biblical story Naomi and Ruth, wife of Boaz.

Third – Fellow or Healer & Exorcist: The Candidate in this ceremony represents a Knight, educated and of noble birth and is required to consider his response should he face difficulty, danger or peril in any just cause. It also has echoes with the Ceremony of Raising in the Craft, and the story of the Holy Royal Arch.

...for the Twenty-First Century

Fourth – Councillor: This is the first of three Grades conferred by Grand Senatus. It is highly dramatic, colourful and musical and tells of the story of the Ark of the Covenant, the crossing of the river Jordan and the fall of the walls of Jericho.

Fifth – Keeper of the Hidden Secret: The events portrayed in this ceremony represent a significant episode in the Masonic tradition of King Solomon's Temple, as well as impressing on the mind valuable lessons of faith, ministry and perseverance.

Sixth – Prince of Jerusalem: This is the of the Order, and is conferred on recipients only at the discretion of the Grand Summus. Set in the second century BC, the struggles and ultimate triumph of the Jewish people, to throw off the yolk of oppression and persecution, are related.

It should be noted that, in addition to these Grade ceremonies, there is also the Preparation Ceremony, essential before anyone can be installed as President of a Consistory, and unique in Freemasonry as, in order to be elected to take the Chair, the recipient is required to answer questions relating to the three Grades of the Order through which he has passed, to prove his proficiency and understanding thereof.

Once installed as a President, he will be reliant upon the assistance of the Primus of Lectores and Primus of Ostiarii, (equivalent to the Senior and Junior Wardens or second and third Principals) who have large parts to play when conferring Grades within his Consistory.

Thus, the Order of the Scarlet Cord, open to all Princes of the Order of the Secret Monitor, is a modern Masonic Order for the 21st century, but with all the pageantry, splendour and ritualistic verve of its nineteenth century forebear.

Who can join?

The Order is open to Princes of the Order of the Secret Monitor.



Who's in charge?

The Most Distinguished Grand Summus, Ian Stanley Currans. He is assisted by the Right Distinguished Deputy Grand Summus, Francis Charles Spencer; and the Right Distinguished Assistant Grand Summus, Howard Saul Markham.

That's a lot of Grades. Does it require a lot of regalia?

No. The personal regalia for companions of the first two Grades consists of the scarlet cord, and a jewel (lent to you by the consistory) worn suspended from a cord around the shirt collar. Having taken the Third Grade you require a breast jewel, which changes with each Grade thereafter. In addition, Provincial/District/Grand Officers wear a sash and collarette.

Further information

Beyond The Craft by Keith B. Jackson
Two Podcasts featuring the Grand Summus talking about the Order may be found at:

www.brothermasonic.com/

Or you can visit the Order's webpage at:

www.markmasonshall.org/orders/scarlet-cord

Dan Heath



Freemasonry in harmony

On Sunday 24th July, the Provincial Grand Summus for East Anglia in the Ancient and Masonic Order of the Scarlet Cord, Rt. Distinguished Companion Keith McCully and the Deputy Provincial Grand Master for East Anglia Mark Master Masons, Gary Allen, together with representatives of both orders, attended Sea Palling Independent Lifeboat in North Norfolk, for the official handover and naming of the new lifeboat "Canon Portal".

Having supported Felixstowe Independent Lifeboat previously, Rt. Dist. Comp. Keith discovered that Sea Palling was looking to replace its current boat, a 5.8m RIB named "Lionheart". Keith asked his Assistant Provincial Grand Summus, Dist. Comp. Phil Cuff to petition the trustees of the Mark Benevolent Fund to ask if they would sponsor the replacement vessel. Shortly after the request, a message from Mark Masons Hall confirmed approval and the agreement to purchase the new boat for £56,384.

Subsequently, a new Humber 6.3m Ocean Pro was ordered from Humber Marine, the specification to include a 200hp Suzuki outboard, the latest Raymarine radar, AIS and FLIR heat-seeking camera.

The date for the handover and official naming (Canon Portal being the founder of the Mark Benevolent Fund) was arranged. Sea Palling Independent Lifeboat's members and crew received the Masonic representatives, gave a tour of the facilities, prior to the official naming, followed by lunch.



Follow Sea Palling Lifeboat on Facebook and on their website www.seapallinglifeboat.co.uk

Chris Bowles

March hosts IPA friendship event

March Masonic Centre hosted the Cambridgeshire Branch of the International Police Association (IPA) during its friendship week. Seventeen IPA members from Germany, Poland and Austria stayed in March during August and enjoyed a lunch at the Masonic Hall in City Road.



Local Masons WBro. Mark Purser, WBro. Paul Wintle and Bro. Clinton Elkin helped out behind the bar, for which they were presented with certificates of appreciation from the national chairman by Andy Sullivan, secretary of the Cambridgeshire IPA and Region 8 chairman, who is also Master-Elect at Stone Cross Lodge No. 6704.

Andy Sullivan



Lockdown was MAGIC for Kynaston brother

Ray Christofides has been a driving instructor for 43 years, 30 of those in Cambridge which is where he joined Kynaston Lodge No. 5810. The past couple of years during the pandemic has been the worst time he has ever known being forced to take a lot of time off work and reliant on his wife for support.



In 2017, Bro. Ray had got involved with the 102-year-old Pentacle Magic Club in Cambridge, began to learn a little bit of magic and practiced on his long-suffering wife, pupils and Brethren during festive boards and Masonic events.

During the pandemic Ray needed something else to do and decided to give himself another goal to achieve. He joined the world-famous Magic Circle as an Apprentice. Considering that many magicians started in The Magic Circles' Young Magicians Club as children and Ray was starting as a 64-year-old newbie, he had a lot of catching up to do.

Zoom came into play and suddenly the world of magic was opened up to all aspiring magicians with lectures and talks from those world-famous magicians. Monday evenings became The Magic Circle Apprentice Network and Tuesday evenings were The Pentacle Magic Club here in Cambridge.

Ray said: "We discussed magic with people like Dynamo (Steven Frayne), Andy Nyman, Jeff McBride, Lance Burton, Martin Daniels (Paul's son) and were inspired by their work".

In the meantime, Ray felt he'd been progressing too slowly with his magic. He asked Cambridge-based, three-times Magic Champion, Matthew Le Mottée, for help. Matthew agreed. Ray added: "This is when my plan came together and since I've been working with Matthew my magic started to improve significantly". Eventually, Matthew felt it was good enough to take The Magic Circle Audition for full membership and passed.

Ray concluded: "My act, took a lot of time and effort to get to an acceptable standard and I've enjoyed every moment of learning with Matthew. I have asked him if I can stay on as his student."

Ray still finds a trick or two while attending Lodge meetings with his fellow Brethren. He recently proposed for membership his good friend Jeremy Bond, an entertainer and magician, and who is now also a member of Kynaston Lodge.

Brian Elliott

Couple's skydive for charity

A March Freemason has supported his partner's bid to raise money for charity by taking part in a skydive.

Bro. Matt Smith, of Stone Cross Lodge No. 6704, got involved when his partner Nikki Harvey decided she wanted to mark the fifth anniversary of her father's death by completing an activity outside her comfort zone.

Having never flown before, Nikki came up with the idea of a skydive from a small airfield close to March. Matt, a prison officer who was previously in the Royal Navy from 1991 to 2001, had completed a skydive in 2017 while in Florida. Matt and Nikki's skydive took place on 18th August with donations through a Just Giving page going to Thrombosis UK.

Cliff Brown



Masonic Nuggets – “Step Off with the left foot”

We are all familiar with the phrase ‘Step off with the left-foot’, which is not only used in the First Degree, but in the Fellowcraft and Master Mason Degrees, and also in the Royal Arch. The phrase was used in your initiation as you were perambulated around the Lodge, and likewise for those of you in the Chapter.

That pace forward with the left foot forms the first part of the First Degree step, after which the right foot is drawn into the hollow thereof, to form a right-angle sign. But why the left foot? Why not the right?



The answer may be found in antiquity. For example, the surviving artwork, bas-reliefs and sculptures, of the Ancient Egyptians almost invariably show the left foot advancing.

Scholars have speculated that this may be derived from military marching, so that the strong right arm is immediately brought into play; victorious Pharaohs are shown in this way. Male figurines from Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece are almost always shown with the left foot forward.

The Egyptians knew that as the left-side of the body was where the heart resided; it was therefore regarded as the house of will, emotion and consciousness. The Ancient Egyptian stepped off with the left-foot to tread out evil so that the heart could proceed in safety. It has been suggested likewise that the left foot was representative of the power of Isis, the fertility goddess associated with life and new beginnings.

This idea of the left foot subduing evil has appeared in other cultures and faiths; the Archangel Michael, for example, is frequently depicted with his left foot on the defeated Satan. The priests, on their way to King Solomon's Temple, tradition informs us, began their journey ritually with the left foot. In the barbarian lands of Western Europe, the left foot was the starting point for the ancient druids.



So, when we ‘step off with the left-foot’ we are deemed to be symbolically trampling the forces of evil beneath us at the beginning of each part of our Masonic journey.

Peter Crussell

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