

The Ancient & Accepted Rite



District of Worcestershire The District Diary Edition No: 21

~ Easter 2025 ~

This District Diary is for distribution by the Chapter Recorder to all of their Chapter members either by email or sent as hard copy by post.

1. Introduction



**By our INSPECTOR GENERAL
V.: III.: Bro Ian M Fothergill, 33°**

Dear and beloved Brethren,

As we approach the Easter celebrations it is perhaps time for us to reflect on the last twelve months with the changes and revision made within our Order.

I remain conscious that there are still members who question the reasons why the changes were made. I hope by attaching my paper ([See Annex A to this Edition](#)), which I have had the pleasure of presenting in several of our Chapters, provides the answers to many of the questions raised.

Our requirement for us to strive to encourage Candidates to our Order has been assisted with the recent tri-fold leaflet issued by Supreme Council and we all must recognise that the only way to succeed in this is the “one

to one” or “face to face” meeting. If you do not ask you will not get. I have set a New Year Resolution to each Chapter to Perfect at least 1 Candidate in 2025. Some are succeeding but others have work to do.

Let us now turn to consider Easter and the traditions that have evolved:



The English word Easter, which parallels the German word *Ostern*, is of uncertain origin. One view, expounded by the Venerable Bede in the 8th century, was that it derived from Eostre, or Eostræ, an Anglo-Saxon goddess possibly associated with spring and fertility, (In the modern era the connection between Eostre and spring has been disputed; she may have been a local protective deity rather than a fertility figure.) This view presumes - as does the view associating the origin of Christmas on December 25th with pagan celebrations of the winter solstice - that Christians

appropriated pagan names and holidays for their highest festivals. Given the determination with which Christians combated all forms of paganism (the belief in multiple deities), this appears a rather dubious presumption. There is now widespread consensus that the word derives from the Christian designation of Easter week as *in albis*, a Latin phrase that was understood as the plural of *alba* (“dawn”) and became *eostarum* in Old High German, the precursor of the modern German and English term. The Latin and Greek Pascha (“Passover”) provides the root for Pâques, the French word for Easter.

The Council of Nicaea in 325 decreed that Easter should be observed on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox (March 21). Easter, therefore, can fall on any Sunday between March 22 and April 25.

Eastern Orthodox churches use a slightly different calculation based on the Julian rather than the Gregorian calendar (which is 13 days ahead of the former),

In the 20th century several attempts were made to arrive at a fixed date for Easter, with the Sunday following the second Saturday in April specifically proposed. While this proposal and others had many supporters, none came to fruition. Renewed interest in a fixed date arose in the early 21st century, resulting from discussions involving the leaders of Eastern Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, Coptic, Anglican, and Roman Catholic churches, but formal agreement on such a date has remained elusive.

Easter, like Christmas, has accumulated a great many traditions, some of which have little to do with the Christian celebration of the Resurrection but derive from folk customs. The custom of the Easter lamb appropriates both the appellation used for Jesus in Scripture (“behold the lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world,” John 1:29) and the lamb’s role as a sacrificial animal in ancient Israel. In antiquity Christians placed lamb meat under the altar, had it blessed, and then ate it on Easter. Since the 12th century the Lenten fast has ended on Easter with meals including eggs, ham, cheeses, bread, and sweets that have been blessed for the occasion.

The use of painted and decorated Easter eggs was first recorded in the 13th century. The church prohibited the eating of eggs during Holy Week, but chickens continued to lay eggs during that week, and the notion of specially identifying those as “Holy Week” eggs brought about their decoration. The egg itself became a symbol of the Resurrection. Just as Jesus rose from the tomb, the egg symbolizes new life emerging from the eggshell. In the Orthodox tradition eggs are painted red to symbolize the blood of Jesus shed on the cross.

The custom of associating a rabbit or bunny with Easter arose in Protestant areas in Europe in the 17th century but did not become common until the 19th century. The Easter rabbit, or Easter bunny, is said to lay Easter eggs as well as decorate and hide them. In the United States the Easter bunny also leaves children baskets with toys and candies on Easter morning, a tradition enjoyed by non-religious families and Christians alike. The practice has been seen as a manifestation of the Protestant rejection of Catholic Easter customs. In some European countries, however, other animals - in Switzerland the cuckoo, in Westphalia the fox - brought the Easter eggs.

In conclusion, however you celebrate it, may I wish you all a Very Happy Easter.

Kind and fraternal regards.

Ian

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2. Supreme Council

Tremendous Tuesday



Tuesday 11th February 2025 saw some 18 members of the District setting out for the Grand East, 14 of whom travelled by Coach from Henley in Arden, and the remainder travelling by their own means, to witness 5 members of the District being promoted to either the 31° or 30°.

The journey from Henley to London went extremely well despite having to avoid a severe accident on the M40. The Coach party and the other 4 members met at Mark Masons Hall where the District had laid on a soup & sandwich lunch and where the IG, with his usual generosity on such occasions, provided the wine.



The assembled company included 3 current and a Past Inspector General, V. Ill. Bro's. Stephen Fowler (Warks), Nigel Bridges, (Gloucs & Heref), Dr. Richard N Hoare, and our own Inspector General.

On completion of a generous and very satisfying lunch the party moved to No. 10 Duke Street to witness Ill. Bro's, Lindsay (Taff) Hill, Gordon Stacey and Stephen Wyer promoted to the 31st Degree.



Followed by Ill. Bro's Mark Hudson & Richard Noakes receiving their first promotions to the 30^o.



Both ceremonies being conducted in a superb manner by the Most Puissant Sovereign Grand Commander and other members of The Supreme Council.

On conclusion it was back to Mark Masons Hall to enjoy a high standard, quality Dinner which concluded at 1900 hrs, and saw the weary travellers depart back to their original locations. The Coach party arriving back in Henley in Arden for 2120 hrs.

The Inspector General concluded by addressing the Coach Party, once again congratulating those promoted, and stated that he looked forward to visiting their

respective Chapters to Propose their Higher Degree Toasts.

It was, without doubt a memorable Ancient & Accepted Rite day for those promoted, and an enjoyable day out for those supporting.

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3. The District



In Memorium

It is with great sadness that we record the passing to the Grand Chapter Above of the following brethren since the last newsletter was published:

Ill.: Bro Allan J Laidlaw 32^o - Feb 2025

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Worcestershire Chapter RC No 970 Honours Board



Honours at Last

The Inspector General having conducted some valuable research, and with grateful thanks to the management team at Halesowen, an old now defunct Rose Croix Chapter Honours Board was found. The board was surveyed by Meg, the renowned Stourport signwriter, and an estimated cost provided to display the names of all the Most Wise Sovereigns of this prestigious Chapter.

The Inspector General therefore at the October 24 meeting proposed that the Chapter, being the most senior Chapter in the District, should indeed have an Honours Board and, whilst it meets at two masonic centres - Halesowen in March, and Worcester in October, it was Consecrated on 23rd March

1987 at Halesowen and that therefore should be its home. The proposition was approved, and the Inspector General took the task on as a project.

The management team at Halesowen agreed with the proposal and stated that as the Chapter was Consecrated at Halesowen they would find an available slot in the main temple to affix it.

Having submitted the draft to Meg the IG then waited nervously to view the finished result and on Monday 17th March met Meg and the management team at Halesowen and was deeply impressed with the result. This was achieved with an exceptional amount of unforeseen additional preparatory work, but the end result is very good.

Unfortunately, at the Chapter Enthronement meeting on 31st March 2025, the IG was attending the Inspectors General National Conference at Duke Street so the former Inspector General, V.: Ill.: Bro Dr Richard Hoare 33°, a Founder and Past Sovereign of the Chapter, was delighted to attend and act as the Presiding Officer **and** be given the opportunity of unveiling it. The board now publicly identifies those Past Sovereigns of this prestigious Chapter.

Much credit should go to Meg for the quality of her work; indeed, such now is her reputation amongst the masonic fraternity, she is now updating Honours Boards in at least four masonic locations.

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Who said that?



Four of the District finest. No prizes on offer, however, let's have your 'captions' as to what tickled the V.: Ill.: Bro Dr Richard Hoare 33°, Former Inspector General.....

Midlands Rose Croix Chapter of Improvement (MRCCI).

Chapter Support

Another reminder to all Chapters that from time to time some of our chapters unfortunately find themselves with reduced numbers. This sometimes results in a chapter being unable to fill key offices, or maybe just unavailable for a particular meeting and there are no other officers available to 'stand in'.

On occasions, some chapters also experience difficulty in filling all the offices generally, and may need assistance to perform ceremonies.

In times of difficulty when trying to coordinate our meetings, please consider seeking assistance from members of the MRCCI.

Please contact Ill.: Bro Charles Dyer 32°, chazdyer@yahoo.com who is the MRCCI Preceptor who will be only too pleased to call upon his team to offer all the necessary support that he can.

It is of course so important to maintain as high a standard of ritual as possible at our meetings, particularly to impress a new candidate and visitors. Using outside assistance should be seen as a sign of strength and not a weakness.

Additionally, if you are able to visit any chapter, please contact Chapter Recorders direct and offer any support to them if you can. They will be so pleased to book you in.

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4. Chapters

St Dunstan Chapter RC No 12



Wednesday 8th January 2025 saw the first meeting of 2025 in the District. And what a welcome into the New Year it proved.....

Nineteen members & visitors including the Inspector General and the District Recorder assembled for the 'Business' meeting of the Chapter.

Upon failing miserably to hand his Chair & Baton to the IG, the MSW, E&P Bro Phil Abram 18°, Opened the Chapter and the Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed. The

MWS then declared E&P Bro Karl Haines 18°, MWS, and E&P Bro Alex Sinton 18°, Treasurer for the ensuing year. It was also announced by the MWS that as of the next meeting of the Chapter, the Chapter was going to return to the 'old progressive process' whereby the IPS automatically assumed the office of Outer Guard, following his rightful year as IPS. This was welcomed by the members.....

Then followed an informative and much welcomed talk by the IG giving reference to the background and impact of the recent changes in the Ritual. The MWS and all the brethren thanked the IG for the explanation he gave.

Upon Closing the Chapter and carrying out the Third Point, the brethren retired to the Refectory to enjoy an excellent dinner.

Next meeting (E) - Friday 2nd May 2025.

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Northfield Chapter RC No 1022



On Monday 13th January 2025, some 13 members of the Order including the Inspector General, attended Northfield Freemasons Hall for

their Regular Meeting.

On this occasion it was a Perfection Ceremony to welcome E&P Bro Lawrence J C Wood into our Order.

Due to unforeseen circumstances following the MWS having been injured in an accident in Australia, the Chair was taken by the Chapter Almoner, Ill Bro. John Pritchard, 30°, with the ceremony being conducted by the Chapter Recorder and Inspector General, with the Visitor acting as Rafael. The Marshal also deserves a mention for the very good work he conducted including the explanation of the Collar, Jewel & Signs.

On completion of the Third Point the Chapter was closed and the Brethren retired to enjoy an exceptionally good evening meal in the Refectory.

Whilst the numbers were small it was a most enjoyable Rose Croix evening.

Next meeting - Monday 10th March 2025.

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Gervase Paganel Chapter RC No 316



8 Members of the Chapter, 1 Visitor and the Inspector General attended the January Regular Meeting of the

Chapter at the James S Webb Freemasonry Centre, Victoria Street, Stourbridge on Thursday 16th January 2025.

Prior to the main item on the Agenda a Ballot was taken for two Joining Members, who had become unattached following the Closure of St. Edmund King & Martyr Chapter: The Ballot proved favourable, and they were duly welcomed into the Chapter. Unfortunately, due to work commitments only one was present.

There then followed by Declaration, the election of the MWS and Treasurer both of whom thanked the Chapter for their confidence in response.

The main business of the evening was the MWS conducting the explanation of the Collar, Jewel & Signs of the 18th Degree. It commenced with the IG conducting the Accolade prior to the explanation taking place and was done satisfactorily. It completed, other than the Installation of his successor, all the necessary work required by the MWS.

On completion of the Third Point nine members retired to The Old Edwardian Club to enjoy a very convivial and tasty meal to end another meeting of a Chapter in this beautiful Order that we all enjoy so much.

Next meeting (E) - Thursday 10th Apr 2025.

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St. Francis of Assisi Chapter RC No 711



9 members of the Chapter plus 3 visitors including the Inspector General and the District Recorder met at Kings Heath Freemasons Hall on Saturday 25th January 2025 to enjoy a

relatively short but never the less, very enjoyable meeting.

The Inspector General, V.:Ill.:Bro Ian M Fothergill 33°, accompanied by V.:Ill.:Bro

Stephen W Fowler 33°, (Inspector General for the District of Warwickshire), and V.:III.:Bro Dr Richard N Hoare 33°, (Former Inspector General of the District of Worcestershire), were escorted into the Chapter by the Director of Ceremonies. Before taking his seat in the Chapter, the MWS very kindly offered the Batten and Chair to the IG which was declined with equal kindness by the IG.....

Following the Opening Hymn, the Prelate gave the Chapter Prayer for St Francis of Assisi.

After opening the Chapter and confirming the Minutes of the previous meeting, The MWS Invested the Prelate as he was unfortunately absent for the Enthronement meeting.

Then followed an exemplary presentation of the Collar & Signs by Raphael, E&P Bro R Pinner 18°. The delivery was so good that the MWS informed him that he was tasked to deliver it again at their next meeting at which there will be a Perfection.

On completion of the Third Point the members retired to the Refectory to enjoy an excellent 3 course lunch. Once again excellent meeting and great company enjoyed by all.

Next meeting - Saturday 26th April 2025.

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Bordesley Abbey Chapter RC No 918



On Monday 27th January 2025, with only 8 members of the Order present including the Inspector General and 1 Visitor, the Chapter

was opened at 1800 hrs by the MWS in the Chair, III.:Bro Del Padmore 30°, who gave a full account for the lack of attendance and then welcomed the Inspector General to the meeting and proffered him the baton which he as usual declined.

With various members being placed into Office, including the Visitor as Prelate the Chapter was Opened and the initial usual administration conducted.

The Inspector General was then invited to present his recently approved paper ***“Why did our Order remove the requirement of swearing Allegiance to the Trinitarian Faith?”*** This was very well received and

prompted some interesting questions, and it was suggested that it should be made available to all the members of the District. The IG agreed he would talk with the DR and make suitable arrangements.

He ended his talk by referring to the request recently made to individual Chapters in the District regarding using the Nunc Dimittis as a Recessional Hymn after Closing.

St. Luke’s Gospel Chapter 2 v25-29 refers: *“After Simeon had seen and held Jesus, he broke out in the song we still sing: “Lord, now You let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word. For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to Your people Israel.”*

The Doxology at the end is an expression of praise sung to the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and is obviously as stated Trinitarian and therefore no longer approved.

The IG emphasised that given that we have just prior to Closing conducted the Third Point, forming a living circle of eternity and shared the goblet of fraternal friendship and fidelity and once Closed are moving to the Refectory to enjoy a social gathering, why would we want to end the Meeting singing a “song relating to death.”

The IG then presented a Supreme Council Certificate to E&P Bro Paul E Blackband-Hibbert in his usual erudite manner and welcomed him warmly into the Order, the District in General and Bordesley Abbey Chapter in particular.

The IG was thanked by the MWS in the Chair for all his work.

The MWS Declared the nominations for the MWS and Treasurer remaining in their respective Chairs for a further year. Unfortunately, neither were present.

The meeting was Closed following the Third Point but unfortunately there was no Refectory due to the small numbers in attendance.

Next meeting - Monday 28th April 2025.

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St Mary & All Saints Chapter RC No 688



On Thursday 30th January 2025, 13 members including the Inspector General, District Recorder and three other visitors were warmly welcomed to the Chapter.

Prior to Opening the Chapter, The IG was escorted into the room by the Director of Ceremonies, Ill.: Bro V Fogarty 32°, and presented to the MWS. The MWS, Ill.: Bro C Hart 30°, invited the IG to accept the Baton and occupy the Chair and before the IG could answer said "I don't know why I am giving you this Baton because I know I will get it straight back". The IG however informed him "I am here here to enjoy myself this evening and hadn't planned on doing any work"!!!

The MWS Opened the Chapter and confirmed the Minutes of the previous meeting. The MWS then demonstrated the Intermediate Degrees with a confident and word-perfect presentation.

On completion of the remainder of the Agenda, V.: Ill.: Bro Dr Richard N Hoare 33°, Former Inspector General, carried out the Third Point and the MWS then Closed the Chapter.

Everyone retired to the Refectory to enjoy the accustomed high-quality Stourport Masonic Hall dinner completing a super evening.

Next meeting (E) - Friday 30th May 2025.

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Oldswinford Chapter RC No 908



On Thursday 6th February 2024, 15 members and visitors including the Inspector General and the District Recorder, met for an interesting and enlightening meeting.

After warmly welcoming the IG and visitors the MWS, E&P Bro Justin Randle 18°, approved the Minutes of the previous meeting.

What then followed was an encouraging and extremely enjoyable demonstration of the Second Point (Red Room) of the Perfection ceremony, including a 'commentary of the

ceremony' given by Ill.: Bro Charles Dyer 32°, the Midlands Rose Croix Chapter of Improvement (MRCCI) Preceptor.

It must be noted that every Brother taking part in delivering the work were members of the 18°. This will give the Chapter huge heart and promise for their future. Bring on their next candidate.....

The MWS then conducted an 'open discussion' on the way forward and future prospects of the Chapter, which was concluded with a few delightful motivational words from the Prelate, Ill.: Bro Justin Parker 30°. Encouraging and inspiring to say the least.

On completion of the Third Point the members retired to the Refectory to enjoy a generous helping of steak pie, seasonal veg and Chips.

Next meeting (E) - Thu 3rd April 25.

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St Ann of Malvern Chapter RC No 606



7 members of the Chapter plus 4 Visitors including the Inspector General and the District Recorder, met at Rainbow Hill on Tuesday 25th February 2025.

After singing the opening Hymn, the Most Wise Sovereign Ill.: Bro Maurice A Hume, 32°, Opened the Chapter and immediately offered his Baton & Chair to the IG. It came as no surprise when the IG politely declined the kind offer and returned the Baton as quickly as he received it.

The MWS then gave a sincere and moving eulogy to Ill.: Bro Allan J Laidlaw 32°, who sadly passed to the Grand Chapter Above just a few days prior to the meeting.

With no other nominations received and there being no request for a ballot, the MWS then declared Ill.: Bro Charles M K Dyer 32°, as the MWS for the ensuing year, and Ill.: Bro Sean P Warner 30°, Treasurer for the ensuing year.

The Inspector General then gave another of his interesting and informative talks reference our beautiful Order which was well received by all present, and provoked a thoughtful questions and answers session, leading into

an open discussion reference the Chapter itself.

The Third Point was conducted by the MWS and everyone departed in peace and harmony.

The evening was relatively short but very, very enjoyable indeed.

Next meeting (E) - Wed 7th May 25.

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St. Nicolas Chapter RC No 198



The Chapter met on Friday 28th February 2025 for an enjoyable meeting. The MWS, Ill.:Bro Stephen Middleditch 31°, welcomed the Inspector General into the Chapter and offered him his Chair & Baton to which the IG politely declined. The MWS Opened the Chapter and warmly welcomed the Visitors.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were relayed to those present by the Recorder and were duly approved by the members and signed for by the MWS and IG respectively.

The members of the Chapter then elected the MWS Ill.:Bro Stephen Middleditch 31°, to remain 'in the Chair' for the ensuing year, and the current Treasurer E&P Bro Emerson Holder 18°, to also continue as the Treasurer (which he will be delighted to learn when he returns from his holiday).....

The MWS then gave an interesting talk from a paper written by Ill.: Bro Matthew Christmas, a Past MWS of the Grand Metropolitan Chapter of Princes Rose Croix of Heredom. His writings provide an explanation of the 18° of the Ancient & Accepted Rite. Its content include ***The History and Origins; The Supreme Council; Emblems of the Order; and Why seek Perfection?*** The MWS chose this paper as it is rather fitting topic following some recent difficult times within our beautiful Order, reminding us of 'why did I join Rose Croix', and 'what does it mean to me'.

The MWS talk led fittingly into another talk from the Inspector General on the background to the recent changes to the Ritual, and subsequent implications for members. This talk once again very well received, and led to an interesting question & answer session.

Upon completing the Third Point, the MWS closed the Chapter, and the rest of the evening spent in Harmony and Brotherly Love in the Refectory to enjoy a hearty dinner of fish & chips.

Next meeting (E) - Fri 28th October 25.

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Halesowen Chapter RC No 615



On Monday 3rd March 2025 21 members of the Order including the Inspector General and District Recorder received a warm welcome to the Chapter for an evening's entertainment at Halesowen Masonic Centre.

The MWS, Ill.:Bro Robert Bennett 30°, opened the Chapter, proved the Minutes of the previous meeting, and conducted a Ballot (for Perfection), of Bro Colin Edwards. The Ballot proving in favour of the Candidate, the Chapter retired to confer the Intermediate Degrees.

Ill.:Bro John K Owen 31°, conducted the 1st Point and Ill.:Bro Derek Percival 31°, the 2nd Point. The Candidate was also suitably cared for and directed by both the Marshal & Raphael throughout.

After collecting Alms, the MWS conducted the Third Point, and closed the Chapter. Everyone then retired to the Refectory to enjoy a baked gammon dinner which was very well received and enjoyed by all.

Next meeting - Mon 12th May 25.

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Northfield Chapter RC No 1022



On Monday 10th March 2025, 8 members of the Chapter plus 4 Visitors including the Inspector General and the District Recorder attended Northfield Freemasons Hall for the Business Meeting of the Chapter.

Due to reasons beyond his control and with the severe meteorological conditions 'Down Under', the MWS was unable to return to the UK in time to attend the meeting, and the Chair

was very comfortably occupied by Ill.:Bro John Pritchard 30°, who looked and felt very 'at home' indeed. However, despite his best efforts, he was unable tempt the IG to retain the Baton when offered to him!!!

After Opening the Chapter, the Minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed by the members of the Chapter. The IG then had the pleasure of presenting a Supreme Council Certificate to E&P Bro Lawrence Wood 18°, who was Perfected into the Chapter at their last meeting in January.

Ill.:Bro Martyn Hardeman 30°, was then declared the MWS elect for the ensuing year, and E&P Bro John Peglar 18°, declared the Treasurer for the ensuing year, both of whom graciously accepted the confidence that the brethren showed.

The next two items on the Agenda were to receive an exceptionally interesting and informative paper from E&P Bro John Peglar 18°, who captivated the audience with his knowledge of 'The Five Noble Orders of Architecture', followed by an equally interesting and informative talk from the IG on our beautiful Order in particular. Both Papers very well received indeed.

On completion of the Third Point the Chapter was Closed and the Brethren retired to enjoy an exceptionally good 3 course evening meal in the Refectory.

All in all, a very enjoyable evening.

Next meeting - Monday 9th June 2025.

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Evesham Chapter RC No 994



On Thursday 27th March 2025 the Chapter gathered at their Swan Lane home for their 'Business' meeting. Prior to Opening the Chapter, the Recorder read the

Emergency Fire/Evacuation Procedures, and everyone is now fully refreshed in the actions to be carried out in the event of an emergency.

Beside the Chapter Warrant stood the 'Travelling Apron' on full display after being liberated from the Halesowen Chapter RC No 615 Enthronement meeting in November 24.

Who will be the next custodian of this prestigious District of Worcestershire award?



The Inspector General was warmly welcomed into the Chapter by the MWS, E&P Bro S Hillard 18°, who, for his second attempt, offered the IG his Chair and Baton which again proved a failure as the Inspector General thanked the MWS for his generosity and returned the Baton as if it were too hot to handle.....

Immediately upon Opening the Chapter, the MWS asked everyone present to rise and take a moment of reflection in respect of Ill.:Bro George A Aldrich 31°, a Founder and Honorary Member of the Chapter.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were then approved, signed by the MWS & IG.

The MWS and 2nd General carried out a 'practice' of the 2nd Point (Red Room) of the Perfection ceremony with the MWS demonstrating the 'Ladder', and E&P Bro J Battell 18°, Second General displaying an impressive delivery of the Collar & Signs. Our latest Perfectee, E&P T McMillan acting as Candidate..... E&P Bro W Duthie 18°, (Marshal) and E&P Bro P Emmerson 18°, (Raphael) once again gave confident performances of their responsibilities. Well done!!!

The Inspector General had the pleasure of once again delivering his 'Paper' on the background to the recent changes to the Ritual, and subsequent implications for members. This talk once again very well received, prompting one or two interesting questions from some of those present. Following the IG paper the District Recorder gave a short explanation of the new Supreme Council 33°, website **and** the superb new tri-fold leaflet produced by the Supreme Council 33°, aimed at attracting new members.

On completion of the Third Point and closing the Chapter, members and guests retired to the Refectory to enjoy a delightful 3 course dinner.

A relatively short but another enjoyable evening.

Next meeting (E) - Thu 19th June 25.

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Merston Culy Chapter RC No 883



On Friday 28th March 2025, the Inspector General, District Recorder and 6 other visitors received a warm welcome to the Chapter by Ill.: Bro Mark Hudson 30°, the MWS in-the-Chair who, offered the Inspector General his Chair and Baton. The Inspector General thanked the MWS in-the-Chair for his very kind and generous offer but politely declined returning the Baton with his accustomed humour.

Unfortunately, the MWS Ill.: Bro Ed Baker 18°, was unable to be with us on this occasion due to a pressing alternative arrangement. The MWS would have been 'Proclaimed' as the MWS for a second year, and this will now take place at the next meeting of the Chapter on 27th June 2025.

After opening the Chapter, the IG and the Chapter Recorder gave sincere tributes to Ill.: Bro Roger Shayes 30°, and Ill.: Bro Michael Midgely 30°, respectively who had passed to the Grand Chapter Above since the last meeting of the Chapter.

The Inspector General once again (and for the last time) had the pleasure of delivering his Paper ***Why did our Order remove the requirement to swear Allegiance to the Trinitarian Christian Faith?*** which was once again very well received, and the expected usual questions were asked and suitable answered by the IG. The District Recorder also gave a short explanation of the new Supreme Council 33°, website ***and*** the superb new tri-fold leaflet produced by the Supreme Council 33°, aimed at attracting new members.

On completion of an excellent Third Point, the MWS in-the-Chair closed the Chapter, and the rest of the evening spent in harmony in the Refectory where everyone enjoyed a delightful meal to round off a super evening.

Next meeting - Friday 27th June 2025.

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Worcestershire Chapter RC No 970



Worcestershire's premier Chapter held their 74th Regular meeting on Monday 31st March 2025 at the Halesowen Freemasons Hall, and what a great meeting it was.

Unfortunately, the Inspector General, V.: Ill.: Bro Ian M Fothergill 33°, was unable to attend the meeting due to another masonic commitment at 10 Duke Street. Also absent was the 1st General and Inspector General for the District of Warwickshire, V.: Ill.: Bro Stephen Fowler 33°, who was at the same meeting at Grand East.

Ill.: Bro Martyn Hardeman 30°, the MWS, welcomed the V.: Ill.: Bro Dr Richard Hoare 33°, Former Inspector General (FIG) for the District of Worcestershire and presented him with his Baton and Chair saying that he could retain it "until the end of the meeting". Much to the surprise of the MWS (and everyone else present), the FIG replied saying that "he wanted to keep it as it was many years since he had received that honour"!!! However, and under protest, the Baton was returned to the MWS and the FIG took his seat in the Chapter.

The MWS Opened the Chapter and Ill.: Bro Gordon Stacey 31°, gave a warm and sincere eulogy to Ill.: Bro Allan J Laidlaw 32°, who sadly passed to the Grand Chapter Above on the 7th February 2025. V.: Ill.: Bro Dr Richard Hoare 33°, also provided a moving tribute, and the Chapter rose for a moment's reflection for the much-loved departed Brother.

After confirming and approving the Minutes of the previous meeting, the Minutes were duly signed by the MWS and FIG, with the Recorder ensuring that there was sufficient space for the FIG's signature. (By means of an additional page).

The first highlight of the evening was the very pleasant task of unveiling the new MWS Honours Board finally prepared and installed taking pride of place just inside of the Lodge room entrance of the masonic centre where the Worcestershire Chapter No 970 was consecrated in March 1987. V.: Ill.: Bro Dr Richard Hoare 33°, a Founder Member and indeed the MWS in 2006, proudly unveiled the

Board and said a few words of wisdom of some of the names emblazoned on it.



The second high light of the evening was for the MWS to Enthroned Ill.: Bro William (Bill) Roberts 30°, as the 38th Most Wise Sovereign of the Chapter.

After Appointing and Investing his Officers, the new MWS gave a presentation from the writings of Leonard Bosnam.

The MWS conducted the Third Point and Closed the Chapter. Everyone retired to the Refectory to enjoy a super roast beef dinner.

A really enjoyable evening indeed.

Next meeting - Saturday 4th October 2025.

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Oldswinford Chapter RC No 908



On Friday 3rd April 2025, 16 members and visitors including the Inspector General, District Recorder, and the Preceptor of the

MRCCI met for an Enthronement ceremony. The Chapter was also delighted to receive E&P Bro Andrew Martin-Smith 18°, and 32°, of the Scottish Rite of the USA, South Jurisdiction. (Who indicated his intention to apply for membership of the Chapter. Great news!

The MWS, E&P Bro Justin Randle 18°, warmly welcomed the IG and visitors, and approved the Minutes of the previous meeting.

The Chapter then performed elements of the Perfection Ceremony, particularly the First Point (Black Room), which proved very beneficial for those taking part.

Ill.: Bro Jim Mulligan 30°, was then Enthroned as MWS of the Chapter in a most delightful manner, and he then had the pleasure of Appointing and Investing his Officers. The Chapter is in very safe hands indeed.

On completion of the Third Point the members retired to the Refectory to enjoy a generous helping of Lasagne followed by Apple Pie & Custard.

Next meeting - Thu 4th December 2025.

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Gervase Paganel Chapter RC No 316



The Enthronement meeting for Gervase Paganel Chapter No 316 took place on Thursday 10th April 2025 at the James S

Webb Freemasonry Centre, Stourbridge.

The Inspector General was welcomed into the Chapter by the MWS, E&P Bro Perry Conner 18°, who for his final attempt, did his best to entice the IG into his Chair to conduct the evening. The IG retained the Baton for a few moments and returned it to the MWS with some very encouraging words, and that he (the MWS) was probably much better prepared for the evenings work.

After reading the Notice convening the meeting and confirming the Minutes of the previous meeting, a Ballot was held for two joining members of the Chapter. Ill.: Bro Robert Grainger 30°, and formerly a member of St Edmund King & Martyr Chapter No 730, and Ill.: Bro Michael Bayliss 30°, formerly of Oldswinford Chapter No 908. The Ballot proved clear and Ill.: Bro Robert Grainger 30°, was warmly welcomed into the Chapter by the MWS. Ill.: Bro Michael Bayliss 30°, was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting and will be formally greeted at their October meeting.

Unfortunately, the MWS -elect for the ensuing year was unable to fulfil the role due to unforeseen circumstances. Therefore before continuing with the main event of the evening, the Recorder read the Dispensation from the Supreme Council permitting the Chapter to hold a further ballot for the MWS for the ensuing year. With the ballot proving clear, E&P Bro Mark Winfield 18°, another former member of St Edmund King & Martyr Chapter No 730, was Enthroned as the Most Wise Sovereign in a sincere and heartfelt ceremony. Congratulation to the Enthroning Sovereign for

the very dignified manner in which he carried out Enthroning his successor.

With the new MWS appointing & investing his officers completed, the remainder of the business was carried out and everyone retired whilst the room was prepared for the Third Point.

On completion of the Third Point everyone retired to the Refectory and enjoyed a super 3 course dinner.

Special thanks to the exceptionally hard working Recorder III.: Bro Gordon Stacey 31°, for all his hard work in bringing this evenings meeting together under some very stressful and difficult circumstance. And thank you Gervase Paganel Chapter RC No 316 for a most delightful evening

Next meeting - Thursday 9th October 2025.

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Dates for your Diary

NOT TO BE MISSED!!!

On Friday 30th May 2025, the V.: Ill.: Bro Dr Richard Hoare 33°, Former Inspector General will be Enthroned as the Most Wise Sovereign of St Mary & All Saints Chapter RC No 688.



This will be without doubt an extremely popular meeting so please do 'consult your diaries' and do make every effort to support the Chapter in making this another night to remember.

Keep your eyes peeled for the Summons.....

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King Edward VII Rose Croix Chapter of Improvement



The demonstration of the 4° & 5°, (Secret Master & Perfect Master) will take place on:

- 1) Monday 28th April 2025 at the Grand Lodge Temple at Freemasons' Hall, London.
- 2) Saturday 21st June 2025 at the Novotel, 1 West Quay Street, Southampton.
- 3) Saturday 28th June 2025 at Queen's College, Silver Street Cambridge.
- 4) Saturday 20th September 2025 at the Freemason's Hall, Woodbourne, Douglas, Isle of Man.

Read more about the KEVII Chapter of Improvement via the following link:

<https://kevii.org.uk>

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Easter Greetings

To you and your families

From

Ian & Irene, Taff & Donna

WHY DID OUR ORDER REMOVE THE REQUIREMENT OF SWEARING ALLEGIANCE TO THE TRINITARIAN FAITH

INTRO: When someone asks for a definition of Freemasonry the following phrase is often quoted: "*It is a system of Morality, veiled in Allegory and illustrated by Symbols.*" Pretty meaningless without further explanation really.

I prefer this: Freemasonry is a secular organization, i.e. not connected with religious or spiritual matters. But members must acknowledge a belief in a Supreme Being, often called the "Grand Architect of the Universe". It is open to men over the age of 21, or 18 for University Lodges or Lewis', regardless of their race, colour, religion, political views, or social or economic standing.

This last part of this being most important in relation to this paper.

1. It must be recognised that the Ancient & Accepted Rite was founded as a Universal Masonic Order i.e. free of any religious bias. On a worldwide basis it is today the second largest Masonic Order next to the Craft.
2. The Grand Constitution of 1786, Ordered, Made and Approved by Frederick II, King of Prussia, Margrave of Brandenburg, etc. etc. etc. was signed at the Royal residence in Berlin on the 1st of May, A.L 5786, AD 1786. (I have both the Decree and the translated Constitutions.

NOTE: It is the intention of the IG to deliver the Decree and the Original Constitutions at the next meeting of Worcestershire Chapter No. 970 in October.

3. Article V of the Constitutions states that a Supreme Council must be composed of 9 Members of which at least four must profess membership of the dominant religion of the country of its jurisdiction.
4. The Mother Supreme Council of the world, The Southern Jurisdiction of the United States was established in Charleston, South Carolina in May 1801 at Shepherds Tavern. This was the same tavern where Freemasonry was founded in South Carolina in 1754. It consisted of 4 Jews and 5 Christians of different denominations, including an Anglican Priest.
 - The Rose Croix degree is first recorded in England in about 1770. It was conferred in Knight Templar Encampments, which were Christian and considered as the final or *ne plus ultra* degree of the Knights Templar.
5. In 1845, Dr. Crucifix, a well-respected senior mason, obtained a Patent from the Northern Jurisdiction of the United States. which had been founded in 1813 from a Patent issued to them by the Southern Jurisdiction of the USA and established as a Universal Order.

Dr. Crucifix and other Knights Templar then formed an English Supreme Council. The Supreme Council then took control of the Rose Croix and persuaded the Knights Templar to give up their Rosae Crucis ceremony.

6. The Rose Croix Chapters gradually moved to their present position and became the 18° of the Ancient and Accepted Rite.
7. In 1845, when our Supreme Council was founded only Anglican Christians could be elected to public office as MP's or JP's or go to Oxford, Cambridge, or Durham Universities. Including non-Christians was illegal.
8. Ironically just one year later in 1846 Parliament passed the Religious Disabilities Act 1846 which removed the last restrictions against dissenters and Catholics. It also extended to Jews the same rights and freedoms on education, property, and the administration of charities. However, our Order, having developed from the Knights Templar Order required its members to swear allegiance to the Trinitarian Faith.
9. Of 50 Supreme Councils with whom we are in amity only five are now exclusively Christian. Finland, Estonia, New Zealand, all daughter Councils of ours and Scotland and Ireland. The latter two will probably never change but our daughter Constitutions are considering following our example.
10. One of our problems that had to be considered was that we regularly received members of the Ancient & Accepted Rite from other Constitutions and of other faiths but did not allow our own UGLE non-Christian members to join us. As an aside I can tell you that at the last meeting of Supreme Lex Chapter No. 1000, last November, the Inspectors General Chapter, we entertained the Sovereign Grand Commander of the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States, and I had a very interesting chat with him and the Grand Prior in the Refectory following the meeting, which was later followed by a Higher Degrees Meeting.

So

11. The Grand Prior was set the task of consulting with Senior Masons of other faiths, who were Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh to identify what changes needed to be made for us to become Universal. Which resulted in:
 - a) No change to furniture or regalia,
 - b) Prayers to conform to Craft inclusiveness but retain the use of "Amen." Literally "so be it" rather than "So mote it be." a ritual phrase we use as Freemasons, as well as Rosicrucian's, and Neopagans that means "so may it be", "so it is required", or "so must it be".

Obligations to be taken on a Candidate's VSL and in a posture appropriate to their religion. So, for the Hindu it would be the Bhagavad Gita, the section of the Vedas on which they take their Obligations, The Jew, The Torah, (the first of three books - this one comprising the law given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai), and for the Muslim, The Qur'an.

- c) Some Christian symbolism has been broadened e.g. *"The Pelican is a symbol of self-sacrifice; for, as it was reputed to feed its young with its own blood to save them from death, so Jesus shed His blood for the sake of others; may it remind us all to sacrifice our selfish desires for the Glory of God and the wellbeing of His Creation."*

12. Two Anglican Bishops who are members of our Order fully supported the changes that have been made. Indeed, one commented, *“continuing to exclude our brethren who follow other faith traditions from listening to the Christian story is like assembling a community around a village War Memorial cross, listening to John Chapter 15 Verse 13. “Greater love hath no man but this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” and having been identified as a non-Christian be told to leave the Service of Remembrance as they are not welcome.”*

In conclusion, The Supreme Council were adamant that it would be inappropriate, given the foundational identity of the Rose Croix degree as a Christian working within this jurisdiction, to 'de-Christianize' the ritual of the 18°, which is held in such high regard. Our ritual is fundamentally reflective of the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, and the Council decided it would be inappropriate to remove or 'water down' the Christian character of the degree.

However, they were equally convinced that the Order's stance failed to reflect the Christian - and Masonic - need to be loving towards all and to treat one another with equity. To that end, the Council came to the unanimous conclusion that the requirement to profess the Trinitarian Christian faith should no longer be a requisite of admission to this Order, which strives to be reflective of a modern, inclusive society.

The Council took the view, to remove the restriction is the Christian thing to do, thereby ensuring our Order is both inclusive and welcoming to all thus emphasizing our masonic strengths and, indeed Christian virtues!

There are many good people prevented from experiencing the Higher Degrees of Freemasonry, who would enjoy membership and who would be assets to our Order; there is no reason why they should not join if they wish, provided they are willing to strive to uphold the Christian ideals of Faith, Hope and Charity exemplified by the life and teachings of Jesus, so beautifully represented in the 18°.

IMF 10/10/2024 *Approved by Supreme Council 23/10/2024*