

**PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE
OF HERTFORDSHIRE**



From: Provincial Grand Secretary: Keith Gilbert, **PAGDC**.
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**SECRETARIES ARE REMINDED THAT ITEMS WHICH HAVE
BOLD HEADINGS SHOULD BE READ IN THE SECOND RISING:**

Dear Brother Secretary,

I hope all is well with you and your Lodge at the start of the New Year. There is now only one Lodge secretary not communicating with me by email and I hope that those of you who make regular contact with me in this way are finding it beneficial. I thank those of you who sent appointment and promotion forms to me electronically as this assisted us greatly in what is an important, but lengthy and time-consuming exercise. There will be further changes to the forms in use for 2009, one of which will be that all of the forms will be dated and previous versions will not be acceptable. There were recommendations sent in this year using past versions which, although they were similar to previous years, were not the same. Forms will go out during the second week in October and recommendations will only be accepted electronically. To assist you with this we will again run a series of training sessions. The training events held in November and December were well received by the secretaries who attended.

Celia Munt, who has been working with us for nearly 28 years, has been persuaded by her husband Gerald and the other members of her family to enjoy a well-earned rest. You may remember we held a Province-wide collection for her when she celebrated 25 years service. We will all miss her warm and friendly voice on the phone and her extensive knowledge of Provincial activities. Judith Titmus works on Tuesday to Friday from 09.00 until 15.00. We are fortunate to have several volunteers who have taken responsibility for aspects of our work; Colin Taylor (Tues,Wed,Thurs), Ken Carbin (Mon,Thurs), Bill Hamilton-Hinds (Thurs,Fri), Roger Spencer (Tues,Wed), Tony Harris (Wed), Peter Trowell (Mon) and we will be joined by Richard Phillips, Alick Burge and Geoff Bedford over the next few months.

The editor of the Provincial News, Michael Imeson, who is also the Provincial Information Officer, is keen to mention news from as many Lodges as possible in each issue of the magazine. The only way he can do this is if he hears the news from Lodge secretaries. So if you think you have a story to tell - from a Lodge meeting or a special event -please don't hesitate to contact him. Photographs are especially welcome – so long as they are good quality (and most of those taken with digital cameras these days are most suitable).

So please get in touch: Michael Imeson , 01582 767181 michaelimeson@btinternet.com

Following the devastation of parts of Bangladesh by the tropical storm , The Freemasons' Grand Charity supported the relief work of the Red Cross with an emergency grant of £20,000. Further details can be seen at <http://www.grandcharity.org/pages/news.html>. Hospices across England and Wales are set for a funding boost as The Grand Charity distributes £600,000 towards the operating costs of the widely respected services. Although children's and adults' Hospices have always been supported through the annual grant giving scheme, this year for the very first time a sum was set aside specifically to benefit the growing number of services dedicated to children. The money from The Freemasons' Grand Charity will be shared between 220 hospices, with over half of the children's services receiving more than £3,000 and each adult service receiving an average of over £2,600.

The newly announced grants will take The Freemasons' Grand Charity's support for the sector to over £7 million since 1984. Five hospices in Hertfordshire: Garden House, St Francis, Isabel, Peace and the St Albans and Dacorum Day Hospice recently received their yearly cheques ranging from £1k to £3.386k from the Grand Charity.

There have been a number of requests recently for members of the Provincial Executive to make a formal visit at an anniversary of a Lodge. Already our "chain bearers" attend most of the 206 Lodge Installations, Annual Meetings of other Provinces, banner dedications and those Lodges celebrating 50, 100, 125, 150, 175 years of continuous working, as well as having commitments to their own Lodges and other orders. No other Lodge "birthdays" will be formally recognised with a Provincial visit. This does not preclude a Lodge secretary offering a personal invitation to a "chain bearer" with whom he or the Lodge have a close relationship.

The following notice should appear on the summons of each Lodge at least once every year:

'Brethren travelling abroad are warned that they should not visit Lodges under other jurisdictions until they have found out by application to the Grand Secretary at Freemasons' Hall about the existence of regular Masonry in the country they are visiting and the address to which Masonic enquiries in that country should be directed'.

I sent an email to you just before Christmas, informing you of the death of W Bro Dennis Thomas. Please remember to remove his name if he was elected as an Honorary Member of your Lodge.

Although many of you do inform us if there are changes of status within your membership, unfortunately we still have copies of the Provincial News being returned. I attach again a copy of the form for change of status for your convenience. I also attach an electronic copy of the Installation return. Although Grand Lodge are still not issuing populated copies, this at least will enable you to enter details and then modify the form each year, saving you time and effort. If any of you want help with this form, please let me know.

You will now find the updated version of the Secretaries Handbook on the web site. I will on occasions make changes, but will list these as a frontispiece to the handbook to enable you to know where the changes are.

Peter Trowell, presently our Provincial Senior Grand Warden assists me by following up any enquiries by men who have no Masonic connections but who wish to join Freemasonry. There have been 52 enquiries, mostly by email, since September 2006. Three were general enquiries, three have subsequently moved away from Hertfordshire and 18 have never returned calls or were judged unsuitable by Peter or by the Lodge members who met with them. This leaves 28; three are very recent and Peter is still communicating with them, three were from potential joining members who are joining a Hertfordshire lodge, five are still with lodge secretaries and may go forward. However, the good news is that 17 are already or will soon become masons. This is about a third of those making an enquiry. Eleven have already been Initiated, five will be Initiated in January and February, and one will be Initiated in April. I am grateful for Peter's work in assisting Lodges who did not have candidates.

I thank David Sharman, Secretary of Eastgate Lodge No 6694 for researching the following. He had, as all secretaries do, Lodge and general purposes committee meetings books, but he had little space to store them. He also wanted these books stored in an accessible, yet safe location. He firstly looked at:

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/libsleisure/heritage1/HALS/service/deposit/>

He then contacted Mr Gavin Henderson, who is the Archivist at County Hall in Hertford, 01438 737333 - asking for the Archive Reading Room. Documents (books etc., - no jewels or non-records) may be taken in a carrier bag, with an accompanying list, to County Hall during opening hours, to the Archive Reading Room. You will receive a temporary receipt and within a week or so, a formal receipt to replace it, which is also a reference should you need to refer to the books in the future. Once the books have been deposited, any change in Secretary should be notified to them, in case they ever need to make contact regarding the records. There are two methods of storage:

a) Deposit. This means that the title of ownership is kept by the Lodge concerned, and the transaction is seen as a long term loan. Should, at any time, the Lodge need to withdraw the books, a fee will automatically be charged for the safe keeping of the records to that point. However, the Secretary of the Lodge or any Brother can see the documents at any time during opening hours.

b) Donate. This means that the records are donated to the Archive and become the property of the council. However, they will always be available for the Secretary of the Lodge to see them during opening hours.

It does appear that the former is the best option for our Lodges.

Year books for Brethren of your Lodge are still available and may be collected from the Provincial Office free of charge or they can be posted direct to the individual concerned on receipt of £2.00. Please note that the Lodge

contribution towards the publication will be collected with the Provincial annual dues rather than as a separate item sent out with the treasurer's copy of the Year Book as it was this year.

I printed the following in my November circular: "Please alert your treasurer that from January 1st 2008 the Grand Lodge registration fee for an Initiate will be £45.00 plus £7.88 VAT, hence, £52.88. This is payable on any Form Ps received after that date, so I urge you to return forms immediately for Initiations that take place in November and December". I repeat this as I have had to seek an additional amount from six Lodges.

I attach a set of model by laws. I have been asked by Grand Lodge to check latest versions of Lodge by laws to see if they meet today's requirements. Please may I ask you to compare your official Lodge copy with those attached.

Please destroy any Form Ps Issue 6 you may still have as these are no longer accepted by Grand Lodge. Issue 7 is still being accepted for the time being.

THE FOLLOWING ITEM SHOULD BE READ IN THE SECOND RISING

A form to obtain tickets for the General Meeting of the Grand Charity in the Grand Temple of Freemasons' Hall at 6.00pm on Thursday 5th June 2008 will be included in the next edition of the Provincial News. There is no charge for his event which is open to Brethren, their families and friends, including non-masons. Tours of the building and of the library will be provided from 5.00pm. This informal meeting, in the past chaired by the Pro Grand Master The Most Hon The Marquess of Northampton, will be attended by all members of the Provincial Executive and will be an ideal opportunity for us all to share an occasion when we can see more of this wonderful building. The meeting is scheduled to last for no longer than an hour and will be followed by wine and light refreshments for all attending.

For your diary then, Thursday 5th June.

Yours sincerely and fraternally

Keith

Distribution: Lodge Secretaries:

cc: Provincial Grand Master, Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Assistant Provincial Grand Masters, Provincial Senior Grand Warden, Provincial Junior Grand Warden, Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, Provincial Grand Almoner, Provincial Grand Charity Steward.