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PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE

OF WEST KENT

Brethren & Companions,

Welcome to the Orator’s webpage, I hope that you will find it both informative and entertaining. As well as assisting lodges and chapters to find guest speakers; it will also seek to provide information of interest to Brethren wishing to learn more about the history and meaning of Freemasonry, including a ‘*Notes & Queries*’ section.

I would like to expand the provincial lecturers list, I am sure that we have many accomplished speakers who are not on it. If you give talks, either Masonic or non-Masonic, and would like to be added to the list please let me know.

Can I also take this opportunity to ask if any Brethren would be interested in supporting a Masonic Study Group in West Kent? This would seek to generate a wider interest in Masonic history, by arranging talks by both local enthusiasts and Masonic historians. These talks could be hosted by lodges or chapters throughout the Province; their regular meeting being ‘Called Off’ so that Brethren could attend straight from work or come casually dressed. Membership of the study group would be free, and open to all West Kent Masons. At this stage I am just seeking to gauge the interest in such a group; if sufficient Brethren respond positively I will arrange a meeting to discuss the possibilities in more detail.

I do hope that you will enjoy this webpage. It will be regularly updated, and I would welcome your feedback, as well as contributions and questions for the ‘*Notes & Queries*’ section.

Clive Moore

Provincial Grand Orator

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**MASONIC SPEAKERS**

Most lodges and chapters have been in the situation of having no work for a meeting, and then someone suggests ‘*why not have a talk*?’ However, talks can be much more than entertaining time fillers, they can also inform and motivate. An interesting talk, with a lively Q & A session, can attract and involve Brethren who might otherwise not have attended; and they can also be given at LOIs or white table meetings.

Talks come in all lengths and on many subjects; and they can be delivered by a guest speaker, or read out by a lodge or chapter member. Our Provincial Oration Team are available to deliver a wide range of fascinating lodge or chapter talks, explaining the ritual and its meaning. The Kent Masonic Museum also has an excellent list of speakers; not just about Freemasonry, but on such varied topics as Crime & Freemasonry, Admiral Lord Nelson, and Vulcan bombers. This list can be downloaded directly from the Museum’s website ([www.kentmuseumoffreemasonry.org.uk](http://www.kentmuseumoffreemasonry.org.uk)); but please do contact me if you would like to discuss the different possibilities, and I will then put you in touch with a suitable speaker.

**KENT MASONIC MUSEUM & LIBRARY**

The recently refurbished Kent Museum of Freemasonry, at St Peter’s Place in Canterbury, is now open nearly every day. Knowledgeable guides are always on hand to assist visitors; and there is plenty of car parking nearby, as well as wine bars and restaurants. The museum’s displays are fascinating, and there is a new temporary exhibition called ‘*Kent Freemasonry & Canterbury Cathedral*’, that looks at the historical connections between the Cathedral and Freemasonry.

The museum is now a major tourist attraction in Canterbury; last year it welcomed over 9000 visitors, coming from 50 different countries, 80% of whom were non-Masons. They also have an excellent library for anyone researching Masonic history or a family connection to Kent Freemasonry; but please do telephone ahead if you plan to visit the library. Discover more about the Kent Masonic Museum & Library by visiting their new website ([www.kentmuseumoffreemasonry.org.uk](http://www.kentmuseumoffreemasonry.org.uk)).

**FORTHCOMING MASONIC HISTORY EVENTS**

**2016 CORNWALLIS LECTURE ‘1966 AND ALL THAT, THE BEAUTIFUL GAME & FREEMASONRY’**

2016 is the 50th anniversary of England winning the world Cup; and to mark that event this year’s Cornwallis lecture looks at the many, often surprising, links between Freemasonry and football. Its writer and presenter, W. Bro. Mike Baker, also selects a Masonic fantasy football eleven, will your selections match his?

If you would like to hear this fascinating talk, there will be two further official presentations in West Kent. At the West Kent Masters’ Lodge No.5778 on Thursday 19th January 2017 at Bromley, and at the Gavelkind Lodge No.4266 at Dartford on Saturday 18th March 2017. Full details for both these events will be circulated in due course.

**THE GRAND LODGE LIBRARY & MUSEUM -** The Museum in Great Queen Street has just opened a new exhibition called ‘*Healing with Kindness’*. Marking the centenary of the opening of the Royal Masonic Hospital, the exhibition tells the fascinating story of the hospital from its opening in 1916 until its closure in 1996. Visit the museum’s website for more details (freemasonry.london.museum).

**QUATUOR CORONATI LODGE No. 2076 -** The world’s Premier Lodge of Masonic Research, Master Masons from all UGLE recognised constitution can attend its meetings. Its lectures are delivered by leading Masonic historians, and afterwards you have the opportunity to ask questions. Their next meeting is on Thursday 10th November 2016 at Great Queen Street, full details can be found on the lodge’s website (www.quatuorcoronati.com).

**ASSOCIATION OF ATHOLL LODGES -** Our United Grand Lodge was formed in 1813 when the Premier and Atholl Grand Lodges united. The Atholl Association exists to promote and celebrate the heritage of those lodges originally warranted by the Atholl Grand Lodge. To find out more about the special events arranged by the Atholl Association, and its member lodges, visit the Association’s website ([www.antients.org](http://www.antients.org)).

**EMULATION LODGE OF IMPROVEMENT -** Would like to see and hear Masonic ritual performed to the very highest standard? Then visit the famous Emulation LOI; it meets at Freemasons’ Hall Great Queen Street at 6:15 pm on most Fridays, and Master Masons from all UGLE recognised constitutions can attend. To find out more about the LOI’s history and work visit their website (emulationloi.org).

**N.B.**  Please do email me (crmglatton@aol.com) if you know of any other Masonic events that could be listed here.

 **NOTES & QUERIES** 

* **WHY ARE THEY CALLED TOASTS? -** The Romans would put toasted bread in their wine to improve its taste, acting like charcoal it reduced the acidity; similarly in the 17th cent spiced toast was sometimes put in stale water to improve its taste. Toasted bread was also sometimes put in loving cups; after it had been passed around the host would have to drain the cup and swallow the bread! Toasting as a term for drinking someone’s health came into use in the early 17th century; the inference possibly being that the person whose health was being drunk had, like the toasted bread, made things better.

So what is a ‘*bumper toast’?* The early Masonic Exposures speak of candidates drinking a ‘*bumper*’, and the dictionary tells us that this meant full to the brim, the phrase to ‘*drink a* *brimmer*’ was also sometimes used. The origin of the word *‘bumper’* is uncertain, but it is not thought to have anything to do with banging a glass down. It may be a corruption of ‘*bombard*’, the name used for a large medieval liquor-jug that resembled the jug shaped stones fired by a cannon of that name; some writers have also suggested that it derives from a Jacobite toast to the *‘Bon Pere*’, a discreet reference to the exiled James II.

* **THE LONGEST EVER ‘CALLING OFF’? -** Founded in 1767 the Lodge of St. John No.115 still meets in Gibraltar; originally a military lodge its early members were mostly artillery men. The lodge was meeting when the Great Siege of Gibraltar started in 1779, but they immediately ‘*Called Off*’ to go and man their guns; they did not ‘*Call On*’ again until 1783!
* **THE TROWEL -** The trowel has had a long and varied history in Freemasonry. The 18th century rituals used it to symbolise peace and benevolence; but in the early 19th century the trowel largely disappeared from our ritual, although some lodges did still use it as an extra working tool. Our Royal Arch chapters also have a trowel amongst the implements they display, and the ritual tells us how companions once worked with a trowel in their right hand and a sword ready by their left hand.

In the 1970s the trowel returned to our lodges as the Charity Steward’s jewel; but historically Past Masters, Entered Apprentices, Inner Guards and Tylers have all worn it as a jewel. The first Inner Guards may have been armed with pointed trowels, not poignards; this office was at one time given to the junior Entered Apprentice, so at their Initiations monarchs were said to be exchanging ‘*the sceptre for the trowel’.*

* **COLUMN UP OR DOWN?** - Does your lodge have both columns down when the lodge is closed? The Emulation and Logic rituals say that the Junior Warden’s column should be raised, but other rituals, such as Taylors and Universal, say to leave it down.

18th century lodges did not usually have separate festive boards, they would eat and drink during the meeting itself. So using the Wardens’ columns to indicate whether the lodge was at labour or refreshment was essential for maintaining good order; but why put the Junior Warden’s column up when the lodge is closed? Is it because most lodges now go straight to a Festive Board after the lodge closes, so in a way they are at refreshment? That seems unlikely, but do you have a better suggestion?