

PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE

of

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

LODGE

SECRETARY'S

HANDBOOK

Issued by:

The Provincial Grand Secretary,
The Provincial Office,
Old School House
Windsor End,
Beaconsfield,
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1. Introduction

The Office of Lodge Secretary is one of the most important in the Lodge for, without his expertise, the Lodge cannot function. This Handbook is designed to assist the Lodge Secretary in the day to day administration of his Lodge. It contains guidance on the most common questions and problems that occur. However, it cannot be the solution to all your problems so, if in doubt, please feel free to consult the Provincial Office.

Your prompt attention to all communications would be greatly appreciated as this saves considerably on your time as well as that of the Province. By dealing with items as they come in, you can always be on top and know that your Lodge is being administered to the best of your ability. Leaving things for attention at a later date will always mean a backlog and can make the work of a Lodge Secretary an intolerable burden.

2. General Information

The Provincial Directory contains a wealth of information of assistance to the Lodge Secretary. In particular your attention is drawn to the following:

- Addresses of principal Officers in the Province
- Alphabetical List of Lodges (showing Meeting Place, Working and LOI)
- Masonic Centres and addresses
- Meetings Diary
- Provincial Bylaws
- Masonic Notes for Masters, Secretaries & Committees
- Rank Abbreviations
- What a Candidate should know
- Some demands of Freemasonry from its members
- Masonic Hints & Etiquette
- Rulers' Forum Groups
- Charities
 - Buckinghamshire Masonic Benevolent Fund
 - Buckinghamshire Masonic Centenary Fund
 - The Freemasons' Grand Charity
 - Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution
 - Masonic Samaritan Fund
 - Masonic Housing Association
 - Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys

3. Change of Lodge Secretary

If you are newly appointed as Secretary of your Lodge or you have taken over the duties of Secretary until the next election of Officers within your Lodge, you must record this fact immediately with the following offices:

The Grand Secretary's office.

The Provincial Office for advising:

- The Provincial Grand Secretary
- The Provincial Assistant Grand Secretary
- The Provincial Grand Registrar (a single letter only is necessary)

The information required is:

- Your Lodge Name and number
- Your own Name and Address including Post Code
- Your own Telephone Number, Mobile Number, Work number if appropriate.
- Your Fax and E-Mail address (if appropriate)
- The date on which you assumed the duties of the office of Secretary

Please check first whether this information has already been provided by the retiring Secretary.

4. Lodge Summons

4.1. Issue of Lodge Summonses

4.1.1. Lodge Members

A copy of each Lodge Summons must be sent to every Lodge Member and should be in their possession at least seven days prior to the Lodge meeting.

4.1.2. Provincial Copies

One copy of the Installation summons **only** is to be sent to the following:

R.W. Provincial Grand Master
Deputy Provincial Grand Master
Assistant Provincial Grand Masters

Four copies of Installation/Special Meetings (50th etc.) summonses and **two** for all other meetings are to be sent to the Provincial Grand Secretary at the Provincial Office. Electronic copies are acceptable for all meetings **except** the Installation meeting.

4.1.3. Honorary Members

Summonses for Honorary Members should be restricted to the Installation Meeting only, unless specifically requested by the Honorary Member.

4.2. Initiates and Joining/Rejoining Members details

4.2.1. Initiates' details

Every Candidate for Initiation shall, at the meeting at which the ballot is taken, have the following particulars shown on the summons convening the meeting:

Full Name
Date of Birth (in full)
Profession or Occupation
Place of Residence
Business Address (if same as residence, state so)
Name of Proposer and Seconder
Date of Proposal in Lodge

In the event of a Candidate neither living nor working within the Province, action must be taken as outlined in Rule 158 Book of Constitutions, and this fact included in your summons, i.e. "Rule 158 of the Book of Constitutions complied with".

When a Candidate is elected by ballot and is to be initiated at a subsequent meeting, there is no necessity to repeat all the particulars on the summons needed for the ballot, except that the date of his election should be shown. The item on the summons should read "To Initiate Mr....(Full Name)....., elected by ballot on(date).....

4.2.2. Joining/Rejoining Members' details

The same details are required on the Summons for the ballot of a Joining/Rejoining Member as for a Candidate for Initiation, with the exception of age which is not required by the Book of Constitutions.

Rule 158, Book of Constitutions, is not applicable to Joining/Rejoining Members.

In addition, the Brother's rank must be shown, i.e. M.M. or P.M., and the names and numbers of all the Lodges of which he is **or has been** a subscribing member.

4.3. Additional items to be shown on Lodge Summons

In addition to the normal Agenda shown on your Lodge summons, the following items should also appear:

1. Date and Venue of Provincial Grand Lodge Annual Meeting. This information is contained in the Provincial Directory but can also be supplied by the Provincial Grand Secretary.
2. The date of your next Lodge meeting.
3. The date of your last Lodge meeting. This may be shown in the item dealing with the minutes, i.e. "To read the Minutes of the meeting held on(date)...."
4. The Provincial Website address – www.buckspgl.org
5. The name of your Visiting Officer

Note that where officers are listed, the IPM, who is not an Officer of the Lodge, may not be included in the list. The IPM details should be shown separately.
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5. New Members

5.1. Initiates

5.1.1. Registration of Candidates (The Blue Form)

Potential Candidates for Initiation have to sign a declaration which includes at Paragraph 6 "that they are not or have not been members of Quasi Masonic Organisations...." If a candidate has so been, then Rule 176 Book of Constitutions applies. In such cases the candidate should be asked by his Proposer to "star" the paragraph as "See Attached Letter". This letter should make clear the fact of resignation from such Quasi Masonic Organisation. The Lodge Committee should then consider the application. If it is intended that he should be put forward for ballot, then the Provincial Grand Master's approval should be sought, with all the supporting documentation, via the Provincial Grand Secretary. Until such approval is granted the candidate should NOT appear on the summons. If there is any doubt about the nature of the organisation, advice should be sought from the Provincial Grand Secretary.

If a candidate is unable to state that he has no such connections, obtain details and speak to the Provincial Grand Secretary **before** taking any further action.

5.1.2. Proposal of Candidates

Candidates for Initiation, as a general rule, can only be proposed or seconded at a regular Lodge meeting. This may be done by yourself reading the Proposal Form, or by the Candidate's proposer and seconder. The Proposal Form must be in your possession before the Lodge meeting at which the proposal is to be made. Once the Proposal has been placed before the Lodge, the ballot must be taken at the next Regular Meeting. If this is not done, the proposal lapses. Once a Candidate has been elected by ballot, he must be initiated within one year of his election, otherwise his election becomes void.

(Rule 159 of the Book of Constitutions refers to this Section and Rule 160 outlines the circumstances under which a Candidate may be proposed and seconded at a Lodge of Emergency.)

5.1.3. Enquiries as to Candidates from other localities

Any Candidate seeking Initiation who does not reside or have a regular business address within the Province comes under the provision of Rule 158 of the Book of Constitutions. Upon receiving the Proposal Form you should immediately write to the Provincial Grand Secretary of the Province in which he works or resides, stating:

- the Candidate's full name
- the nature of his profession or occupation
- his place of residence
- his business address
- the names and addresses of his proposer and seconder
- the reason why he is seeking membership of your Lodge

and asking if they know of any reason detrimental to the proposal.

Until you have received the approval of the Province concerned, no such Candidate may be proposed or seconded in open Lodge. Names and Addresses of Provincial Grand Secretaries are to be found in the Grand Lodge Masonic Year Book.

5.1.4. Items for the Initiation Ceremony

The Secretary should see that he has the Declaration Book ready when a candidate is to be Initiated, together with the following books and pamphlets for presentation to the Candidate:

- Up to date Book of Constitutions
- Up to date copy of Lodge By-Laws.
- Booklet "Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft"
- Booklet "Information on Masonic Charities"
- Copy of the current Bucks Masonic Directory.
- Lodge Members' Address List if not included on the Summons

5.2. Joining Members

5.2.1. Proposal of Joining Member

Joining Members may only be proposed and seconded at a regular Lodge meeting, in the same manner as for Initiates. The ballot, again, must be taken at the next Regular meeting and if this is not done, the proposal will lapse. If the ballot proves in his favour, his membership of the Lodge commences from the date of the ballot but, if he has not taken up his membership within one year from the date of the ballot, his election is void. (Rule 163 of the Book of Constitutions refers).

When checking the credentials of potential joining members from other Constitutions, all enquiries **must** be made through the Grand Secretary at Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London and **not** by writing direct to their Lodges or to other Grand Secretaries.

5.2.2. Clearance Certificates

Before a ballot is taken for a Joining Member, you should have scrutinised his Grand Lodge Certificate and have in your hands Clearance Certificates from every Lodge of which he is or has been a subscribing member.

5.2.3. Joining Members from a Constitution other than the English constitution

Attention is drawn to Rule 163(a) to (h) of the Book of Constitutions. Regarding Rule 163(e), it is advisable to send the Grand Lodge Certificate of the Brother concerned to the Grand Secretary, and this will obviate the necessity to send it when forwarding the Registration Form P to the Grand Secretary.

5.2.4. Items for the Joining Member

The Secretary should see that he has the following ready for presentation to a Joining member:

- Up to date copy of Lodge By-Laws.
- Copy of the current Bucks Masonic Directory.
- Lodge Members' Address List if not included on the Summons

5.3. Registration of New Members with Grand Lodge

It is recommended that Initiates and Joining Members are registered with Grand Lodge immediately they are Initiated or have joined, rather than waiting for the submission of the Annual Return. If the latter course is adopted, a Brother may be in the Craft for a full year before Grand Lodge have any knowledge of him and non-registration may jeopardise a claim by his widow to the Board of Benevolence should he die. Registration is effected by completing Registration Form P and sending this to the **Provincial** Grand Secretary together with the registration fee Initiates and Joining Members from other Constitutions, plus VAT. There is no joining fee for members of Lodges in the English Constitution.

6. Special Meetings (Centenaries, Anniversaries, Banner Dedications)

Special Meetings to celebrate Centenaries, Anniversaries and Banner Dedications all require special arrangements. Please discuss your plans with the Provincial Grand Secretary at the earliest opportunity.

7. Visits by the Provincial Grand Master (or his representative)

Visits at Installation meetings are always by the Provincial Grand Master or his representative and the Lodge will be informed of the visitor and escort in advance of the meeting. Other visits by the Provincial Grand Master may be made and are official visits and he will be escorted. The PGM or his representative will normally give the Address to the Master at Installation. He must be asked before hand if any other ritual or task is required of him.

See Appendix B - Notes for Lodge Director Of Ceremonies. Please draw the attention of your DC to these notes and ensure that he is availed of a copy.

8. Provincial Membership System

The Provincial Membership System is run on the computer in the Provincial Office under the control of the Provincial Grand Registrar.

It is the responsibility of the Lodge Secretary to advise any change to the details of his Lodge's membership. This commences with the notification of the full details of all Initiates and Joining Members using Registration Form P and ceases, for any one individual member, with the notification of their Death, Resignation or Exclusion using form BP1. During the life of their membership, any change of address, title, telephone number, profession/occupation or Masonic Rank outside of the Province must be notified to the Provincial Office immediately using form BP1.

Notification of all changes should be made **immediately** they occur. Please do not bank them for mailing at a later date.

The System is used not only to maintain an accurate record of membership but also to address bulk correspondence to members in the form of advices to Secretaries, offers of Provincial Rank, distribution of Concord, etc. Thus any inaccuracy of address will cause correspondence to be delayed with the consequential inconvenience to yourself and the members of your Lodge.

Finally, a prime use of the system is the production of the annual Provincial Directory. The Installation Return is used to update the promotion of officers within the Lodge making any other advice from the Lodge Secretary unnecessary.

A standard form (BP1) for the notification of all amendments to existing members has been issued to all Lodge Secretaries and can be emailed if preferred. Further supplies are available from the Provincial Office upon request. Please only use this document as, when correctly completed, it provides all the information required. Should you wish to notify additional information such as funeral details, they may be entered in the Notes section. The relevant Provincial Officers will be notified. A copy of the Instructions for completing this form are included in the Appendices of this manual.

9. Termination of Membership

9.1. Death

9.1.1. Death of a Lodge Member

In the event of the death of any member of your Lodge, you should immediately notify the Provincial Grand Registrar using Form BP1 giving the date. If the deceased was also a member of Bucks Masters and/or Bucks Stewards you should also notify their Secretaries.

You will, of course, notify the Master of your Lodge immediately. It is recommended, if at all possible, that you also notify all the members of the Lodge giving the funeral arrangements before the date of interment so that they may pay their last respects if they so wish. In addition to this an Obituary Notice should be placed on your next Lodge summons.

9.1.2. Death of a Grand Officer

In the event of the death of a Grand Officer of your Lodge (present or past rank), in addition to notifying the persons detailed in **Termination of Membership**, the Provincial Grand Secretary should be informed immediately giving

- The Brother's full name
- His Grand Rank
- The Date of death.

The death will then be notified to Grand Lodge and will be included in the Obituary Column in the Quarterly Communications.

Funeral details can be notified to Provincial Office where the deceased was a prominent Mason.

9.2. Resignation

In the event of the resignation of any member of your Lodge, you should immediately notify the Provincial Grand Registrar using Form BP1 giving the reason and the effective date.

9.3. Cessation of Membership (erroneously known as Exclusion)

If a member of your Lodge is in arrears with his subscriptions for a period of two full years, immediately the next year's subscription becomes payable he ceases membership of your Lodge under provisions of Rule 148 of the Book of Constitutions. The following actions are then required:

- Notify the Provincial Grand Registrar on Form BP1
- Notify the Grand Secretary. (Failure to do so will, in all probability, result in the Grand Secretary's staff asking why the Brother has not been excluded.)
- Notify the Lodge at the next Regular Meeting and enter it in the minutes.

After having warned the Brother that he is about to be so dealt with, no further communication on any matter appertaining to the Lodge should be sent to him.

If your Lodge bylaws allow for cessation of membership after a shorter period of time, this is covered by Rule 181, Book of Constitutions, which must be followed to the letter! Please note that the ballot should be either a ball or paper ballot. A "show of hands" is not acceptable.

From the foregoing, you will appreciate the necessity of a close liaison between yourself and your Lodge Treasurer. This cannot be overstressed, and only by this liaison will you be able to fulfil your office in a competent manner.

If a Brother whose membership has been terminated under either Rule 148 or Rule 181 ultimately settles his debt to the Lodge, this fact must be reported to the Grand Secretary and the Provincial Grand Registrar to enable the records to be suitably amended.

See Appendix D

10. Application for Grand Lodge Certificates

If a brother who has just been raised has previously been registered with Grand Lodge, as recommended above, application for his Grand Lodge Certificate should be made to the Grand Secretary on Form L.P. & A.5 which must be completed fully.

11. Supply of Grand Lodge Forms

During the summer months a supply of Grand Lodge Forms will be sent by the Grand Secretary's staff for your use. If the number sent is not sufficient for your use, further supplies may be obtained from the Grand Secretary's office. Registration Form P may also be obtained from the Provincial Grand Secretary who holds a small supply.

12. Annual Returns and Dues

12.1. Grand Lodge

You will receive a computer printout on form A.R.1 from Grand Lodge at the end of the Lodge financial year. The printout shows a list of the members of the Lodge for the previous year together with the meeting place, meeting dates and the month of Installation.

Corrections, additions and deletions should be applied by you.

The printout is in triplicate and should be handled as follows:

- Top copy - return to Grand Lodge
- Second copy - send to the Provincial Grand Secretary
- Third copy - retain for your own reference next year.

At the bottom of the print-out will be shown the Annual Dues payable, plus VAT, the cost of the Masonic Year Book and the Grand Charity contribution. Dues are payable **in arrears** so any Brother whose membership ceased in the preceding twelve months will have to be paid for. Please pay the dues promptly to avoid the embarrassment of your Lodge being reported to the Board of General Purposes. Also, please remember that it is the Secretary, not the Treasurer, who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that dues are paid on time. Always obtain a cheque from the Treasurer and action it yourself. Do not send him the form for payment.

12.2. Provincial Grand Lodge

Provincial Grand Lodge will in early July send a statement based upon Lodge membership taking into account Initiates and Joiners as well as Deaths, Resignations, Exclusions and election to Honorary Membership. These numbers will be based upon the Provincial Computer records. If you keep these records up to date by the regular use of forms BP1, the statement should be correct. Again, it is recommended that you obtain a cheque from your Treasurer rather than forwarding the invoice to him for payment. A copy will be enclosed for your records.

The Invoice will be accompanied by a proof copy of your Lodge entry in the Provincial Directory. Any errors in your invoice will be also be reflected in the proof. Corrections to both must be advised to the Provincial Registrar using the Form BP1.

13. Installation Return

13.1. Grand Lodge

This return is made on Form L.P. & A.4 which will be supplied to you from the Grand Secretary's office during the summer months. The Return is to be made immediately after your Installation Meeting and must be signed by yourself as Secretary and the newly Installed Master. If the Master Elect is not installed at the Installation Meeting, or if either of the Wardens designate are not invested at that meeting, the reason must be given on the Return in the space provided for the date of Installation or Investiture and the Grand Secretary must be notified immediately the Installation or Investiture takes place.

The Return also calls for the Name and Initials of every Past Master **OF** or **IN** your Lodge, together with the Number(s) of the Lodges(s) under the English Constitution in which they have served as Master and also the year of their Installation. Honorary members should **NOT** be included. Any Past Master who was shown on your last Installation Return and is no longer a Subscribing Member of the Lodge (i.e. death, resignation, exclusion, election to honorary membership) must be shown in the appropriate place on the Return giving the reason for cessation of membership and the date.

Keep a copy of your Return, this will save you a lot of laborious work the following year. (Rule 151 Book of Constitutions refers to this Section).

13.2. Provincial Grand Lodge

The Installation Return for Provincial Grand Lodge must be made on the appropriate form which you will receive from the Assistant Provincial Grand Secretary immediately after he receives the summons for your Installation Meeting. The Return is to be submitted to the Provincial Grand Secretary within 7 days of your Installation Meeting and, in addition to the newly Installed Master and Wardens, calls for the names of all the Brethren appointed to office for the ensuing year. Please include all Stewards.

The Installation Return is used to update the Provincial computer records for the subsequent production of the Provincial Directory. It is, therefore, important to clearly distinguish where there are other brethren of similar name in the Lodge by inclusion of all initials and, if necessary, full given names.

As this return differs from year to year, according to the Brethren appointed to office, a copy of this Return is not normally issued for your retention.

An electronic version is in Word format available on request and can be completed and sent by email.

14. Alterations to Bylaws

Any alteration or amendment to your Bylaws must, in the first instance, appear on your Lodge summons as "Notice of Motion" or "Motion, Pursuant to Notice", stating clearly the number of the Bylaw to be changed and the exact nature of the alteration to be made in order that Brethren may understand what is proposed should they not be present at the meeting. Voting on an amendment to Bylaws may be by "show of hands" and will be deemed resolved if a majority of the Brethren, present and voting, support the motion, except in the case of a proposal to alter the place of meetings, when the signature of seven subscribing members and a two-thirds majority are required. (Rule 141 Book of Constitutions refers).

Once the resolution has been passed by your Lodge you should forward a copy of the Bylaws with the amendment inserted therein in **red ink**, together with a transcript from the Lodge Minute Book showing that the proposal was carried by a sufficient majority of the members to the Provincial Grand Secretary. He will obtain the approval of the R.W. Provincial Grand Master. Until such time as the alteration or amendment has been approved by the R.W. Provincial Grand Master, the alteration or amendment cannot be implemented.

Please ensure that there is a blank sheet of white paper affixed to the back of the By-Laws on which the Provincial Grand Secretary can sign as approved.

On receiving your By-Laws back from the Provincial Grand Secretary the alteration may be put into effect and a printed amendment should be prepared and circulated to all your Lodge members. (See Rule 136, Book of Constitutions and Masonic Notes, Provincial Directory)

A copy of the Model Bylaws is available on application to the Provincial Grand Secretary. Your attention is particularly drawn to paragraph 6 which has a sensible form of words for dealing with annual Subscriptions which might need frequent changing.

There are, however, some matters arising from amendments which must be reported to the Grand Secretary's office to keep his records up to date for the Masonic Year Book and for checking Annual Returns. This obviously applies where Lodges change their venue, meeting, election or Installation dates and the due dates of their Annual Subscriptions; it is also essential for the Grand Secretary to have a copy of any newly Consecrated Lodge's Bylaws. The Provincial Grand Secretary will notify the Grand Secretary on your behalf.

15. Dispensations

The normal reasons for seeking a dispensation are:

- (i) Inability to meet on the date specified in your Bylaws.
- (ii) Inability to meet at the venue specified in your Bylaws.
- (iii) Calling a Lodge of Emergency.
- (iv) Installing a Brother into the Chair of your Lodge whilst he is Master of another Lodge.

In the case of (i), (ii), and (iii) application should be made by you to the R.W. Provincial Grand Master (addressed to the Provincial Grand Secretary) clearly stating the reasons why you request a Dispensation and the circumstances which led to the request **and enclosing a fee of £5.00.**

In the case of (iv) the application is to be made to the Grand Secretary with a copy to the Provincial Grand Secretary.

If the Dispensation is granted, an item should appear on the relevant summons "To read the Dispensation". This should be read fully in Lodge and the fact recorded in the Minutes.

No Dispensation is required if your normal meeting day falls on a Public Holiday, providing the substituted date is within seven days prior to or seven days after the normal meeting date.

Should you wish to hold your meeting outside the Province of Buckinghamshire then you must obtain the Dispensations from both jurisdictions concerned. (See Rules 139 - 142, Book of Constitutions.)

16. Certificates of Service

The Provincial Office can provide a Certificate for any Brother, to be signed by the Worshipful Master. Please ask the Provincial Office for details. The cost is £5.

17. Quarterly Communications of Grand Lodge

Many Lodges use the services of Jolly the Printer and have printed extracts of the Quarterly Communications sent to them in quantity to circulate to the members. There is nothing against adopting this procedure and, indeed, it can save a considerable amount of time. However, shortly before the Quarterly Communications you will receive copies of the minutes of the previous meeting and the agenda for the next meeting from the Grand. The items it contains should be mentioned at your next Lodge meeting, and the items referred to briefly entered in the minutes. Please always read the minutes/agenda for Quarterly Communications as they will often contain items of information which are useful to a Lodge Secretary. Also, please encourage your WM and his Wardens, together with Past Masters to attend Quarterly Communications and join the Buckinghamshire contingent for lunch on the three occasions when we dine outside of the Grand Officers' Mess.

18. Lodge Minutes

It is recommended that Lodge minutes should be a plain statement of fact as they occur and be brief and to the point. Flowery entries such as "he performed the ceremony in a manner beyond reproach" or "in an exemplary manner" are to be discouraged, being an expression of opinion. A time may come when such a statement is not applicable and will lead to embarrassment for yourself or some other Brother. If you record your meeting plainly and factually no one can take offence.

Secretaries are reminded of "Points of Procedure: Grand Lodge" regarding Lodge Minutes "all such names appearing in the Signature Book should, as heretofore, be recorded in the body of the Minutes". See Rule 144 para. 2, Book of Constitutions. The practice of circulating the minutes before the meeting so that they can be approved without reading is to be encouraged.

19. Buckinghamshire Masonic Directory

It is your responsibility to ensure that the entry in the Bucks Masonic Directory in respect of your Lodge is correct. Prior to the issue of the Directory, the Provincial Grand Registrar will issue a print-out of your Lodge details from the Provincial System in early July. These should be carefully checked and any errors notified to the Provincial Grand Registrar within 14 days. All proofs must be returned, duly signed, to indicate that they are correct or otherwise.

The regular and prompt notification of any changes in the details of Lodge membership to the Provincial Grand Registrar will ensure that your Lodge details are always up to date in the Provincial records and will minimise or eliminate any last minute changes.

You should note that the details of your Lodge will be shown as at the date that the Directory goes to the printers – usually at the end of October. Advance information on Officers for the following year will **not** be accepted. As explained earlier, the Provincial System derives this information from the Installation Return which can only be submitted after the Installation has taken place.

The Directory is normally ready for issue in the third week of January each year. It is distributed to Lodge Secretaries by post. The allocation of Directories will be a quantity to be agreed by the Provincial Executive each year. This is designed to allow for dual membership. Should you require additional copies please apply to the Provincial Office. There will be sufficient numbers printed for each member to receive one copy.

Please note that the Directory is the copyright of the Province and is covered under the Data Protection Act. Copies should not therefore be distributed to anyone who is not a member of the Province without prior approval of the Provincial Grand Secretary.

20. Honorary Members

Honorary Membership should be granted only in recognition of distinguished service. The UGLE booklet 'Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft' begins to qualify the Book of Constitutions Rule 167

It is recommended that Lodges should communicate with the Provincial Grand Secretary, before commencing the procedure for election. It should be noted that the following do not alone qualify a Brother for Honorary Membership.

- Inability to pay Lodge fees
- Length of service
- Being unable to attend the Lodge due to age, infirmity, inability to travel or any such other reason.

The Lodge should clearly detail the distinguished service they believe that the member has given. The Provincial Grand Master will review each case against the high standards set by both UGLE and the Province and will make an appropriate recommendation to the Lodge

Assuming the recommendation is to offer Honorary Membership it would then be appropriate to extend the courtesy of asking the member if he would be willing to accept, subject to ballot. This should be undertaken before putting the proposal to a ballot.

In every situation relating to Honorary Membership details must appear on the Lodge summons and can only be agreed by ballot as detailed in the Book of Constitutions, Rule 167.

Should a Lodge wish to make the Provincial Grand Master, Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Assistant Provincial Grand Masters or Provincial Grand Secretary an Honorary Member then it is customary to ask the person concerned if he is willing to accept the Honorary Membership, subject to ballot, before commencing the procedure.

The order in which any list of Honorary Members should be printed is as follows

The Provincial Grand Master (no Grand Rank shown)
The Deputy Provincial Grand Master
The Assistant Provincial Grand Masters
Past Provincial Grand Master, Past Deputy and Past Assistant Provincial Grand Master in order of seniority.
Grand Officers in order of seniority.
Provincial Grand Lodge Officers in order of seniority

It is wise to regularly review your Honorary Membership list to see that it is up to date. If in doubt refer to the Provincial Directory or consult the Provincial Grand Secretary.

21. Register of Lodge Members

It is the responsibility of the Lodge Secretary to maintain an up-to-date register of all the Lodge members (see Rule 146 Book of Constitutions). This should ideally be in loose leaf form and aim to be a condensed Masonic History of every member of your Lodge from the date of his Initiation or Joining to the date of his cessation of membership.

On request, the Provincial Grand Secretary can provide a copy of the details held on the Provincial Computer records for a fee of £2.00.

22. Communications to Lodge Members and Lodge Accounts

A copy of any communication to your Lodge Members, on whatever subject (with the exception of Ladies Festivals and social events) must be sent to the Provincial Grand Secretary. It is not necessary to send a copy of the minutes unless there is something that you particularly want to bring to the attention of the Provincial Grand Secretary. In this case, the item should be highlighted.

Two copies of Lodge Accounts are required, one of which is examined by the Provincial Grand Treasurer.

23. Communications to the Provincial Grand Master

All communications to the Provincial Grand Master, with the exception of your Lodge Summonses, must be sent through the Provincial Grand Secretary.

24. Application to the Institutions

Although a good deal of the work in this connection should be dealt with by your Lodge Almoner, it is necessary for much of the paperwork to pass through your hands as Secretary.

24.1. The New Masonic Samaritan Fund

Details are published in the Provincial Directory.

24.2. The Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys

This Trust provides maintenance and education for the sons and daughters of Freemasons who are in need by reasons of death, illness or misfortune of either or both of their parents. Some details of the Trust are given in the Masonic Year Book. Admission to the Girls' school or application for relief should be by Petition and application should be made to the Joint Secretaries for a form. Before the Petition is sent, it requires the recommendation of the Province and must therefore be submitted to the Provincial Grand Almoner.

24.3. Buckinghamshire Masonic Benevolent Fund and the Freemasons' Grand Charity

If a Brother or his widow is found to be in distressed circumstances, the first application for relief will come to the Lodge and will be considered by your Committee. If urgent, the Lodge Almoner will be instructed to make a grant from the Lodge Benevolent Fund. The Secretary will then apply to the Secretary of the Buckinghamshire Masonic Benevolent Fund for a form and, if approved, a grant will be made. At the same time, details should be submitted to the Provincial Grand Almoner so that he may decide if it is a case for a Petition to the Grand Charity. If so, he will send a Petition form for completion.

In due course, this is submitted to the Lodge, returned to the Provincial Grand Almoner for Provincial recommendation and sent by him to the Grand Charity to be considered by the Council of the Grand Charity and/or the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution. If the Petitioner is qualified, steps will be taken to secure an annuity and a grant may be made.

Further petitions may be made to the Grand Charity at intervals of not less than one year.

24.4. Admission to Homes

Should a Brother wish to make an application for admission to one of the Homes for himself or he and his wife, application should be made in writing to the Provincial Grand Almoner, whose details appear in the Buckinghamshire Directory. It should be noted that places are scarce and cannot be guaranteed.

24.5 Buckinghamshire Masonic Centenary Fund

The Fund was set up in 1990 to commemorate the centenary of the formation of the Province of Buckinghamshire, formerly the joint Province of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. The Trustees have directed the Committee to focus on making grants or donations to non-Masonic charities or causes with strong Buckinghamshire connections and such grants should be concentrated upon specific projects rather than general appeals or requests to fund routine activities.

The fund also provides "top up funding" to match suitable donation from individual Lodges. For further information, contact the Secretary, whose details appear in the Buckinghamshire Directory.

A recommended donation to the fund of £2.00 per member per year is requested from each Lodge.

25. Festive Boards

Festive Boards are part of the Masonic meeting and should be conducted with decorum.

Grand Lodge has directed that informal toasting should be kept to a minimum. The practice by the Master of "taking wine" at dinner becomes detrimental to congenial conversation unless kept to a minimum and should in any case be restricted to Brethren in their Masonic status. For your guidance it is suggested that the order for such "Toasts" to be given is as follows:

1. The W.M. desires to take wine with all the members and requests that you remain seated.
2. The W.M. desires to take wine with the (Provincial Grand Master or his representative).

3. The Provincial Grand Master desires to take wine with all the Brethren and requests that they remain seated. (The Representative of the PGM will NOT take this toast).
4. With Grand Officers.
5. With Provincial Grand Officers and (if desired) Holders of London Grand Rank.
6. Guests.

Formal Toasts should be given as directed by the Provincial Grand Secretary who will issue updated Toast Lists as required. It is advisable to have the toast list presented to the Master at each Festive Board with advice to Wardens and other Brethren who are to give toasts.

Important Notes

Wine Taking or Toasting Grand Lodge

The title is 'Grand **Officers**', not 'Grand **Lodge Officers**' unless they are active officers of Grand Lodge (see Appendix B).

Masonic Fire

The correct announcement for Masonic Fire is '**Good Fire**', NOT '**Bucks Fire**' or '**Quick Fire**'

26. Honoured Guests

In some Lodges it is customary to elect certain Brethren as Honoured Guests, e.g. Masters of Sponsoring or Daughter Lodges, Honorary Organists, etc. It should be borne in mind that a Resolution to this effect should be passed each year. Generally, Province does not wish Organists to be Honorary Members.

27. Provincial Grand Rank

Appointments and Promotions are the prerogative of the R.W. Provincial Grand Master and are limited by Rules 68-69 Book of Constitution. In all instances his decision will be final.

The Provincial Grand Master is allowed to appoint 1 brother for every Lodge in his Province and promote a number of brethren as he sees fit.

Lodges and their members should therefore recognise that if they allow members to **stay in jobs for periods exceeding, say, five years**, then they are almost certainly adversely affecting or denying advancement to other members.

It should be further noted that the Provincial Grand Master and his Executive use a points scoring system to determine what rank a brother should be offered. The points are based on answers given on the appointment and promotion forms. Those with lower points may not receive an appointment or promotion.

With regard to active appointments, the answers given to question 19 on the forms are very significant.

27.1. First Appointments

During the month of December, if a Lodge was consecrated prior to 1st May in the same year, a form for recommendation of a Past Master for Provincial Rank is sent by the Provincial Grand Secretary for completion and return to him **by the date indicated**. The recommendation to be made should be considered by the Past Masters of the Lodge and should not be made unless they are satisfied that the Past Master concerned satisfies the following conditions:

- was installed as Master of the Lodge prior to a date 6 years before the preceding 31st October.
- has rendered good service to the Lodge and continues to support the Lodge and all its activities.
- is considered worthy of the honour.

Brethren who are not Past Masters can be considered with special commendations, usually the rank of PPGPurs. Promotion from this rank will be exceptional and only after very long and active service.

Normally Grand Officers will not be considered.

Note: if a Lodge has recently moved into the Province, applications will be considered for those Brethren who qualify as above, having gone through the Chair in the previous Province.

27.2. Promotions

All Lodges (including those recently consecrated) will receive a form in December to make a recommendation for promotion of a Provincial Officer. It must be said that second and third promotions are only likely to be achieved by Provincial Officers that extend their activities beyond their Lodge in both the Province and the Royal Arch.

27.3. Provincial Stewards

Provincial Stewards are appointed by the Provincial Grand Master each year. The following year they will hold the rank of Past Provincial Grand Steward. They will be considered for further promotion in due course, usually after three years, and may be recommended by the Lodge after five years. Stewards that do not fulfil the conditions of their appointment will not be considered for an early promotion.

28. Grand Rank

If a Lodge wishes to bring the name of a worthy and distinguished brother of outstanding merit to the notice of the R.W. Provincial Grand Master, the Secretary should write to the Provincial Grand Secretary giving exhaustive details of the achievements and merits of the Brother concerned, together with his full name, age, and address(es). Only Brethren with the rank of Provincial Registrar (Present or Past) or above will be considered by Grand Lodge and it should be noted that appointments to Grand Rank are available in strictly limited numbers.

29. Visiting Officers

Each Lodge will be allocated a Visiting Officer. He will be either a Grand Officer or a very experienced Provincial Grand Officer.

When he visits your Lodge, he is the Representative of the Provincial Grand Master. As such, except at Installation Meetings, he should sit in the East to the immediate right of the Worshipful Master. He is entitled to sit at the Top Table on the immediate right of the Worshipful Master, except at Installations and Initiations, but may choose to sit with the other Brethren sometimes so that he can gauge their feelings or offer advice. He should aim to visit your Lodge at least twice a year.

He is to act as a “communicator, friend and mentor” and to provide a tangible link between the Provincial Executive and your Lodge. He can choose to address the Lodge on the second rising, if time permits, or when responding to the toast to the Province at dinner. He is not there to push a Lodge in a direction for which it is not prepared or willing to go. He is to encourage you to assist in achieving our strategic objectives and to give advice when called upon to do so. If he identifies problems within your Lodge, he will quietly discuss them with the Master, Secretary, DC or Senior Officer present.

He will also take the opportunity to talk to new Masons and “younger” Brethren and not just to the more senior members. All too often, the concerns of newer members are not expressed to the Lodge. This may best be achieved during the interval between the meeting and dinner or by sitting with them at the Festive Board rather than on the top table. He may also note any promising Brethren as future Provincial Officers.

30. Data Protection Act 1984

1. A copy of the leaflet “*Charities and Registration Under the Data Protection Act 1984*” issued by the Office of the Data Protection Registrar gives full details and should be studied in relation to your own situation. Copies are available from the Office of the Data Protection Registrar (Tel: 01625 545700) or from the Provincial Office.

The following notes are for general guidance only. It is the responsibility of each Lodge and Chapter to ensure that they comply with the Act.

2. The Data Protection Act applies to any data which is held on an electronic data device whether it is a Personal Computer or a simple Personal Organiser. It does not apply to manual records.

3. Lodges and Chapters are, by definition, unincorporated members' clubs and as such are exempt, providing they comply with certain conditions.
4. Data relating to members may be held so long as two conditions are satisfied.
 - Firstly, all members are asked whether they object to personal data on them being held. If any member objects, then their details must be removed or alternatively you may register in respect of the personal data held. It would be advisable to obtain the signature of every member, now and in the future, to this effect.
 - Secondly, the personal data held may only be disclosed in very limited circumstances, broadly speaking, when the member consents to its disclosure. Note that this can only apply to members and not to non-members or potential members.
5. These conditions are best satisfied by maintaining a simple register which contains a declaration to the effect that the member authorises the holding of specified data and for each member to sign. Subsequent new members then sign when they first join.
6. Where data is held for the purpose of mailing only it is exempt from registration. However, this should be interpreted as Name and Address only. The inclusion of historic dates (Initiation/Exaltation, Exclusions, Resignation), Date of Birth, Profession, etc should be interpreted as Personal Data.
7. The Act provides for exemption where data is held for accounts purposes. Thus, details of members' dues and payments can be interpreted as being exempt. Details of charitable donations, providing it is for record purposes only, may be interpreted as exempt. The use of Grand Charity Chests is further protection for Lodges and Chapters.

Appendix A - Instructions for completing Member Details (Form BP1)

This form is to assist the Lodge Secretary in notifying Province of changes to Membership details and to ensure that all the required information is submitted. A covering letter is **NOT** required and it can be submitted as an email attachment.

New memberships, whether Initiates or Joining Members should be submitted on Registration Form P which will subsequently be forwarded to Grand Lodge by the Provincial Office, together with any fees.

All changes should be advised IMMEDIATELY to ensure that your Directory details are up to date.
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1. **Lodge Number and Lodge Name.** Essential to identifying the Member.
 2. **Title.** The title by which the Member is to be addressed in correspondence, e.g. Mr., Dr., etc.
 3. **Forenames.** All Forenames required. Please underline the name by which the member is known, e.g. James **David** John.
If the "known name" is an abbreviation or not one of his given names, please show in brackets, e.g. James (**Jim**) John.
 4. **Surname.** Surname - if the member has a non Masonic honour which is normally included please add here, e.g. MBE or DSO.
 5. **Address.** Two lines available for House Name, Number, Street/Road, Village e.g.

Dunroamin, 15 High Banks
Aston Village.
 6. **Town.** Postal town, e.g., Farnham Common has the postal town of Slough – **this is very important as the Royal Mail no longer recognises counties.**
 7. **County.** Useful for data sorting.
 8. **Post Code.** Essential - please ensure this is provided, e.g. HP21 5XE
 9. **Telephone Number.** Area Code and Number, e.g. 01494 123456
 10. **Email address and mobile 'phone number.** Please include wherever possible.
 11. **Occupation.** Type of occupation and not their status, e.g. Police Officer is sufficient and preferable to Police Sergeant. Company Director must be accompanied by type of business. If "Retired", include their previous occupation e.g. Baker (Retired)
 12. **Date of Birth.** In format dd mm yyyy, e.g. 01 05 1934
 13. **Member Status.** Tick one box only to indicate if member's details have changed or if he is Deceased/Excluded/Resigned/Honorary. In **Date of Action** enter the effective date of the change.
- Note: Should an existing member's details regarding Provincial/Grand ranks be incorrectly shown in the Directory, please use these fields to advise the amendment.
14. **Notes.** This is a free form section; please use it to notify any additional details that might normally be advised in a letter. For example, if a death is notified you may wish to add details of the funeral arrangements. All such relevant information will be noted by the Provincial Grand Secretary.

Appendix B - Notes for DC on Official Visits

1. Introduction

- 1.1 When a Lodge is to be honoured by a visit by the R.W. Provincial Grand Master, his Deputy, an Assistant or other representative of the Province, the Lodge Secretary will have been informed beforehand. For the purpose of these notes, all the above will be referred to as "The Representative" unless protocol demands otherwise.
- 1.2 It is the usual custom that all Representatives are escorted by the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, his Deputy or a Provincial Grand Steward acting as Prov. G.D.C. The Escort will occupy the Senior Deacon's seat, the Senior Deacon moving one seat to his right (i.e. West).
- 1.3 The Representative will normally give the Address to the Master at an Installation Meeting. **If there is any alteration to this arrangement, or if it is to be given at any other time other than at the conclusion of the Investiture of Officers, the Escort should be informed.** He should also be informed if it is the custom of the Lodge to vary the normal practice in the Inner Working (e.g. "passing" Salutation of the W.M.).
- 1.4 If the Lodge is to be Called Off, care must be taken to ensure adequate security before the Lodge is Called On.
- 1.5 Whilst it is customary in some Lodges for the Brethren to wear dinner jackets at Meetings, the Representative and his Escort will wear morning suits.
- 1.6 Should any R.W. or V.W. Brethren be expected, the Escort must be informed.

2. Procedure in the Lodge - Provincial Grand Master, his Deputy or an Assistant

- 2.1 The Representative will be received as soon as the Lodge has been opened and **BEFORE** the Minutes of the Previous Meeting are read.
- 2.2 The Escort will be announced by the Tyler. If other than the Prov.G.D.C., the Escort will inform the Tyler and Inner Guard of the title to be used.
- 2.3 The Escort will enter the Lodge, salute, and announce

"The (Provincial/Deputy Provincial/Assistant Provincial) Grand Master is without and demands admission".

The Master will reply

"We will receive him with pleasure"

- 2.4 The Escort will then form a deputation to receive the Representative. The deputation will form up in the south of the Lodge, facing west, the leading pair mid-way between the Senior and Junior Warden's pedestals. The deputation will consist of:
 1. A.D.C. and D.C.
 2. J.D. and S.D.
 3. Provincial Grand Officers of the Province for the year.
 4. Members of the Lodge who are Past Provincial Grand Officers (seniors leading).
 5. Escort.
- 2.5 The deputation will leave the lodge when instructed to do so by the Escort and will remain in the formation in the ante-room whilst the Escort communicates the Master's welcome to the Representative. The deputation will then be instructed to turn about and the D.C. and the A.D.C. and the Deacons will move to the head.

The formation will then be:

1. A.D.C. and D.C.
2. J.D. and S.D.
3. Members of the Lodge who are Past Provincial Grand Officers (juniors leading).
4. Provincial Grand Officers of the Province for the year.
5. The Representative

6. Escort.

2.6 The Escort will say

"Forward Brethren".

2.7 On entering the Lodge, the D.C. will say

"To order brethren" (and nothing more).

2.8 As the Representative is about to enter the Lodge, the Escort will say

"To order Brethren to receive the (as appropriate)".

2.9 The deputation, on entering the Lodge, will open out and the two columns will move down the Lodge about eight feet apart. When the A.D.C. and D.C. are about three feet in front of the Master's pedestal, they will halt and turn inwards, all the others in the column will follow suit. Wands will **NOT** be crossed.

2.10 After the Representative has entered and saluted he will advance alone to the right of the Master. The Master will welcome the Representative by offering him his Gavel.

2.11 When the Representative is seated, the Escort will say:

"Brethren resume your places"

the deputation will proceed, in pairs, the seniors first, leading eastwards through the column to their places.

2.12 When all have reached their places, the Escort will proceed to his place and say:

"Be seated, Brethren".

2.13 The Escort will then say:

"W.M. and Brethren, I call upon you to salute the R.W. Provincial Grand Master (V.W. Bro. Deputy or W.Bro. Assistant Provincial Grand Master) as Entered Apprentices with SEVEN (FIVE) taking the time from me; to order Brethren"

followed by:

"Be seated Brethren".

2.14. After the Representative has acknowledged the Salutations, normal Lodge business will proceed. There will be no other Salutes, except if there is another R.W. Brother or Brethren present, in which case, he or they will be saluted with **SEVEN**.

3. During the Lodge Meeting.

3.1 The Escort will conduct the Representative if he is to take part in any of the ceremony.

3.2 The Escort will take charge of the outgoing procession. If it is customary for the D.C. and A.D.C. to perambulate during the Closing Hymn, then the Escort will take over when the procession is formed, just before the Master joins it. Lodge Wardens should remain in the North East until called by the Escort. If there is no perambulation the Escort will form the procession immediately after the Closing Hymn has finished by calling the various Officers to their positions. The correct place for the Provincial Grand Master, his Deputy or Assistant is at the left of the Master.

3.3 When the procession is formed the Escort will say:

"The Brethren will remain standing while the Worshipful Master retires - accompanied by the (as appropriate) attended by the Wardens and followed by Grand Officers, Acting Provincial Grand Officers of this Province, Past Provincial Grand Officers of this Province, Provincial Grand Officers, present and past, of other Provinces, and Holders of Senior and London Grand Rank"

The composition of the procession will be dictated by the size of the Temple as well as by the ranks of the Brethren present. The procession should be kept to a minimum and formed as expeditiously as possible. At the appropriate moment the Escort will give a signal to the Organist and say:

"Forward Brethren"

(If it is customary to sing the first verse of the National Anthem, it is more convenient if it is sung before the Closing Hymn in the case of perambulations.)

4. Procedure at the Festive Board.

4.1 Entry of the Representative

The Escort will conduct the Representative to the table. He will announce entry by saying

"Brethren, be please to receive the Worshipful Master accompanied by the (as appropriate).

4.2 Seating.

The Representative will sit on the immediate right of the Master and the Escort on the immediate left of the I.P.M.

4.3 Taking Wine.

The Escort will take charge of the Festive Board and call for wine takings after consulting the Master. These should be kept to a minimum.

4.4 Grace.

The Escort will call for silence for the W.M. who will call for the Grace both before and after the meal.

4.5 Toasts.

The Escort will call for silence for the submission of Toasts and direct "Fire" (excluding the "Fire" after the Toast to the Provincial Grand Officers.)

4.6 National Anthem.

If the National Anthem has not been sung in Lodge and it is intended to sing it at the Festive Board, the sequence for the purposes of the Toast are as follows:

Escort to call for silence for the W.M.
W.M. to announce the Toast "The Queen and the Craft"
The National Anthem will be sung
WM proposes the Toast
The Brethren will drink the toast.
The Escort will call for the Fire
Brethren will be seated.

4.7 Retirement of the Representative.

The Representative will normally retire before the end of the proceedings. The Escort will say:

"The Brethren will stand during the retirement of the (as appropriate)".

5. Representatives other than the Provincial Grand Master, his Deputy or an Assistant.

5.1 The Escort will be announced by the Tyler and the Escort will enter the Lodge, salute and say:

"Worshipful Master, W. Bro. (Name and Rank), representing the R.W. Provincial Grand Master, seeks admission".

The Master will say:

"We will receive him with pleasure."

5.2 The Escort will retire and, upon re-entering the Lodge, escorting the Representative, will say:

"To order Brethren to receive the representative of the Provincial Grand Master."

5.3 Upon entering the Lodge, the Representative will salute and be escorted to the seat immediately to the right of the Master, who will welcome him. The gavel will **NOT** be offered. As the personal representative of the Provincial Grand Master, the Representative takes precedence over all other Brethren.

5.4 The Escort will request the Brethren to be seated.

5.5 The Escort will then say:

"W.M. and Brethren, I call upon you to salute the representative of the R.W. Provincial Grand Master as Entered Apprentices with THREE taking the time from me; to order Brethren"

followed by:

"Be seated Brethren".

5.6 Should there be any other Grand Officers present, they will be saluted immediately after the Representative. The Representative will not salute Grand Officers. Grand Officers who are members of Buckinghamshire Lodges will be aware of this procedure, but it may be found necessary to explain it to other visiting Grand Officers.

5.7 The Escort will be responsible for the outgoing procession as outlined above. The place in the procession of the Representative is immediately **AFTER** the Lodge Wardens and **BEFORE** Grand Officers.

6. General

As mentioned in 1.2 above, all official visitors within the Province are normally escorted. It is, however, necessary that Lodge DCs acquaint themselves with the above directions so that they are able to perform the Escort's duties should that Brother be unavoidably absent. The Representatives are conversant with these procedures and will offer such assistance as may be necessary.

Appendix C - Regular queries and answers

When queries arise, reference to the Book of Constitutions will usually provide a solution. The more common problems are dealt with by the following Questions and Answers but, of course, if in doubt consult the Provincial Grand Secretary.

Q.1 The Lodge wishes to hold an Emergency Meeting, do I need a dispensation?

A.1 Yes. The B. of C. provides for an Emergency Meeting to be held on the authority of the Provincial Grand Master. It is usual to state on the summons words to the effect that "*On the authority of the Provincial Grand Master, under Rule 140 (B. of C.), an Emergency Meeting of the Lodge will be held onetc*"

Q.2 At an Emergency Meeting, can the Lodge deal with items as at a Regular Meeting?

A.2 No. There are specific requirements with regard to what has to be done.

1. No Minutes can be approved. The Minutes of the previous Regular Meeting together with those of the Emergency Meeting(s) must be taken at the next Regular Meeting.
2. Only the business set out in the Dispensation and itemised in the Agenda printed on the summons can be taken, and nothing else. No last minute items may be added.
3. There are no Risings at an Emergency meeting

Q.3 The Lodge wants to change, on a permanent basis, the date of one of the Regular Meetings. Does this pose any problems?

A.3 It might. The change, of course, involves the amendment of the Bylaws (see Book of Constitutions Rule 138), but great care has to be taken, particularly when changing the date of the Installation.

The Craft year runs from Installation to Installation. This can mean that, if the Installation is brought forward, then the WM and Wardens could serve for less or more than a year. This could mean not qualifying as a member of Grand Lodge or having to serve for more than a year.

So careful consideration needs to be given, and the Provincial Grand Secretary should be consulted at the earliest opportunity if such should be considered.

If the date of Installation is to be changed this can affect other offices, particularly the Wardens, for they have to have served for at least one full year before being a W.M.

Q.4 The Lodge wishes to change a date of a Meeting for good reason (not permanently), for which a dispensation is required. Will this affect anything, e.g. qualification for taking office, etc.?

A.4 The Lodge can apply to the Provincial Grand Secretary to change a date by dispensation for good reason, but see the advice above.

Q.5 The WM Elect is WM of another Lodge. Is a dispensation needed to enable him to be installed as WM of our Lodge?

A.5 Yes. (Rule 52). Even if the other Lodge is a Lodge in the Province of Buckinghamshire, Grand Lodge will issue a dispensation. If, however, the Lodge is in London, or in another Province, the dispensation has to be issued by the Grand Master; the Provincial Grand Secretary applies for it from the Grand Secretary on behalf of the Lodge. Fees are, of course, payable.

This situation exists even if the overlap is one day! You should always ascertain if the WM Elect, is "encumbered" in this respect before electing him, and certainly, before Installing him.

It is possible, in certain circumstances, to obtain a dispensation after the event should there be a "slip-up" - it is known as a

"pro tunc nunc" dispensation. There has to be a good reason, and it does not reflect well on the individual or the Lodge if something which should have been known in advance, has to be corrected afterwards, and, of course, if reasons are not good enough might be refused!

Q.6 We have Candidates and Joining Members to be balloted for at the same Meeting. Can we ballot for them en-masse, taking separate ballots should there be sufficient black-balls to disqualify?

A.6 No. Do not mix "apples and pears". The Candidates can be balloted for en-masse and separately if there is a rejection through number of black-balls. Similarly, Joining Members can be dealt with in the same way, but not Candidates and Joining Members together.

Q.7 I am unclear on the difference between "cessation of membership" and "exclusion" on non-payment of subscriptions. Can you clarify?

A.7 There are differences and different procedures apply in each case. This is important and is not always well understood, so is dealt with it in great detail in Appendix D.

Q.8 We want to be able to alter our Initiation fees, Joining fees, Subscriptions and Dining fees without the necessity of amending the Bylaws on every occasion. Can we have a By-Law which effectively obviates this along the lines of "The Initiation, Joining and Re-Joining fees, Subscriptions and Dining fees may be set by resolution of the Lodge"?

A.8 No. Initiation, Joining and Re-Joining fees have to be specified by amount in the Bylaws and are changed by Notice of Motion of Bylaw amendment at one Meeting and subsequent printing on the summons "*pursuant to Notice of Motion of Bylaw amendment at the next Meeting the (xxxxx) fees will be changed to (£yyyy)*" When passed by the Brethren the Bylaw amendment has to be authorised by the Provincial Grand Master before implementation.

The Subscriptions and Dining fees can be altered by the Lodge without necessitating a change of Bylaw, providing the Bylaws of the Lodge allow for it and by printing the new amounts in the summons for the next Meeting at which they are to be approved by the Lodge. If the Lodge has been wise enough to adopt the words of the Model Bylaws of Grand Lodge all this is catered for and no problem arises.

Q.9 If the summons specifies a Passing but the Candidate is unable to attend, is it possible to carry out a Raising in its place (or vice versa)?

A.9 Ideally, all summonses should provide for an alternative ceremony to guard against this eventuality. The summons may read: "*To Pass Bro. or to Raise Bro.*" If this has been inadvertently overlooked then a substitute ceremony is permissible. However, an Initiation can only be carried out if due notice has been given on the summons. For obvious reasons, an Initiation should never be defined as an alternative ceremony. Should any change be made, the Provincial Grand Secretary must be advised.

Q.10 When must a Notice of Motion be given? Is it necessary for the presentation of a Past Masters Jewel?

A.10 If a proposal is covered in the Lodge Bylaws, e.g. payment of a sum up to £xx, a Notice of Motion is not required. If, however, it is an item on which unauthorised funds are to be expended then a Notice of Motion is required. Clearly, this is a mechanism which gives members the opportunity to investigate the proposal before it is voted on in open Lodge and this consideration should be used as the yardstick when making a decision whether or not to give notice. The presentation of a Past Master's Jewel being a regular annual occurrence should not require notice unless excess expenditure is involved. It would be a very unusual situation if this Motion was opposed - if such a possibility is anticipated then it will require serious consideration by the Lodge Committee.

Q.11 What privileges does a Lewis enjoy?

A.10 A detailed description is given in that much underused publication "*Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft*". Briefly, if a Lewis is one of two candidates to be Initiated on the same day, he is automatically the senior. He cannot claim precedence over candidates proposed or balloted before him.

Appendix D - Cessation of Membership, or Exclusion on non-payment of subscriptions

The Rules dealing with these matters are Rule 148 (Cessation of membership when two years in arrears) and Rule 181, Book of Constitutions, (so-called Permanent Exclusion).

Under Rule 148 "if the subscription of a member to his Lodge remains unpaid for two full years, at the expiration of that period he shall cease to be a member of the Lodge and the fact shall be reported to the Lodge at its next regular Meeting and recorded in the minutes. He can become a member again only by payment of the arrears followed by regular proposition and ballot according to Rule 163. This Rule shall not prevent any Lodge proceeding against any of its members in accordance with Rule 181, Book of Constitutions, in respect of sums due for a shorter period than two years, if so provided in its Bylaws."

If this Rule is invoked the member is NOT excluded, there is an automatic cessation of membership, and the report on the Rising when such occurs should just be "under Rule 148 (B. of C.) Bro. xx has ceased to be a member of the Lodge", without the use of the words "exclusion", or "excluded".

However, because two years is quite a long time, and dues to Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodge, and possibly other levies to Centres, etc., would have to be paid for the two years - possibly a tidy sum - provision is made, if a Lodge so wishes, to have a shorter period specified in its Bylaws, a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of one year, (in practice Lodges usually adopt a period of 6 months, or of 9 or 10 months). This saves at least one year's dues, against the two years which have to be paid in the case of "Cessation of Membership" as above.

Rule 181 lays down what has to be done when invoking the Bylaw specifying a shorter period.

- (i) A notice in writing has to be served on the Brother concerned by Recorded Delivery Post, the envelope being plainly marked on the outside "Private and Confidential", not less than fourteen days before the meeting at which the complaint is to be considered, together with particulars of the complaint made against him, namely, that he is in arrears with his subscriptions and that a resolution is to be put under Rule 181, Book of Constitutions, that he be excluded for non-payment of subscriptions for a period shorter than that prescribed, namely xx months as provided in the Lodge By-Laws. The notice shall state the time and place appointed for the Meeting and that he may attend to answer the complaint in person or make answer in writing if he prefers.
- (ii) Not less than **ten** days' notice in writing shall also have been served on the members of the Lodge of the intention to propose the resolution. (This is usually done by having an item on the Summons such as "*To terminate the membership of a Brother (or Brethren) from the Lodge*").
- (iii) The notice shall be considered duly served if sent by post to the last known address of each member.
- (iv) The name of the Brother concerned and the reason for the motion shall not appear in the notice served upon the members of the Lodge, but must be made known to the members when the resolution is moved at the Meeting.
- (v) The voting shall be by ballot (ball or paper).
- (vi) The resolution shall not be carried out unless two thirds of the members present vote for it.
- (vii) If the resolution is carried, the exclusion shall be effective forthwith.
- (viii) The name of every Brother excluded from a Lodge, with the cause of the exclusion, shall immediately be sent to the Grand Secretary, and the Provincial Grand Secretary.
- (ix) If the Brother concerned subsequently pays the arrears of subscription the Grand Secretary and the Provincial Grand Secretary shall be notified.
- (x) In Rule 181 to "exclude" a Brother means to terminate the Brother's membership of the Lodge, and the terms "exclude", "excluded", and "exclusion" shall be construed accordingly.

Note that whether a Brother is excluded or has ceased membership, the effect is the same in that, if he subsequently pays the outstanding arrears, he can apply to re-join under Rule 163 and Lodge Bylaws governing that, and be readmitted if the ballot at his re-election again proves favourable.

It can be seen, therefore, that if "exclusion" is invoked, positive action has to be taken and the procedures above must be followed. It cannot just be reported on a Rising that under Lodge Bylaws Brother xx has been excluded, as though he had ceased membership, as under Rule 148.