



Provincial Grand Master's Annual Address – Key Highlights



At this year's Provincial Meeting, attended by over 300 Brethren and guests, the Provincial Grand Master reflected on a decade of service, growth, and progress across Cambridgeshire. A warm welcome was extended to all attendees, with special thanks to visitors, and anticipation for a celebratory dinner at Queens'.

Cambridgeshire remains one of only four Provinces to achieve membership growth for three consecutive years, with a 1.6% net increase in 2024. This success, aligned with the Pro Grand Master's strategic vision, reinforces the importance of Craft and Royal Arch working together through initiatives like the Pathway and Archway harmonisation.

All Lodges are encouraged to aim for a net growth of two members per year. Re-engaging inactive Brethren, embracing recruitment opportunities, and supporting public-facing events will be crucial. The Light Blues' buddy scheme and early engagement efforts were praised as exemplary.

A refreshed Provincial team was announced, and Lodges were urged to plan strategically, foster inclusivity, and avoid outdated attitudes. Criticism in Lodge must be replaced with support and encouragement, particularly for newer members.

Grand Rank honours were awarded to eleven Brethren, with special congratulations extended. Retiring officers including W.Bro. Kevin Mader (Provincial Grand Secretary) and W.Bro. Mike Hinton (Communications) received thanks for their exceptional service.

Cambridgeshire's charitable contributions remain strong, with over £45,000 donated last Christmas and ongoing support for the Maggie's Appeal. The Province aims to contribute £100,000 towards the new Cambridge cancer support centre.

A seamless transition in the communications team was noted, with thanks to W.Bro. Mike Hinton and best wishes to W.Bro. Tony Barrios. Media engagement, digital platforms, and events continue to play a key role in outreach.

With his term concluding this December, the Provincial Grand Master expressed pride in the Province's achievements and urged continued commitment to the Pro Grand Master's Three Pillars strategy.

He called on all Brethren to embrace the future with purpose, unity, and energy.



Cambridgeshire's Young Masons star at Sine Nomine Lodge



Simon Cooper, Ed Williams and Raz Dinita recently represented Cambridgeshire Clarets at the 'Young Masons' meeting of Sine Nomine Lodge in London. They also discussed their journey in Freemasonry for an edition of 'Arch Cast' - the podcast created by the United Grand Lodge of England.

Ed said:

Speaking at the Sine Nomine meeting at Grand Lodge was genuinely one of the greatest honours of my Masonic journey so far. As a Cambridgeshire Claret AND a member of Sine Nomine (Lodge 10k), it was particularly special to contribute to such a landmark event. Standing in front of 1,600 people in that magnificent building, sharing my reflections on Royal Arch Freemasonry, was both surreal and deeply moving.

As I said on the day, my journey in Freemasonry began with a Google search and a meeting in a pub car park! No family ties or legacy—just curiosity. Yet here I was, alongside Simon and Raz, in front of the Pedestal of the Pro Grand Master, speaking about the journey that's shaped so much of my life. Our talk followed a powerful film and focused on what the Royal Arch means to each of us. For me, it's Companionship—the space to step out of the noise and be present with good people.

We'd also recorded a Archcast podcast a few weeks earlier, talking about the achievements of the Cambridgeshire Clarets. The podcast had similar themes, but in a more relaxed digital format and is available on all major platforms. The recording session helped us find our rhythm before the big day. To quote what I've said to many since: "To speak in that space, to that audience, was humbling. A memory I'll carry for life."

Simon said:

The event aimed to highlight successful initiatives that attract, engage, and retain new members. With presentations showcasing innovative approaches from various provinces, one aspect of the conference focussed on strengthening the connection between Craft Freemasonry and the Royal Arch.

I had the honour of presenting as part of a trio from the Cambridgeshire Clarets. Speaking before an audience of 1,800 was rather daunting but a deeply humbling experience. It was a proud moment to represent Cambridgeshire and share the Clarets' efforts to promote Royal Arch engagement. Each of us spoke about our personal journeys. I shared how I joined Freemasonry in 2010 while studying at Cambridge, and how after serving as Master in my Craft lodge, I felt ready to explore the Royal Arch.

Upon joining the Royal Arch, what struck me most was the richness of its symbolism, the depth of its philosophy, and the beauty of its ceremonies. The concept of "Comprehension"—one of the Clarets' three pillars—particularly resonated with me, encouraging deeper reflection on the meaning behind our traditions.

Razvan Dinita

Addressing the meeting was a true milestone in my Masonic journey. Sharing the platform with Simon and Ed, I spoke of arriving in the United Kingdom from Romania, of finding community through my Craft initiation in 2014, and of the renewed purpose I discovered when exalted into the Royal Arch in 2016.

Today, as First Principal of Euclid Chapter No. 859, I emphasised that Companionship remains the heartbeat of my journey and that the “One Journey, One Organisation” vision now offers every Mason a clear and inspiring path forward. Preparing for and recording the supporting Archcast episode earlier this year in April sharpened those messages and will carry them to Brethren and Companions far beyond Great Queen Street.

The warmth of the Grand Temple audience reminded me that, when we meet as Companions, we build far more than structures; we build one another. I left London humbled, energised and eager for the friendships still to come.

Building Together-For the Future!



It was a rainy Tuesday afternoon in the October of 1646 when, in the Cheshire market town of Warrington, the first recorded Masonic initiation took place. Little is known about the attendees or the form of the ceremony. We do know that of the candidates- Henry Mainwaring and Elias Ashmole- one was a Parliamentarian and the other a Royalist. Even at this time, the height of the English Civil War, Freemasonry was able to bring two men of diametrically opposing views together in an environment of brotherhood and mutual respect.

Some 70 years later, in 1717, Freemasonry had become so well established that the first Grand Lodge was formed. However, the organisation remained in its infancy and was far less structured than today. It was not until 1723 with the advent of Anderson’s Constitutions that the rules and regulations of the fraternity were first set down.

Even a cursory reading of those ancient charges provides an insight into the values of our founders. They remain recognisable, relevant and clearly differentiated the brotherhood from the plethora of Gentleman’s drinking clubs that were so popular at the time.

This was the age of the Enlightenment. A time when a culture of tradition and superstition was being replaced with one of reason, science and individual liberty.

Many of the great thinkers who drove that change were Freemasons Their principles lie at the heart of modern democracy and remain central to the structure of society today.

Like all great things Freemasonry is founded on very simple ideas. Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. Explaining those to a potential member today in terms of what they might derive from membership we might describe them as Fun, Helping Others and Self Development.

It is the element of Self Development – being the best version of yourself that you can be- that continues to differentiate Freemasonry from other hobbies and pastimes.

It enables you to develop personal skills by going outside your natural comfort zone in an encouraging and supportive environment where a misstep will neither incur the wrath of social media nor become a “career limiting move”.

Those skills are taught using a complex allegory which includes the Royal Arch. Building resilience is a key part of the journey and there is no fault in falling- the fault is in not getting back up. That is the message as much of Rudyard Kipling’s “If” as of Chumbawumba’s “Tubthumping”. The loss that we make when raised is restored when we are exalted. The Royal Arch is an intrinsic part of the structure of Pure Antient Freemasonry.

However, as the structure of Freemasonry evolved throughout the eighteenth century a difference in opinion emerged among senior masons regarding the role and purpose of the Royal Arch. This was ultimately resolved by the Act of Union of the Antients and Moderns in 1813 and has resulted in today’s relationship of Craft and Royal Arch Freemasonry which is unique to the English Constitution.

This year will see the launch of the Building Together project, an comprehensive set of resources that will enable us to plan for the future success of both Lodges and Chapters in an integrated way. Whilst Craft and Chapter remain organisationally distinct we will now have the tools to manage and articulate the complete journey in Pure Antient Freemasonry in ways never imagined by our founders.

Cambridgeshire Freemasons Donate £12,625 to the Air Ambulance



Cambridgeshire Freemasons were on hand to present a donation of £12,625.87 to the East Anglian Air Ambulance (EAAA), following the success of their annual Festival of Carols at Ely Cathedral in December last year. The generous contribution will support the charity's vital, life-saving work across the region.

Members of the Cambridgeshire Freemasons gathered at the EAAA base in Cambridge for the official cheque presentation. Attending the event was Assistant Provincial Grand Master of Cambridgeshire, W.Bro. Jonathan Lambert, alongside fellow Freemasons from the province. W.Bro. Jonathan Lambert commended on the efforts of all involved in making the Festival of Carols a memorable and impactful occasion, stating:

We are proud that charitable giving and community engagement are at the heart of Freemasonry. This generous donation exemplifies our commitment to making a difference. We are incredibly grateful to the East Anglian Air Ambulance for welcoming us to their base and providing valuable insight into the lifesaving work they do every day.

Following the presentation, attendees were given a guided tour of the Air Ambulance base, where they explored response vehicles and had the opportunity to get up close to the air ambulance itself. They also met with crew members and medical staff, gaining first-hand insight into the charity's emergency operations.

We are truly touched that you chose to support us alongside Ely Cathedral for this very special event. It is support just like this that enables us to deliver and develop our vital services – 24/7 by air and by road from our two bases in Cambridge and Norwich, treating on average six people a day in often the most traumatic moments of their lives. We simply couldn't do this without you. Tammy Swiderski, EAAA's Community Fundraising Lead for Bedfordshire & Cambridgeshire.

The East Anglian Air Ambulance relies on charitable donations to fund its 24/7 emergency medical services, responding rapidly to critical incidents by both air and road. The generosity of the Cambridgeshire Freemasons will help ensure that this essential service continues to save lives across the region.

Little Miracles



The Caldwell Lodge Secretary W. Bro. Les Mills presenting a cheque for £250 to the Little Miracles Charity Easter Egg appeal. Little Miracles is a local charity that supports families of children with additional needs, disabilities and life limiting conditions - it meets weekly at March Town Cricket Club.

St Andrew Chapter Installation

At the recent St Andrew Chapter Installation meeting our Deputy Grand Superintendent Mark Shields paid tribute to the way that Compassion, Companionship and Comprehension had been fully demonstrated over the past year in ensuring that E.Comp. Chris MacLeod was able to support his family during his daughter's serious illness. Chris hopes to be back at our Chapter in the near future when he will receive a well deserved Past Z Jewel for all of his excellent work over the past years.

Tribute was also given to E.Comp. Paul Baldwin who stands down with distinction as both DC of St. Andrew and from his many years in active Provincial Office. With the new Principals installed and even younger Companions invested in the key offices of Sojourners the Chapter looks forward to a very successful year led by E.Comp. Nick Thompson.

At the festive board the DGS reiterated the values of Compassion, Companionship and Comprehension, congratulating the Chapter on an excellent meeting along with his good wishes for the coming year.

Widows Friendship Club



The Province of Cambridgeshire Masonic Widows Friendship Club held their AGM on Friday 4th April 2025. During the meeting the retiring Chairman Tony Mason was presented with a gift in recognition of his 19 years' service to the club, as a founder member and secretary in 2006 and later as Chairman 2019-2025.

Deputy Provincial Grand Master David Blair expressed sincere thanks to him and the committee for the work done, after which Tony Kirby was appointed the new Chairman, leading a committee with existing and new members. After the AGM the ladies were treated to a talk from Bryan Saddington on the piers and coastal towns of the UK, before enjoying a lovely lunch. The meeting coincided with the new Chairman's 60th Birthday and after lunch he supplied cake and a drink to all who attended to help him celebrate the day.

Light Blues Escape the Tower!



Photo left to right

Martin Oaks Etheldreda, Dan How Etheldreda, James Rowney Stone Cross, Andy Sullivan Stone Cross, Russell Octave Stone Cross, and Alex Skerrit Guild of St Mary. W.Bro. Andrew Sullivan, Regional Chair of The International Police Association (IPA), the world's largest Police social group recently invited six members of the Cambridgeshire Light Blues to attend the legendary Ceremony of the Keys at the Tower of London.

The Ceremony of the Keys is one of the oldest known military traditions, with a history spanning over 500 years. This nightly ritual, symbolising the formal locking up of the Tower, has only been missed twice in its long-standing history. The group had the rare chance to witness this event, performed by the esteemed Scots Guards, making it an evening to remember.

In addition to watching the ceremony, the attendees were given a guided tour of the Tower by a Yeoman Warder. The Warder shared fascinating historical insights, just as they do for the thousands of visitors who walk through the Tower's gates each year. However, this particular visit held an extra-special touch as the group was invited into the exclusive warders' pub, "The Keys." Here, they enjoyed a drink and took part in a raffle, where they managed to win three prizes adding an extra layer of excitement to an already enjoyable evening.

All who attended were thoroughly captivated by the experience and have expressed a keen interest in returning for another visit.

The Lodge of United Good Fellowship No 809



The Lodge of United Good Fellowship No. 809 Installation Meeting was held at the Masonic Rooms Wisbech on the 7th of May 2025. The meeting was attended by the Assistant Provincial Grand Master W.Bro. Jonathan Lambert accompanied by Grand Officers, Active Provincial Grand Officers and many other visitors including several Masters in the Chairs of other Lodges.

Bro. Richard Clare was installed into the Chair of King Solomon by W.Bro. Barry Lambert in fine form. This was a very auspicious occasion for Wisbech Masonry as it was the last meeting to be held in the Crescent before the move to the new Wisbech Masonic Centre at the former Magistrates Court House.

A bumper Festive Board was enjoyed following the ceremony and £450 was raised in sponsorship of the Wardens on Tour with friends Cycle Ride to be held on the 7th of September from Wisbech to [Maggie's Cambridge](#) premises in Cambridge.

St Andrews Sausage Supper



The Masonic values of teamwork, charitable giving, and support were on full display at the St. Andrew Lodge of Instruction Sausage Supper Meeting! Led by Bro. Paul Gale as Worshipful Master, members of St. Andrew, Fenland Farmers, and Fundamental Lodges carried out a superb 1st Degree Demonstration, initiating the Deputy Provincial Grand Master W.Bro. David Blair in fine style.

A delicious meal, prepared by W.Bros. Tim Smith & Graham Turner, was served by the ever-dedicated St. Andrew Angels. The night concluded with an inspirational address from the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, emphasising the vital role Lodge of Instruction meetings play in securing the future strength of Freemasonry.

Adding to the evening's success, charitable giving remained at the heart of it all, with proceeds from the meal and raffle—around £350—going to [Maggie's Cambridge](#).

St. Audrey Lodge No.2727 celebrates 1,000 meetings.



Seventy Freemasons convened in Ely to commemorate the 1,000th meeting of St Audrey Lodge No. 2727. Attendees even included some members and guests who travelled from distant locations such as Switzerland and Zimbabwe.

The esteemed attendees comprised the Deputy Grand Master of the Province, W.Bro. David Blair, the Past Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Rodney Wolverson, along with three Past Deputy Grand Masters: V.W.Bros John Sheriff, Tim Pearce-Higgins, and Patrick Kilby.

In the Lodge room, members and their guests enjoyed a presentation entitled "History of the Lodge in a Thousand Meetings."

The presentation was delivered by a team comprising two of the Lodge's most senior members and two newer members. The audience gained insights into the Lodge's operations from its inception in the late nineteenth century, through two world wars, and into the present day.

During the Festive Board, the room was filled with friendship and laughter as we enjoyed a feast celebrating our achievement. W.Bro. Gerald Harrison, District GDC of Zimbabwe and Malawi responded to the visitors' toast with stories of Masonry in Southern Africa.

Success at Sausage Supper



There was a fine line-up for the Ely United Lodge of Instruction Annual Sausage Supper last week. Perennial Initiate Mr Percival Thistlethwaite was yet again the star of the show at Ely Masonic Hall.

The Deputy Provincial Grand Master W.Bro. David Blair and the Past Deputy Provincial Grand Master VW.Bro. Pat Kilby joined over 50 Brethren for a very rewarding evening. As ever, the acting officers were from all four Ely Lodges and the Festive Board was a culinary tour de force.

The Ely United Lodge of Instruction meets on the first Tuesday of the month from October to May. All Freemasons are welcome to attend.

Rising Sun Lodge No. 1401 Kobe, Japan



Rising Sun Lodge No. 1401 in Kobe, Japan, was constituted on 17th November 1872, and was the fifth Lodge in the country. It was formed as a result of the establishment of European trading posts in Kobe.

Previously meeting in Kirby Hall, Kobe (a significant building in Japanese Freemasonry history), the Lodge has since moved to premises (a suite of small rooms in the local Library on Rokko Island). The Lodge is the sole remaining active English Lodge in Japan, under the authority of the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE). The Lodge entertained HRH the Duke of Kent – Grand Master in 1997, after the major Kobe earthquake of 1995.

World War II saw the suspension of Rising Sun Lodge in Japan, and all other English Constitutional freemasonry went 'Dark' (closed). Rising Sun Lodge managed to prevail, moving to Hong Kong, returning after the war as the only. Writes W.Bro. Graham Clapperton on his recent visit.

I took with me a published copy of 'The Kent Lodge' book (hardback) and an up-to-date version of Paul Gardners 'The Royal Kent Lodge' as gifts for the lodge. These were favourably received.

As you can see. The Lodge is extremely small – but what it lacked in size, it made up for in that essential part of freemasonry - friendship.

Cross continent visit to Ionic Lodge No.65 in Sydney NSW



W.Bro. Tony Barrios of Scientific Lodge No.88 while visiting family in Sydney, NSW, had the pleasure of attending a meeting at Ionic Lodge No.65, founded in 1878, both Lodges rich in history and tradition.

W.Bro. Barrios was warmly received by Worshipful Master Domenic Cosoieto and V.W.Bro. John Green, District Grand Inspector of Workings. The evening was made even more special by the international friendship present, including Bro. James Heller from Hiram Lodge No.12 (Czech Republic) and Bro. Colin Bascombe from Equity & Appleton Lodge No.1348 (Cheshire, UK).

The night featured a double initiation ceremony and a deeply moving ANZAC Remembrance, honouring those who gave their lives in service.

It was a reminder of how Freemasonry brings together brethren from different continents and centuries, united by the same enduring values.

Maggies



At the recent AGM of the Cambridgeshire Masonic Benevolent Association, Lodge Charity Stewards and Almoners were inspired by a presentation from Hayley Webb of Maggie's Cambridge. A standout moment of the evening was the warm welcome given to Bro. Fergus Payne, who had recently completed the demanding 106km Isle of Wight Ultra Marathon, raising an impressive £9,000 in aid of the new Maggie's Cambridge Cancer Support Centre.

Fergus's motivation for undertaking the challenge stemmed from a deeply personal place. Maggie's had been a sanctuary for his wife and her family following the terminal cancer diagnosis of her mother, Trish, at the age of just 45. Fergus also lost his grandfather Jim to bowel cancer, and a close friend, Chris Meiring, who passed away aged only 32. Another grandfather, Jeremy, was diagnosed with cancer two years ago and is now in remission.

Recognising the impact of cancer on so many lives, Fergus, joined by his brother Lochie, took on the ultra-marathon in support of the Cambridgeshire Freemasons' drive to raise funds for Maggie's for the development of Maggie's new Cambridge centre.

The centre, scheduled to open in 2028 on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, will offer critical emotional, psychological, and practical support to over 100,000 cancer patients and their families each year, in a supportive and welcoming environment.

Fergus described Maggie's as "a vital lifeline during the hardest moments," and dedicated every step of the challenge to those currently affected by cancer.

The marathon route, known for its coastal cliffs, forest trails, and physical demands, pushed the brothers to their limits during the warm bank holiday weekend. Nevertheless, their determination was driven by a clear purpose: helping bring the new Maggie's centre one step closer to reality.

Stone Cross Initiation



Stone Cross Lodge No. 6704 enjoyed a wonderful First-Degree Ceremony in April 2025, with candidate Bro. Alexander Harper and his proposer having been friends for a long time.

When asked how they met Bro. Harper said:

"I've been friends with him for 10 years. We met at the George public house and I challenged him to a game of pool and lost. After losing another 10 games, I asked him to teach me how to play better. From then on we started to hang out more and more until we forged our friendship. Since then he has been like an older brother to me."

The meeting also saw a cheque for £1000 presented to Deputy Provincial Grand Master W.Bro. David Blair for the Provincial Maggie's Cambridge Appeal.

The Porta Lodge Breakfast



On Saturday 24th May 2025, members of The Porta Lodge No. 9511 came together in Ely for an informal breakfast — all arranged with just a few taps on WhatsApp.

Organised by W.Bro. Mark Shields, the event used WhatsApp's built-in poll feature to choose the type of meal, agree on a date, and confirm attendees. The result? A relaxed and well-attended gathering, with over 50% of the Lodge taking part.

What made this breakfast particularly special was the mix of members, some Brethren who hadn't attended since before Covid, and several of the Lodge's newest initiates and joining members. The informal setting provided the perfect space to reconnect, share stories, and strengthen bonds.

Centenary Celebration – The Icenian Council No.36 (Ipswich)



To assist in the celebrations of their Centenary the Icenian Council No.36 was honoured by a visit from the Grand Master, Most Illustrious Companion Kessick Jones IX, accompanied by the Deputy Grand Master, Right Illustrious Companion Paul Norman IX, and the Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies, Illustrious Companion Alan Baverstock. The proceedings were further enhanced by the presence of the Grand Organist, Very Illustrious Companion Robert Scott.

Although The Icenian Council actually completed its first 100 years of existence in 2024, the familiar problems of crowded diaries meant that Thursday 10th April 2025 was the first opportunity to put together a celebratory meeting with the rulers.

In recent years the number of subscribing members has been a little smaller than for much of its history, but it was pleasing to see that the entire current membership was present on the day to celebrate the occasion, along with many guests and visitors from across the District of East Anglia. A very interesting and well-researched 'potted' history of the Council was delivered by the Council Recorder, Illustrious Companion Richard Strutt, before the original Warrant of Constitution was read by the District Recorder, Illustrious Companion Nigel Williams. The Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies then read the Centenary Warrant before it was presented by the Grand Master to the Thrice Illustrious Master, Illustrious Companion Russell Keen, who offered his grateful thanks to the Grand Master on behalf of the Council.

As an additional item of interest, a meeting of the Earl of Euston Council of Installed Masters had earlier been 'embedded' into the proceedings, during which Illustrious Companions Michael Jessett, Colin Birkbeck and David Boswell received the Order of Thrice Illustrious Master, or Silver Trowel. This was a particular demonstration of the harmony and co-operation between the various progressive Orders, with the representative candidate Companion Boswell being the current Provincial Grand Master (Mark Master Masons), and Companion Birkbeck the Provincial Prior (Knights Templar). Also in attendance to witness the occasion were V.III.Comp Geoffrey Keer, District Grand Prefect (Allied Masonic Degrees) and V.III.Comp Keith McCully, Provincial Grand Summus (Scarlet Cord). The Grand Master himself had graciously agreed to take part in the Silver Trowel Ceremony as the Orator, whilst the part of King David was taken by the District Grand Master, R.III.Comp. Geoff Spencer.

After the formal proceedings had been completed, and a few celebratory photographs taken, some of which are included here, the Companions retired to an excellent Centenary dinner. It was noted that very few, if any, of us are likely to be around for the bicentenary, although who knows what advances in medical science may be made in the ensuing years?!

Pairs Bowls Triumph

The Cambridgeshire Masonic Bowls season got off to an excellent start with an indoor Inter-Lodge Pairs Competition at the City of Ely Bowls Club.

The final saw Geoff Day and Bryan Saddington, representing St. Audrey Lodge, triumph over Roger Kilham and Richard Phillips, representing St. Andrew Lodge, to secure the Colin Hutchinson Trophy.

Any Cambridgeshire Mason that may be interested in joining our Association should contact the Secretary, David Mason, on 01733208215

email annandave49@yahoo.co.uk
where you will be most welcome.

Cambridgeshire County Show

The Cambridgeshire County Show proved to be a thoroughly enjoyable and productive day for the Cambridgeshire Freemasons Publicity Unit. Representing the Province, the team worked alongside Philip Miles and John Napper—both Freemasons from the Huntingdon area, part of the Province of Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire.

The group helped man the stand in two shifts throughout the day, including Freddie Lawes, Brian Palmer, Mark Shipton (notably doing double duty), and Martin Rose. All were dressed in their Cambridgeshire Freemasons polo shirts, providing a strong, visual presence.

One special moment was meeting Jerry Barden from St Ovin Lodge in Cambridgeshire, who was exhibiting his classic Triumph Stag in the show's popular Classic Car section. It was also encouraging to see and speak with several members from the Huntingdonshire Province who stopped by for a friendly chat.



W.Bro. Mark Long Honoured with British Empire Medal



Scientific Lodge No. 88 Member W.Bro. Mark Long has been awarded the British Empire Medal for his outstanding dedication to youth musical theatre in Cambridgeshire. The medal was presented by Daniel Schunmann, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire and member of Nourse Lodge No. 8590, who himself received an MBE for his contributions to community theatre.

For over 25 years, Mark has been the driving force behind Sawston Youth Drama, a group originally founded in 1968. Since becoming producer in 1998, he has helped it grow from a small ensemble of 15-20 teenagers performing one show a year to a thriving organisation supporting 150 young performers and 30 adults, staging multiple productions annually.

Despite managing his own construction business, Mark volunteers' countless hours to oversee the charity's finances, liaise with Sawston Village College, organise leadership training, and attend weekly rehearsals. He is hands-on in every aspect, from securing sponsors to setting up and clearing the theatre after performances.

Mark's unwavering commitment has impacted hundreds of young people, fostering a love for the arts and even inspiring some to pursue careers in theatre. His inclusive philosophy ensures that anyone, regardless of ability, can participate without the pressure of auditions. He has also provided enriching experiences, such as rehearsal weekends that strengthen both performance skills and team spirit.

The continued success of Sawston Youth Drama is a testament to Mark's dedication. His voluntary efforts over the years have transformed it into a vital community organisation, making the arts accessible and affordable for all. His recognition with the British Empire Medal is a well-deserved honour for his profound contributions to youth theatre.

Mark expressed his gratitude, saying, *"I am so proud to receive this honour—I had no idea. Sawston Youth Drama has been a passion of mine for many years, and it has been a delight to watch youth members flourish and grow. This honour recognises my work, but it wouldn't have happened without all the members of the group."*

Also receiving a British Empire Medal for services to the community in Ely was Malcolm John Fletcher of Descensus Aquarium Lodge No. 8655. Congratulations to both for their outstanding contributions to their communities.

Inter-Province Exchange



Nine members of Caldwell Lodge No. 3201 made their annual exchange visit to Martin Folkes Lodge No. 6622 at Heacham Manor Hotel in Norfolk last week.

They saw a second-degree ceremony with an excellent explanation of the Tracing Board by their Almoner W.Bro. Steve Teverson.

A lovely Festive Board followed, where the reply to all the toasts are traditionally sung. This exchange visit has existed for well over 20 years since the late W.Bro. Dennis Trehearn, a former Master of Caldwell Lodge, moved to the Norfolk coast and became a joining member of Martin Folkes Lodge. Caldwell Lodge will return the hospitality on Tuesday 16th December 2025.

Descensus Aquarium



A Provincial party was hosted in a fantastic afternoon on 3rd June 2025 at Grafham by Anglian Water.

The visit had been organised by the Descensus Aquarium Lodge in Ely. After a rainfall deluge at lunch time ... a 'descensus aquarium' which stopped just in time, the sun shone on our party. We walked along the reservoir banks and heard about the challenges of

running a water supply reservoir which also provides a haven for wildlife (killer shrimps were unwelcome foreign visitors) and recreation opportunities.

We then went on to see how the reservoir water is converted into drinking water and were amazed at the complexity of the engineered processes; one quote was 'the detailed explanations along with the straightforward answers to all questions enabled us to get a clear picture of the running and management of the site. We had no idea of the size and complexity of the operation before today, and all thoroughly enjoyed the outing'

We finished with a very good value meal at the Wheatsheaf in Perry

'The Cambridgeshire Mason' is produced in March, July, September and December by Editor Andy Clifton, with the assistance of:

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