

The Ancient and Accepted Rite
under the Supreme Council 33° for England and Wales
and its Districts and Chapters Overseas

District of Berkshire

Inspector General

V. : Ill. : Bro. D.R. Jarvis 33°
57 Denmark Avenue
Woodley
Reading
Berkshire RG5 4RS
t: 0118 969 0402
m: 07506 826924
e: jarvisdave@hotmail.co.uk



District Recorder

Ill. : Bro. A.M. Rees 32°
41 Lower Canes
Yateley
Hampshire GU46 6PY
t: 01252 879899
m: 07775 914846
e: berks.district.recorder@btinternet.com

Annual report 2024

Dear Ill. : Brethren & Princes,

I simply can't believe that my 5 year patent has been completed. I am pleased to report that the Supreme Council has reappointed me to continue as Inspector General for a further 5 years. The Lieutenant Grand Commander V. : P Brother David Williamson 33 will be representing me with another five year patent on 27th February. The Albert Victor Chapter has been selected as the hosting Chapter and I sincerely hope to see you and other Princes across the District there.

2024 has certainly proved to be an interesting year for our Order of the Ancient & Accepted Rite.

1st March Supreme Council introduced us to the new ritual. It would be wrong for me to say that not all our members were happy with the changes. Since it's introduction nationally the Supreme Council issued 990 18 degrees certificates an increase of over 30% from 2023. Owing to the ritual changes we suffered three resignations across the District. One of the Ill Brethren who resigned has since re-joined in another District. I'm delighted to report that all Chapters in our District use the 2024 version which was introduced on 1st March and is now mandatory from 1st January 2024.

Bombay Chapter perfected a young Sikh Brother at a morning meeting on 1st March. The Chapter were delighted to welcome two members of Supreme Council, M. : P. : Brother John Boyington CBE our SGC and M. : Ill. : Brother the Rev'd Dr. Simon Thorn the GP. Also present were a large number of Inspectors General and visiting Brethren from neighbouring and distant Districts. I was delighted to see all Chapters in our District of Berkshire represented. I am most grateful to our District Recorder Ill. : Brothers Tony Rees, and Ill. : Brother John Machray, Ill. : Brothers Colin Payne and Lindsay Maskell for their assistance in organising the meeting. This was a showcase moment and I add my thanks to the team at Sindlesham Masonic Centre for their excellent service which made the day a great success. My thanks also to Ill. : Brothers Rod Bancroft, Bill Rhymes and Graham Hutton for their part as Director and Assistant

Directors of Ceremonies. I would also like to thank the Princes of Bombay Chapter for the part they played in performing the new ritual. With the exception of the third point the ceremony was conducted by 18th degree Princes. To their credit they were the first to do so. There were 160 Brethren in attendance.

Now we are pleased to welcome Brethren of all faiths, the Supreme Council have issued a directive regarding music and hymns for our Order of Rose Croix. In summary, the Supreme Council would prefer there to be no singing at all in the context of Chapter meetings, and notes that in the great majority of Districts, this is the case anyway. However, for the minority of Districts where singing is a tradition, the Council has decided to relax its stance on singing before and after Chapter meetings, although maintains its prohibition on singing during meetings.

The Council also reinforces its long-held view that the singing of the **Nunc Dimittis** is completely inappropriate, as is the playing of quasi-Eucharistic music during the Third Point or otherwise. Music has always held an important place in the Ancient and Accepted Rite. Whilst singing has not been permitted outside of Grand Chapter (and other Supreme Council events) since the first printed rituals were published at the start of the twentieth century, and there is no official music for the 18^o, the position of the Supreme Council has long been that the playing of background or 'incidental' music during the ceremony, and of a fanfare after the proclamation, adds dignity and enjoyment to the proceedings. **The singing of Amen and odes** whilst a Chapter is open is not permitted, all singing being reserved to meetings held and officiated by the Supreme Council itself (eg Higher Degrees Meetings, the Installation of an Inspector General, Consecrations of Chapters etc.). The Supreme Council recognises that few Chapters have the benefit of a regular organist, and many have no music at all. It also understands that, despite the explicit direction of the Supreme Council for over one hundred years, some Chapters do sing odes or hymns before the Chapter is open and/or after it has closed. The Supreme Council has therefore considered the matter carefully and has decided that, while it continues to prefer that there be no singing at Chapters Rose Croix (whether, before, during or after a meeting), for those Chapters which currently do so and wish to continue so to do, the Supreme Council has no objection to the singing of appropriate non-denominational odes/hymns before or after a meeting. Singing whilst a Chapter is open continues not to be permitted under any circumstances. For those Chapters that currently sing and insist on continuing to do so, a non-exhaustive list of suitable hymn texts will be circulated to all Chapters in the District. Chapters wishing to sing a text not on that list are advised to seek guidance from myself or from Duke Street. Chapters that do benefit from the services of an organist, or which make use of recorded music during a Chapter meeting, should ensure that the music played is of a suitably dignified character for the Ancient and Accepted Rite. The use of music which has any connection with the Christian service of Holy Communion has always been inappropriate and in poor taste. If in doubt, Chapters may seek further guidance from the Grand Secretary General's office.

In May 1960, the Supreme Council issued the following statement regarding the singing of the Nunc Dimittis: The Supreme Council has discussed this matter most carefully, and it feels that this very beautiful canticle is entirely inappropriate, for the following reasons. **St. Luke II, verses 25–29**, gives a moving account of the aged

Simeon, to whom it had been revealed by the Holy Ghost 'that he should not see Death until he had seen the Lord's Christ'; Simeon, with the Holy Child in his arms, says, 'Now lettest thy servant depart in peace according to thy word etc.' This really means 'Now thou art letting me die in peace' and this meaning is borne out by the Greek and Latin versions. It had nothing to do with an earthly 'separation'. The use of this very beautiful quotation from Scripture is, therefore, entirely inappropriate where a circle of masonic friends are about to repair to refreshment, and there to meet again. Neither has it any direct place in the Rose Croix Degree, and it is unbecoming thus to use Simeon's lovely words in a false context. The Supreme Council, therefore, does not wish the Nunc Dimittis sung during any part of the ceremony.

A reminder, The Supreme Council has produced a selection of Hymns they believe are appropriate and will be circulated to Chapter Recorders.

Provincial Grand Lodge Craft, Mark & Provincial Grand Chapter. I'm delighted to report that the District Recorder and I continue to receive invitations to attend these events as guests of the Province. These events are most enjoyable and are truly very much appreciated.

The Supreme Council are developing a website and will be producing a trifold brochure promoting our Order. The District is also developing a website and my thanks go to E&PP Alex Bruscato, Ill. Brothers Tony Rees & Les Matthews for their support in putting this together. Since my appointment I have given a presentation on the Rose Croix to the Berkshire Light Blues Club and Berkshire 1st Principals Chapter. In December I was invited to give a presentation to the Berkshire Lodge of Enlightenment. In attendance was W Brother Rabbi Zvi Solomons who with representatives of other faiths assisted Supreme Council with the changes to the 18th degree ritual. I was delighted to speak with the Rabbi who enjoyed the presentation and was looking to join our Order in due course.

With the consent of our Most Excellent Grand Superintendent I'm happy to give presentations of our Order in convocations of Royal Arch Chapters.

Membership annual returns July 2024/ 235 members

Passing GCA 4, resignations 19, HM's 2. Ill Brethren and Princes we need candidates.

Annual subscriptions, I'm sure we are all conscious of growing costs and value for our money. For those Chapters who charge the full year subscription when you have a candidate or joining member, regardless of when he joins in the financial year may I respectfully ask that you review this practice and charge subscriptions on pro-rata basis. We have to make our Order as attractive as possible in order to attract new members. Chapter Treasurers please note Supreme Council dues have been reviewed and will be increased in July 2025 to £25 + vat for the annual returns. I expect all Chapters to present candidates on their Perfection, with the Supreme Council rule book, by-laws of the Chapter, the year book, booklet of the Intermediate Degrees, 2024 ritual book and if available the annual circular.

We also need to look after our members and I sincerely hope that all Chapters have **Care Teams** in place.

Windsor Castle Chapter centenary. The Chapter will be celebrating this event on 6th November 2025 at the Windsor Masonic Centre. My understanding is that all Chapters in our District will receive an invitation for the MWS & Recorder to attend as guests of the Chapter. This will be at great expense to the Chapter as dining will be held in the Windsor Castle Hotel. I ask for those Brethren invited to give this matter their consideration.

In 2024 Ill.: Brother John Owen 32 and Ill.:

Brother Robert Faulkner 32 were presented with their 50 year certificates. This is an outstanding achievement and I'm sure we all congratulate them on their service to the Order.

Higher degrees, I'm truly delighted to report that all Sovereigns for the year have received or have been elected to 30th degree. Also, two Brethren were elected to the 31st degree. I'm sure we all congratulate those Brethren on their appointments. Those elected to 30th degree are encouraged to join Thames & Chilterns Chapter.

Relationships with other Districts. Delighted to welcome V.:

Ill.:

Brother Peter Harborne 33 Inspector General for Buckinghamshire. My predecessor V.:

Ill Roy and Ill.:

Brother Tony established excellent relationships with other Districts and their Inspectors General. I am pleased to say that I've built on and strengthened those relationships. I am hopeful to greet a number of Inspectors General at the February meeting of Albert Victor Chapter.

KEVill Chapter of Improvement , In July with 3 other members of Bombay and two members from Windsor Castle Chapters we travelled to Alcester Road in Worcestershire. The KEVill Chapter gave a wonderful demonstration of the 17th degree. These really are enjoyable meetings and certainly help give us a clearer understanding of our ceremonies. I would ask all Chapters to continue supporting the Chapter of Improvement not only physically but also with a voluntary annual donation of £5, perhaps even £10, details are in the year book. I visited Warwickshire to see a demonstration of the new ritual performed by the Midlands Chapter of Improvement which again proved interesting.

Chapter of Improvement. This was introduced in March 2023 with the classes being arranged for 3 times a year at Sindlesham. I'm delighted to report that the Chapter of Improvement has proved popular and are now held once a month. I'm most grateful to Ill.:

Brother Graham Hutton who as Senior Preceptor runs the classes. The classes meet on Saturday mornings and gives the opportunities to rehearse all parts or points of the 18th degree ceremony which include the Enthronement, Perfection ceremonies and a general Q/A's session.

Ill.: **Brother Tony Rees our District Recorder.** Tony wishes to retire from the office at the end of February. Tony has simply proved to be a most dedicated, officiant, thoughtful, excellent eye for detail and procedures and good friend as District Recorder I could not have wished for better. He looked after my predecessor V.:

Ill Brother Roy Ernest Stone Past Inspector General and continued to look after me and the District. During our 5 years together Tony has not only looked after us but also cared for his wife Barbara who continues with ongoing cancer treatment. I'm sure our thoughts and prayers are with Tony, Barbara and their family for a long time to come.

Tony's successor is Ill. : Brother Philip Mott 30 the current Recorder of Sinodun Chapter. I'm sure we all wish Philip all the very best as District Recorder for the District of Berkshire. Ill. : Brother Philip's appointment will commence on 1st March 2025.

Following Q/A's members of Donnington Castle Chapter queried the singing of the National Anthem before opening their meetings.

It was noted that Donnington Castle Chapter were the only Chapter in the District that had this as one of its traditions. I am more than happy to speak with the Grand Secretary General on this matter but please remember Supreme Councils position with these words. In summary, the Supreme Council would prefer there to be no singing at all in the context of Chapter meetings.

I was disappointed to see that not all Chapters in the District were represented at this meeting. Brethren of the 18 degree are welcome to attend and perhaps will be keen to join once they are qualified.

Ill. : Brethren & Princes I do wish you all the very best and as always I look forward to being with you.

Yours most sincerely & fraternally,

David