

The Bow Bearer

The Quarterly Newsletter for the Order of the Secret Monitor in Province of Worcestershire



First Quarter of 2025

A Message from our P.G.S.R.

Hopefully, with planning and present buying now complete, we can look forward to enjoying the very special time that is Christmas. With all the changes and challenges that we face in the world, Christmas time is a constant on which we can all rely.

2024 has been a very significant year for the Order of the Secret Monitor in Worcestershire and has made me even more aware of the uniquely special nature and value of our Order. I do hope that, together, we will be able to attract many others to share our enjoyment.

I am very grateful to you all for your help and support and look forward to meeting on many occasions in the year ahead. Stephenie and I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Corrections

Last month the “upcoming dates” page stated that Worcester Conclave was meeting on Wednesday the 1st of January. This is the information that was passed to me. However of course this is New Years Day so instead the conclave will meet on Friday the 3rd of January.

Media and Promoting the Order

Since our P.G.S.R. asked me to take on the position of Provincial Communications officer I have been beavering away with various projects intended both to promote our order and to provide a service to you, the brethren of this Order. With that in mind it may have been hard to keep up so I would like to provide an overview of what media is available for you.

Firstly there is the website which is meant for the dual purpose of being a point of information for prospective members and also a useful resource for you. This should be an ongoing project so if you would like anything adding to the website then please ask.

Posters should be going up at each masonic venue in the province. On these posters is a QR code that can be scanned with smartphones that directs you to the web site.

Trifold leaflets are also starting to be left at our various venues. Please give these to any brethren who may be interested in our Order. These can also be downloaded from the website.

And finally there are two Facebook accounts and this is where it may get confusing. There is the Facebook GROUP "OSM Worcestershire" which has existed for a few years. This is a closed group that members have to ask to join or be invited. This is for *us* and can be used to share news and events, ask about times, transport and so on. It is private but of course please exercise the normal Masonic caution with it's use. There is the Facebook PAGE "Order of the Secret Monitor, Worcestershire Province" which is what you would click the button to "like." This is public-facing and has the purpose of promoting our Order. Please invite any mason to "like" it.

I hope that clarifies things, helps you and helps you to help the Order.

And you can read about the PowerPoint presentation later in the newsletter.



Kent Provincial Grand Conclave

On Saturday the 12th of October twelve Worcestershire masons ventured down to Freemasons' Hall in London to witness and support the annual Grand Conclave of the Province of Kent as they installed their new Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler, Right Worthy Brother Scott Dunn.

The ceremony took place in temple ten which most of us had never seen before and is indeed a wonder to behold. Time was a factor and so the ceremony was relatively short although efficient, flawless and meaningful. *Rt.Wy.Bro* Scott supported us with our installation this year and provided photographs of our event that have been a big help in our media and promotion so it was only right to return the favour. The program for the day suggests we had the second-biggest representation on the day.

We enjoyed champagne and then a hearty festive board with a great atmosphere and humour. We even managed a sneak look at the grand temple where a tour was taking place and witnessed the tour guide showing off the temple organ by playing part one of Strauss' *Also Sprach Zarathustra* which was astounding.

And so we went our separate ways. I feel it was a special day for many of us for different reasons. Hopefully this sort of trip can become a regular event.



The festive board in the Connaught Rooms



Outside the grand temple

Cheque Presentation to Acorns

On Tuesday the 15th of October R.Wy.Bro Bob along with R.W.Bro Stephen Wyr, Provincial Grand Master for the craft and other senior Worcestershire Masons presented cheque to Acorns Children's Hospice.



L-R:

W.Bro Andy Philpott P.Prov.G.S.wdB.,
R.W.Bro. Stephen Wyr Prov.G.M.,
Ms Siega Benwell (Deputy Matron)
W.Bro Chris Vandy Prov.G.Ch.Stwd.
W.Bro. Stuart Rothero P.Pr.J.G.W.

R.W.Bro. Bob Vaughan P.Prov.G.M.,
W.Bro. Derek Taylor C.M. P.Prov.S.G.W. (lottery chairman)
Ms Emma Wright (partnership fundraising Manager)
W.Bro. Jim Mulligan Prov.G.Sec..

(for simplicity ranks described are craft ranks, with due respect to our own R.Wy.Bro Bob and Wy.Bro. Jim)

Photo taken by Mel Hall (Area Fundraiser).

This donation was overseen by V.Wy.Bro. Chris Farrer who received the following letter of thanks from Acorns:

“
Dear Mr Farrer,

A parent never imagines their child will be diagnosed with a life limiting or life-threatening condition. But when the unimaginable happens Acorns steps in. And that can only happen because of you.

Thanks to you, and your kind donation of £500.00 we can make sure these remarkable families never face this journey alone. Families like Bluebell's.

Bluebell was born with some of her organs on the outside of her body – a very rare life-threatening condition.

Her mum Stella explains: "It's priceless having someone you can trust to look after your child when they need extra care. Acorns looks after all of us in the family not just Bluebell. The support has been invaluable for me as well. It's been a lifeline to talk to other people. To provide constant care can be quite a toll on you. To talk to others in the same situation helps so much."

Thanks to you and your wonderful support not only are we here to help Bluebell and her family enjoy time together, but lots of other families will also receive the specialist care and support they need.

With warmest regards,

Mel Hall
”

The Order of the Scarlet Cord and Maintaining Connections in the Orders

The Order of the Scarlet Cord has not yet been touched upon in the Bow Bearer but it is worth discussing due to the link between the orders and because several of our brethren have recently joined or undertaken degrees in the order. In some provinces The Order of the Secret Monitor and The Order of the Scarlet Cord go hand-in-hand, much like Mark and RAM. This is not so in Worcestershire where they are distinct from each other. However many of the OSM brethren from our Province of Worcestershire are members of Scarlet Cord in the overlapping Province of Midlands Counties.

If you are a prince in OSM then you are eligible to join Scarlet Cord and should consider doing so. There are consistories in Kidderminster and Northfield. OSM ritual is a significant part of the first degree of Scarlet Cord and so, although they are unrelated, they do flow well from one to the other.

On Tuesday the 8th of October myself and Wy.Bro Dr John Firth joined the order at Worcestershire Consistory 29TI in Kidderminster. The ceremony was conducted by several OSM brethren and friends from our respective conclaves.



Also in October our Deputy Prov.G.S.R. took his second grade at the Andrew Sweeny Consistory, 140 in Severn Street, Birmingham.



And on Wednesday the 30th of October the Assistant Provincial Grand Master of the Mark degree in Worcestershire, Bro Mark Winfield of Worcestershire OSM Conclave 186, joined the Scarlet Cord at The Midlands Consistory 2TI at Northfield Masonic Hall.



Also pictured is Wy.Bro. Martin Preece who received his third grade certificate from the Provincial Grand Summus, Graham Holder.

The meeting was lead by our own V.W.Bro. Mike Saxon along with V.W.Bro Gareth Hughes and W.Bro. David Ursell

And finally our P.G.S.R. took his first and second degrees on Friday the 6th of December in London.

The web site for Midlands Counties Scarlet Cord is under the “WOSM on the Web” part of the newsletter.

Ted Meredith Conclave

There was quite a collection of R.Wy. Brethren at the meeting of Ted Meredith Conclave No 427 at King's Heath on Thursday the 31st of October. This very special conclave is the Installed Supreme Rulers conclave for both Worcestershire and Warwickshire. In all orders, these two provinces are joined at the hip.

R.Wy.Bro. Dennis A. Freshwater, P.G.S.R. of Warwickshire was expertly installed by R.Wy.Bro. Dr. Joseph F.K. Marzouk P.Prov.G.S.R. of Worcestershire, whilst R.Wy.Bro. Robert C. Vaughan, P.G.S.R. of Worcestershire, was appointed as the Counsellor. The evening's activities were all under the watchful eyes of R.Wy.Bro. Peter Roberson P.G.G. and a founder of the conclave in 1997, and R.Wy.Bro. Frank C. Spencer P.G.G., the Deputy GM for the Mark and Deputy G.S. in the Scarlet Cord.



With thanks to V.W.Bro Gareth Hughes whose photograph and text I stole from Facebook.

Presentation at Sabrina Conclave

Earlier this year R.Wy.Bro Dennis from Warwickshire created a Powerpoint presentation that could be used to publicise our fine order. This was free to whoever should want it. Our Deputy P.G.S.R. has tweaked it to make it Worcestershire-specific and also researched the history of our order more thoroughly.

This presentation was performed for the first time at the recent Sabrina Conclave in Stourport on Tuesday the 12th of November to the assembled members and visitors. The presentation itself could be as short as fifteen minutes but Wy.Bro. Howard showed us why he's a Doctor of History by providing much greater depth to the information therein.

This presentation was then performed at Severn Craft Lodge in Stourport as they had an evening of promoting appendant orders.

Grand Conclave

This took place at Freemasons' Hall on Thursday the 14th of November. Great day in which four of our brethren received grand honours. We also able to enjoy friendship with our Warwickshire brethren at the festive board.



Worcestershire brethren after receiving their promotions



Worcestershire and Warwickshire at the festive board

Mark Masons' Hall have shared photographs of the event [here](#) and a movie [here](#).

Worcestershire and Warwickshire Sunday Lunch

This joint venture took place on Sunday the 17th of November at King's Heath. Here the Secret Monitors of Worcestershire and Warwickshire along with their partners enjoyed a Sunday lunch in good company and were able to exchange ideas.

We were honoured by the presence of R.Dist.Comp. Francis Spencer, Deputy Grand Summus for the Order of the Scarlet Cord and M.Wy.Bro. Andrew Sweeney, Grand Supreme Ruler for the Order of the Secret Monitor, they both being Worcestershire Masons.

This will hopefully be the first event of many more in which our neighbouring provinces can come together.



The king approves!



A great mix of Worcestershire and Warwickshire to each table



Flowers for the ladies

Right Worthy Brother Raymond Rooke

From our provincial recorder, 8.12.24:

“

R.Wy.Bro. Ray passed away... 7th December 2024, aged 81. Ray was a giant of Freemasonry in the West Midlands, and alongside R.Wy.Bro. David Carr Hooker and a number of other enthusiastic and dedicated Masons, was instrumental in promoting and growing lodges, chapters, councils, conclaves and preceptories. There will be lots of good things said about him, and I have my own memories of wonderful times in his company, but we have seen the passing of a legend.

At some time in his life, he was a member of 12 Craft Lodges (founder of 5), 5 HRA Chapters, 4 AMD Councils, 12 KT Preceptories, 11 Mark Lodges, 6 OSM Conclaves, 8 RAM Lodges, 2 Red Cross of Constantine Conclaves, 4 RSM Councils and a Scarlet Cord Consistory. He was an Honorary Member of many more.

A remarkable man, we'll remember him for many years to come.

”

Most Worthy Brother Michael Guest

This is taken from Freemasonry@86, 13.12.24

“

Farewell, Michael W Guest

It is with much sadness that I have to inform you that our well-beloved Past Grand Supreme Ruler, Most Worthy Brother Michael William Guest, passed to his rest on Friday, 6 December 2024 at the age of 86.

M.Wy.Bro. Michael was a distinguished Freemason, holding high office in many Orders of Freemasonry, and especially those administered from Mark Masons' Hall.

He served this Order as Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler for the then Province of the Midland Counties from 1995 until 2002, and as Grand Supreme Ruler from 2009 until 2014.

As recently as July of this year, M.Wy.Bro. Michael presided as the acting Grand Supreme Ruler and Installing Officer at the Installation of R.Wy.Bro. Robert Vaughan as Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler for Worcestershire.

Among the attendees that day were R.Wy.Bro. Howard Markham and R.Wy.Bro. Peter Wise, who had served M.Wy.Bro. Michael as Grand Counsellor and Grand Guide respectively. This gave M.Wy.Bro. Michael the opportunity to dust off his old joke about being the only Grand

Supreme Ruler to have Markham & Wise on his Grand Officer list.

As a keyholder to the fourth floor at Mark Masons' Hall, Michael had an endearing habit of silently appearing in the communal kitchen area and you would find him happily making himself a cup of tea.

One of Freemasonry's true gentlemen, he liked things done a certain way, and with dignity, but also with a smile.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Ann and the rest of his family.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE.

”

**** A reminder that we are observing a three-month mourning period during which black ties should be worn and summonses should carry a black border and statement of memory. ****

Finishing 2024 with a First Degree

On Tuesday the 17th of December Charles Hinit Conclave in Northfield carried out a first degree ceremony in which we inducted Brother Andy Davies into our Order. The ceremony was conducted with great competence by Supreme Ruler V.Wy.Bro Mike Saxon who was ably assisted by a team of their conclave's own members and also visiting brethren. In attendance were R.Wy.Bro Bob and also Wy.Bro Ian Bennett, Dep.Prov.G.S.R. for Shaffordshire and Shropshire

It was an excellent ceremony and very merry festive board.



And Finally

We do have brethren amongst us who are experiencing health problems, some of which are significant. What makes our Order special is of course how we look after each other and maintain the strong grip of friendship.

Remember that you can, and should, reach out to your visiting deacons who in turn can ask for help from the Order.

Hopefully 2025 will bring good health to us all and to our families.

Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.



Upcoming Dates

January 2025

Friday the 3rd

Worcester Conclave 186 meeting in King's Heath
(change of date)

Tuesday the 14th

Sabrina Conclave 486 meeting in Stourport. Installation

Saturday the 18th

The Lewis Conclave meeting in Northfield

Wednesday the 22nd

Sir Edward Elgar Conclave 527 meeting in Rainbow Hill.

February 2025

Wednesday the 19th

Bromsgrove Conclave 224 meeting in Kidderminster

March 2025

You all get a month off!

April 2025

Tuesday the 8th

Charles Hinitt Conclave 283 meeting in Northfield.

Wednesday the 23rd

Sir Edward Elgar Conclave 527 meeting in Rainbow Hill.

May 2025

Wednesday the 7th

Worcester Conclave 186 meeting in King's Heath.

Tuesday the 27th

Sabrina Conclave 486 meeting in Stourport.

June 2025

Tuesday the 3rd

Bromsgrove Conclave 224 meeting in Kidderminster
Installation

July 2025

Wednesday the 2nd

Ted Meredith Conclave No. 427 meeting in King's Heath.

Saturday the 19th

Provincial AGM at King's Heath

Saturday the 26th

The Lewis Conclave meeting in Northfield. Installation

Contact

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Provincial Recorder, W.Bro. Gareth Hughes WorcsOSM@gmail.com

WOSM on the Web

Web site

www.worcestershire-osm.com

Facebook group (private)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/WorcestershireOSM>

Facebook page (public-facing)

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61564080105660>

Right Worthy Brother Bob Vaughan's masonic account on X (formerly twitter)

<https://x.com/rwbrobob>

The Order of the Scarlet Cord, Midlands Counties Province

<https://midlandsscarletcord.com/>