



Rose Croix | District of Buckinghamshire



NOVEMBER 2018 - Good afternoon brethren and thank you for attending and giving me this opportunity to address you. It is billed as a seminar and I shall be open to questions at the end of my talk or afterwards in the bar

I must start by mentioning the loss of Trevor Stubbings. He was a stalwart of Chandos as well as of this chapter and is a great loss but I'm glad he got his 31° in February. We also lost Bill Bassett 32°, Colin Embley, Fred Crabtree, Keith Cullup, George Meredith and others.

To start us off in trying to build replacements for those brethren you perfected 11 new Princes in the year and had 13 joiners but overall, we lost a total 6 memberships in the year ending 1st August 2018. We now have some 320 members and retained the right to have 4 x 32° and 16 x 31°. You will of course see rather more than that just here today but as I'm sure you are aware we are permitted to recommend extra brethren into our authorised holding of 31° and 32°

appointments a certain number of years after each brother's initial conferment.

Most Recorders are now circulating their summonses to Recorders of the other 11 chapters and I hope each recipient sends that summons out to all his members. This should result in more visitors at our meetings. Whilst on the subject of emailing could I recommend that when Recorders are sending emails to multiple addressees, they should send it to themselves as primary addressee and put everyone else's email address in the bcc (behind cover copy) part of the address header. This isn't necessary if extra addressees need to know who else is getting it but listing all the email addressees isn't always desirable.

There are of course new rules about data protection but whilst I am not an expert, there seems to me to be no reason not to include names addresses and telephone numbers on the back of our summonses. If you are not sure how the revised rules apply to you, whatever position you occupy in the chapter, googling the phrase "ugle gdpr" will give very useful guidance.

The average attendance at our meetings has risen by 2 on average this year despite the average membership reducing by 2. 44% of our members are 30° and upwards which brings 2 points to mind – first, all our chapter members need to recruit more of our suitable friends to share their time with us and, second, those of us present today need to recruit more of our higher degrees members to join this chapter. We should also invite new Sovereigns and Generals to visit this chapter and indeed all of our Princes are most welcome if they can make the time available.

Please support the Chapters of Instruction at Winslow on the second Monday of each month and at Beaconsfield on the second Tuesday of each month. Most of us here do not necessarily need it ourselves having done the work already but our attendance at rehearsals bumps up the numbers and is more likely to encourage Marshals and Raphaels to learn how to present the ceremonies properly. There is no doubt that standing up and talking in a rehearsal environment assists in the learning process and produces a much better ceremony for our candidates.

I have attended 40 Rose Croix meetings in the calendar year since last November including meetings on 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th of this month. Robert de Turnham on Friday 9th will make for a busy time over the last 10 days but everyone has been enjoyable.

Nurture newer members – you may think that experienced freemasons don't need mentoring, but we should always dedicate time to newer members to help them understand the ceremony if necessary but also to keep them enthused and keen to progress.

Now to some Specifics of Ceremonies.

The Intermediate Degrees and the 2nd Point collar and signs can be conferred by Generals as well as Sovereigns and Past Sovereigns – indeed Generals should carry out this task at least once during their year in office – it reduces the amount of work which is required during a Sovereign's year.

I do not like to see the ritual for our ceremonies being read. There are undoubtedly some of our members whose age or infirmity makes learning new ritual extremely difficult but a large proportion of us persist in the effort and produce ceremonies which, while by no means word-perfect, are impressive for our candidates. If, despite what I have just said, some really do need the book, they must spend a reasonable amount of time reading it aloud to themselves beforehand so that the phrasing, cadence and meaning of the wonderful words comes across to the candidate.

About 95% of our members know not to cross their arms when forming the Living Circle at the beginning of the 3rd Point but there are still some who make that mistake. The solution is not for several people to shout out and disturb the silence which should attend our contemplation when filing in and around the room. If the error isn't fixed quickly by a neighbour simply (and silently) moving the perpetrator's hand to the correct place, then the DC should walk gently over and uncross the individual's arms and then return to his place. I think most DCs already remind the Princes just before they re-enter the lodge room for the 3rd Point about the desire for silence and that arms should be stretched out, not across, but mistakes will still occur. I would also recommend that if there are more than about 30 present then Princes should process around the room as pairs if space is available.

The Almoner is an important officer in the chapter, and it is nice to hear a fullish explanation of illnesses and absences or of course successes such as notable wedding anniversaries or grandchildren's achievements. However, I do not see the office of Almoner as responsible for collecting money – that would be the responsibility of a Charity Steward and we don't have such an officer in our chapters. I therefore think that Marshal and Raphael should circulate with the alms bags, preferably starting at the Sovereign and proceeding in opposite directions around the room. When they meet, they should advance towards the East with the bags and present the bags to the Almoner, who then turns and presents the bags to the Prelate who will turn and offer thanks to God. This procedure also saves the Almoner having to walk round and speeds up the collection.

My last point is that we do not run raffles or fund-raising activity at the festive board. We all have enough appeals for money in Craft, Mark and other Orders – let us keep Rose Croix meetings free of such goings-on. This is not a specific rule, it is a precedent set many years ago which I would wish to see continued and respected.

Finally, brethren, thank you for listening and I shall now attempt to answer your questions.

Peter Harborne 33°
Inspector General
Buckinghamshire