

**Newsletter No. 10 – December 2024**

It is nearly two years since I last drafted a City Gate Newsletter, and now that I am sitting in the Master’s Chair it seems most appropriate to pen another, and also to take the opportunity to wish you, and your family, a very

**Happy Christmas.**

May the festive Season bring joy, relaxation, and perhaps just a little over indulgence. My good lady and I will not be going far so it will be a family celebration at home.

November 2023 marked ten years of City Gate Lodge, and also a turning point. Demographics showed we needed new blood if we were to enjoy a second decade, and a hard look at ourselves had highlighted a need to revitalise our communications, both between members and with the wider world.

November 2023 also saw us lose patience with Innholders’ Hall, and arrange a move to a new home at Wax Chandlers’ Hall, in Gresham Street. We managed to retain our usual meeting dates. There is not quite so much elbow room at Wax Chandlers’ but the warmth of the welcome and the excellent dining arrangements means we have made a very good move. The Beadle there could not be more helpful.

November 2023 saw a new Master installed in the Chair for what has turned out to be a tremendous year. We did mark our ten years since consecration appropriately. We welcomed two Joining Members and balloted for two Initiates.

2023 ended on a sad note with the death of Nigel Horsfall in December. Nigel was a Founder, our first Inner Guard, and our Worshipful Master in 2017. He donated a Commando Dagger for use as our Poniard, and it is very sharp indeed. He had resigned due to failing health but that did not detract from his contribution and we properly remembered him at our March 2024 meeting.

At that first meeting at Wax Chandlers’ Hall, we Initiated two new members and the occasion was particularly memorable by the delivery of the First Tracing Board by a guest, who was immediately targeted as a potential Joining Member, especially since he has expertise in websites and digital communications. A willing volunteer, he started to put together a City Gate website.

We have a choice of four caterers at our new home, and it was decided to try them out to see who best fits our needs. The results have been most satisfactory so far, though a favourite is emerging. The Hall allows us to supply our own drink, with no corkage, so we are able to provide quality wine at supermarket prices. We just get it delivered, and the Beadle does the rest, cooling whites, and providing bin storage for any not used, though that is rare.

July saw us Pass an Entered Apprentice to the Degree of a Fellowcraft, Though it did not go exactly as planned. Our Senior Deacon fell in his garden that morning and injured himself. A guest stepped in as SD and did a fine job. Our Junior Warden delivered an excellent long version of the Second Degree Working Tools.

Which brings me to two important points going forward. We have decreed that our ritual shall be Emulation, but the long tools is not Emulation. However, it is felt that it benefits everyone if we add odd bits of non-Emulation ritual into our work, the long tools being one such example, and the Universal Investiture of a Tyler being another. If something is good, why not use it. Accordingly, note of that has been made in a re-drafting of our Founders’ Document, which has become necessary anyway because of the move to Wax Chandlers’ Hall. This re-drafted document has been circulated, and comments are welcome, before it is formally approved by our GP Committee in the New Year.

We had another sad event in September when Ivor Cook died after a period of illness. A Founder and active member until he fell ill, he will be greatly missed. A eulogy was given at our November meeting, a meeting which saw an official visit by our Grand Inspector, a ballot and then an Initiation followed by a further ballot and the welcoming of five Joining Members. They all hail from the West Country, and thus strongly add to the SW contingent. Then there was the matter of my Installation into the Master’s Chair, an event I could not have imagined when we consecrated the Lodge. One that I am still nervous about.

Three of the new Joiners were immediately put to work. One was invested as Senior Deacon (and manager of our new website), one was invested as a Steward, and one gave an excellent Address to the Brethren. I think City Gate has achieved something special by now having a complete line-up of Light Blue Progressive Officers, none of whom have ever been through the Chair. So, Investitures in the future we will see the full ceremony, and there certainly will not be time for anything else.

Appropriate now to mention the City Gate Lodge website. Up and running and accessible at [citygate.freemasons.london](http://citygatelodge.freemasons.london/). There is a private Members’ Area which can be accessed by creating an account via the “Register” page on the website, the link to which is located to the far right of the Home Page and is highlighted in yellow. We also have a Facebook page.

The existence of the website and Facebook page has already generated expressions of interest in either being Initiated into or joining the Lodge and our Membership Officer now finds himself with quite a bit of work to do. Some of the interest looks quite promising. I am also pleased to report that our very first Initiate is re-joining the Lodge. I hope to welcome him back in March.

Of course there are other important things to mention, not least charity. In the last four meetings we donated £2300 to charity, including the Air Ambulance Appeal, a food bank, the British Legion, Life Lights, the National Autistic Society, the Multiple Sclerosis Society and Flint House (the National Police Rehabilitation Centre}. Something of which we can be rightly proud. Now comes a little moan on my part. Although we raise good charitable income from collections at meetings, there is a meniscal amount being donated by Members by means of monthly standing order. It is appreciated that some members belong to other Lodges where they so contribute, but many are solely City Gate and I see no reason why they should not commit to regular monthly donations, even of a nominal amount. That way we can guarantee a regular charity income. I have tasked the new Charity Steward to address this issue.

In order that we promote happiness so that every member feels valued, every member can have a voice, every member can have aspirations which are noted, and above all that we can move forward with a common accord, I have tasked the Mentor to ensure that we have a mentoring structure that is fit for purpose and works on a practical level. Please give him your cooperation.

City Gate likes to show off its ritual, and in this past year the Worshipful Master displayed awesome skill in delivering ritual. A very hard act to follow and I am not going to match his expertise. Indeed, it is my intention to allow others to show off by vacating the Chair in their favour for ritual delivery. So Past Masters can step up and show their skill, and others can do bits of the ritual from the floor, so that we involve as many as possible in the delivery of our ceremonies, an aim originally expressed in our Founders’ Document.

Rehearsals have always been difficult, given the geographical spread of our membership, so our Director of Ceremonies is exploring virtual practice using zoom or other digital platforms. Let us use technology to our advantage.

That geographical spread also makes attendance at any Lodge social event problematical. Only one got off the ground last year, a guided walk of hidden gardens in the City on 24th June, followed by a meal. It would be nice if we could have a social side to our City Gate membership, but I am acutely aware of the practical difficulties. A regular social event in the early years of the Lodge was a Sunday Summer lunch by the Thames. I might well try and resurrect that. As to organising events, very difficult when living in rural Devon. However, if anyone would like to step up as social secretary I will be very pleased to hear from them.

The principle events for 2025 are our meetings which are Monday 10th March, Thursday 3rd July, and Friday 7th November. **Put these dates in your diary now!**

The last year can best be described as one when the Lodge really moved forward and started to get fit for the next decade. A lot of credit for that must go to the retiring Secretary, who saw the problems, pushed the Lodge to address them, and worked to get us a good new home.

The Lodge is quite strong now, with 57 members, new blood in the ranks, and with a good prospect of more members. We must not be complacent, there is still hard work to be done.

Graham

Worshipful Master 2024-25,

02.12.24.