

Thames Valley Allied Masonic Degrees



Gridiron Gossip *Autumn/Winter Edition 2025*



Annual District Meeting 2025

The District meeting was held at the Bletchley Masonic Centre on Saturday 18 October, presided over by the District Grand Prefect, R W Bro Robert William Chevin. With over 85 members and guests from all points of the compass, the District Grand Prefect was delighted to welcome 11 District Grand Prefects and representatives of 5 other Districts. Whilst welcoming the honoured guests of the District it was a delight to also welcome the following Heads of Orders; W Bro Graham Dearing (Most Excellent Grand Superintendent of the Provincial Royal Arch of Buckinghamshire), W Bro Keith Bristow (Provincial Grand Master of the Provincial Mark Master Masons of Buckinghamshire), V W Bro James Hilditch (Provincial Grand Master for the Cotswolds Province of The Royal Order of Scotland and Grand Treasurer of Orders at Mark Masons Hall), R W Bro Ron Bridger (Past District Grand Prefect, Grand Superintendent and High Priest of District No 16 Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests, Past 3rd Grand Master Mason The Operatives, and Past Deputy Grand Master Mason & Senior Past Master for Southern Counties), W Bro Silverio Ostrowski (Intendant-General Middlesex Division Red Cross of Constantine and Provincial Grand Summus of the Scarlet Cord, The Chilterns). W Bro Alan Baverstock (Deputy Provincial Grand Master for Oxfordshire and Intendant General Thames Division Red Cross of Constantine).



On his final official visit before stepping down from his role, the meeting was delighted to welcome R W Bro Ian Bailey, the Deputy Grand Master. Ian was warmly welcomed into the District meeting and chose not to accept the proffered gavel!

Having dealt with all matters of an administrative nature, the District Grand Prefect announced that he was appointing W Bro Paul Rush as his Deputy. Before the Deputy District Grand Prefect (designate) was admitted, he wished to place on record his enormous thanks to W Bro Simon Gillas, who was standing down as the Deputy District Grand Prefect, for all he had undertaken during his tenure in the role and was disappointed that Simon had to apologise for his absence at the meeting today, due to his mother's ill-health. W Bro Paul was admitted into District Grand Lodge with 2 cushion bearers and 4 escorts and was duly obligated and invested as the Deputy District Grand Prefect, and a warning that life was about to get busier!

Having invested his District Officers of the year and welcomed the most recent candidates to be Admitted into the Order, the District Grand Prefect received the Mark Grand Master's Keystone Collarette and Jewel, presented by the Deputy Grand Master, to mark the generous donation made by the District towards the Mark Grand Master's Keystone Fund.



There followed the District Grand Prefect's address, which provided the opportunity for the District Grand Prefect to thank his Executives for their time and effort in ensuring the success of the meeting. In particular, he thanked the District Secretary, W Bro Peter Rawlinson, for all his hard work that ensured all in attendance had a seat in the temple and at the luncheon to follow. Likewise, he thanked him for his checks and balances and his sound advice and wise counsel.

Equally, the District Grand Prefect expressed his thanks to the District Grand Director of Ceremonies and his team who had the unenviable task of ensuring all members and guests, including the District Officers of the year, entered the lodge at the right time and in the correct seat.

Finally, thanks were expressed for the District Stewards, acting as car park attendants, who ensured that everybody was squeezed in tightly without incident.





Thames Valley District Officers 2025/2026



W Bro Brian Farrelly as **DGSW**
VW Bro Brian Roake as **DGChap**
W Bro Peter Rawlinson as **DG Sec**
W Bro Tim Hatton as **DepDGDC**
W Bro Tom Spurrier as **DGJD**
Bro Paul Gausden as **DGSwdB**
Bro Gill Singleton as **DGOrg**
Bro Paul Harrison as **DGStwd**

W Bro Silverio Ostrowski as **DGJW**
W Bro Ralph Newall as **DGTreas**
W Bro Kevin Willaims as **DGDC**
W Bro David Tremaine as **DGSD**
W Bro Roger Hook as **AsstDGDC**
Bro Eugene Gratwohl as **DGStdB**
Bro David Hurst as **DGIG**
Bro Nick Wilson as **DGStwd**

Bro Ian Clabon as **DGTyler**

W Bro Stephen Pope as **PDGSW**

W Bro Terry Foley as **PDGJW**

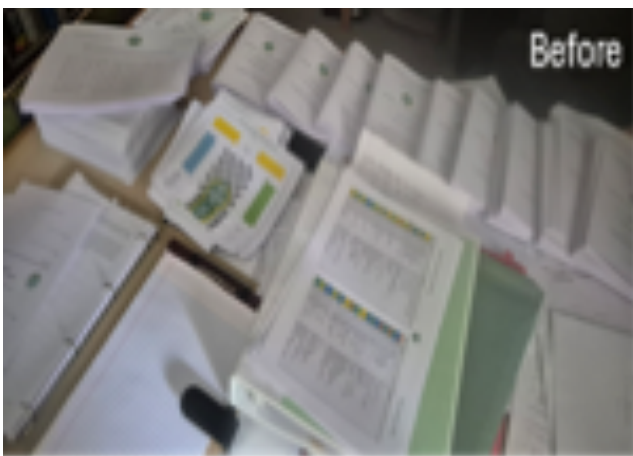
W Bro Andrew Stephens as **PDGSD**



Secretary's Musings

As the year draws to a close, I look back on what has been my first year as District Grand Secretary for the Thames Valley. Over the year it has kept me constantly busy from responding to other District's Annual Meeting invitations to supporting our Councils. Whether that be chasing up the inevitable paperwork (or being chased) or distributing invitations to District Officers to make up numbers where needed.

District events over the last 12 months have included two District visits to Richard Mordant and Cowper and Newton Councils, 2 Red Cross of Babylon Ceremonies conducted by both Rollright and Richard Mordaunt Councils with District help and the inaugural District Grand Prefect's Lunch at the Bell in Winslow.



The high point of the year is, of course, the Annual Meeting of the District, which keeps the District Grand Secretary busy for the weeks beforehand moving from organised chaos to neat piles to be taken to the Temple at Bletchley.



In the end it all paid off with a new Dep DGP Installed, District Officers appointed and invested and the presentation of the District Keystone Fund collarette. Ending with everyone being fed at the Festive Board afterwards

I would like to thank the Secretaries of our individual Councils for their support and cooperation over the last year. Finally, good wishes to all the Brethren and their loved ones for Christmas and may you have a happy and healthy new year.



Around the District

District Luncheon at The Bell Hotel

On Sunday 14 September the District Grand Prefect and his wife, Claire, hosted a luncheon at that well known hostelry in Winslow, The Bell Hotel, renowned for its carvery and warm welcome. This was the first occasion the District Grand Prefect had arranged such an event during his tenure and was delighted that the occasion was marked with the attendance of 38 brethren and their ladies. Aside from the excellent food, a raffle was held raising £200 towards the District's charitable causes. Hopefully, following the success of this occasion, it is hoped that the event can be an annual gathering, possibly at another venue within the 4 Provinces that comprises the District.



Grand Masters Keystone Fund



The District having subscribed to the Mark Grand Masters Keystone Fund, and having been presented with the collarette and jewel, the District Grand Prefect is delighted to announce that Cowper & Newton Council has just become the latest recipient of the award. It is hoped that other Councils of the District will follow this example and show their support of the Fund whilst becoming a Keystone Council, in perpetuity.

The cost for a Council to subscribe is £25/member, plus £60 for the jewel. Where funds might not be plentiful, some Councils are holding a series of raffles to raise the required subscription or using the alms collection of one of their meetings. Whichever method is adopted, it is hoped as many of the District Councils will endeavour to achieve this aim. There is, of course, the opportunity for individuals to become a patron of the Fund with a personal donation; the reward for which is a breast jewel associated with the Order. The cost to subscribe is £150.



Grand Council Meeting

At this year's Grand Council meeting, held at Freemasons' Hall, on Tuesday 28 October, the District was honoured with 5 members receiving appointments in Grand Rank and each is to be congratulate on their preferment.



*W Bro Keith Bristow
Promoted to PGJD*



*VW Bros Phillip Purvis and Alastair
Mason promoted to PGReg & W Bro
Silverio Ostrowski appointed GStwd*



*W Bro Simon Gillas
Promoted to PGSD*

....and finally! Christmas is looming and all that that entails. For many of us it will be a time to enjoy the company of our family and friends as we gather to celebrate in our respective traditional ways. Being the time of peace on earth and goodwill to all mankind we are minded to reflect on those who, for whatever reason, might not be as fortunate as ourselves. Our masonic values can play an important part in helping those who are in dire straits, especially at this time.

On behalf of my wife, Claire, and myself, I wish you and your loved ones a happy festive season and hope that the occasion provides you with some solace away from the trials and tribulations surrounding us in these uncertain times.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

RW Bro Robert W Chevin

District Grand Prefect

