



## Rose Croix | District of Buckinghamshire



### INSPECTOR GENERAL'S FORUM – NOVEMBER 24

Princes all, this is my eighth annual Inspector General's Forum and it is so true that time flies. Last year of course I was somewhat frustrated by the fact that I had been informed the day before that the Order was to be opened up to Craft masons who were not Christians but also told that no mention of this change was to be made public until that Thursday, the day after our Higher Degrees Chapter meeting. Now of course everyone is in the picture and I am pleased that almost all our chapters have already adopted the 2024 ritual and, by 31<sup>st</sup> December, all of them will have done. We lost 7 members who resigned because they felt they could not cope with the Order no longer being restricted to Trinitarian Christians and I know many others initially had reservations. However, the ceremonies continue to tell the Easter story in much the same way as that mandated in the 2008 ritual and it is still a very satisfying masonic degree. We can continue to commend Faith, Hope, Charity and Tolerance to all our candidates and I know a number of recent candidates of other Faiths have thoroughly enjoyed their Perfections. Long may that continue.

I am delighted to welcome V Ill Bro David Jarvis from Berkshire to be with us today and it is a great shame Oxfordshire's Inspector General Bernie Wegerhoff couldn't be with us too. He is of course head of the Order of the Secret Monitor for Oxford, Berks and Bucks as well, now, as an Assistant ProVGM in Oxfordshire Craft so his being busy elsewhere this evening isn't too much of a surprise. Ill Bro Eugene Gratwohl is here as my guest from Oxfordshire and it is also very nice to see some red 18° collars present – I look forward to seeing you here as often as you can manage and perhaps as members in due time when you gain your 30°.

Paul Savage has done a super bit of detective work to produce the accounts we agreed earlier. Normally of course, accounts should be presented just prior to the new Sovereign being Enthroned (as per Rule 51). Exceptions and difficulties do occasionally arise, usually through problems with banks after a Treasurer change, but chapters must always advise the DR and me, with reasons, if there is going to be a problem.

You will all know that Ill Bro Peter Moody has dug his escape tunnel from the District Recorder appointment and has now handed over to Mike Clanfield. I have already thanked Peter in numerous assemblies and tonight should be no exception – you did a terrific job for me Peter and we all thank you for your perseverance in offering counsel and support on so many occasions. Mike hit the ground running for this year's annual returns cycle and I know he and I will continue to offer you our support whenever required.

The last person I will commend specifically today is Ill Bro James Blackhurst. Despite being a very busy man in other Orders, he is Recorder for this chapter as well as for Robert de Turnham and is also our webmaster for which I am very grateful. He was elected to the 31<sup>st</sup> Degree last year and attended the actual ceremony in January. He is therefore listed of course in our District Handbook along with the

advancement of Peter Moody, Peter Corbett and Bill Thomas to the 32<sup>nd</sup> degree, Dave Pitwell and Rob Chaproniere to the 31<sup>st</sup> degree along with James, and Mel Shah, Mike Power, Richard Florio and Martin Blair receiving their 30<sup>th</sup> Degree. The handbook was distributed by Mike Clanfield a couple of months ago and every member of the District should have a copy, in their phone, tablet or computer or, as I have mine, neatly printed and stapled in hard copy.

Since this meeting last year I have attended 22 meetings of our 11 chapters in the District as well as 4 meetings in other Districts and 15 Higher Degrees meetings at Duke Street in London. Six of those Higher Degree meetings have been 33<sup>o</sup> ceremonies, usually for incoming Inspectors General and I can tell you that it is a very enjoyable and thought-provoking experience. As I said earlier, I have now been in post for 8 years and Supreme Council seem to be giving IGs 10 years in post and then selecting a successor so it seems likely that one of you will be standing here in 2 years time wearing a white and gold sash and a black cap.

I have been impressed with the work which has been evident in the ritual delivery at almost all of my chapter visits and I thank the Preceptors of our 2 District Chapters of Instruction for their time and expertise in helping those who attend to improve their efforts. I shall continue to encourage all our members to attend these sessions when they can, especially all Sovereigns, Marshals and Raphaels.

I am also well aware of the efforts put in by the members at many of our chapters in setting up the meeting rooms ready for ceremonies. It can be awkward at several meeting places to re-arrange the furniture and fittings into the required configuration but those of you who have visited Aylesbury, Buckingham or North Crawley and especially perhaps Kimble, will realise how lucky we at Slough and Beaconsfield are. There is some effort involved at all centres when setting up for meetings but some are definitely easier than others. I thank those who have set up for us this evening and am glad for them that it can be left in place for our Robert de Turnham meeting on Friday. Thank you to all the furniture carriers at all of our chapters and I hope there will continue to be lots of you.

The King Edward the Seventh chapter demonstrates one or two of the Intermediate degrees in full each year. They are always popular either at Gt Queen Street in April or at three other venues around the country. I always attend in London and I recommend the meetings to you all if you can spare the time. Next year they will be demonstrating the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> degrees as the first of the cycle of demonstrations.

I will leave you with a final point to ponder. The Strategy 2024 booklet from Buckinghamshire Craft has a target for 2027 of 3000 Craft members. The Royal Arch Strategy has a target for 2027 of 1050 members. In July this year we had just 193 individual members and I would ask each of you to do your bit, in the revised recruiting environment now available to us, to push our numbers up from less than 7% of the Bucks Craft members to nearer 10%. This cannot be achieved without a good deal of effort but an average of 2 candidates per chapter each year, accompanied by some good fortune in reduced deaths and resignations would see us well on the way. You are all in Craft lodges and many of you are in Royal Arch chapters, Mark lodges and other Orders besides, so there is your target market. Suggest to all with whom you meet and talk that they would enjoy our ceremonies and that we would enjoy their company – let us all do our best to spread our message wider and increase our membership.

There is a prayer in all our masonic assemblies and I offer one now. May God, by whatever name we choose to use in appealing to Him, prosper our endeavours to grow our chapters and to continue to enjoy our fellowship in our wonderful Order.

Thank you Princes.

Peter Harborne 33<sup>o</sup>  
Inspector General  
Buckinghamshire