

## Mentoring Seminar – 6<sup>th</sup> October 2012



Back row: WBro Dave Hubbard MBE, WBro John Winslow, WBro John Churchman, Bro Mike Johnson, WBro Peter Baldwin, Bro Polycarpus Kyriacou, WBro John Roberts.

Middle row: WBro Ian Stephen, WBro Kevin Motyer, WBro Robin Gibbs, WBro Tony Gross, WBro Ian McLean, WBro Angelos Kyriacouides

Seated: WBro Jon Maybery, Bro Ray Hynes, WBro Bill Hayes, WBro Andrew Theocharous, WBro Thalys Petrides

### Mentoring Seminar, Kapetanios Hotel, Limassol

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2012 10.30 – 12.30

Present: WBros A Theocharous, R W Cowin, D O V Hubbard MBE, I McLean, P Baldwin, J Churchman, R Gibbs, A Gross, W Hayes, A Kyriacouides, J Maybery, K Motyer, Th Petrides, J W Roberts, I Stephen, J Winslow. Bros R Hynes, M Johnson and P L Kyriacou.

Apologies: RWBro Th S Theodossiou, VWBro E S Williams, WBros K Andreou, L Harakis and R Witherick

#### Welcome

WBro Cowin welcomed those present, thanked them for attending and outlined the programme for the morning. Since time allowed, the August circular letter from the Grand Secretary, VWBro Nigel Brown - addressed to Lodge Secretaries - and the letters to Lodge Mentors and Personal Mentors were circulated prior to the commencement of the meeting. It was explained that these would be transmitted to Lodge Secretaries with the recommendation that the two letters be circulated to all Lodge members as requested by the Grand Secretary.

## Introduction by WBro Cowin

"Mentoring, a currently fashionable concept in commerce and industry, is NOT new in Freemasonry. Conscientious Proposers and Seconders, and caring lodge members have ALWAYS acted as 'wise and trusted guides' (Collins). UGLE are using the business interpretation of the role – 'the practice of assigning a junior member of staff to the care of a more experienced person who assists him in his career.' (Collins) The Oxford Thesaurus allows us to use adviser, coach, guide, instructor, oracle, teacher, thinker, and tutor as synonyms for mentor.

What IS new, however, is the emphasis now being placed upon what needs to be done in order to enable individuals to get as much enjoyment, satisfaction and personal fulfilment from their membership of UGLE. The development of mentoring materials has been taking place for several years within Provinces and is now being launched with great enthusiasm by the most senior members of the Craft – as those of you who listened to our Grand Secretary, VWBro Nigel Brown during our annual meetings in May witnessed.

We in the District are particularly fortunate to have had WBros Finney, Hubbard and McLean working tirelessly to compile and make available through the District Education Centre a wealth of materials to be used by Lodge Educations Officers and those MMs who wish to broaden their knowledge. The Education Officer was never an 'office'. However, so close is the perceived purpose of the Lodge Mentor to that previously undertaken by the Education Officer that the Education Team have happily transformed themselves into the Mentoring Team and have very kindly agreed to continue to oversee the creation, refinement and management of their wonderful materials.

I would like to take you through the 'thinking' of Grand Lodge and their approach to Mentoring, for I believe that many misconceptions are to be found in our lodges – misconceptions that we need your assistance in correcting. I would like to read a paper presented to the Annual Mentoring Seminar last March by the Grand Secretary on behalf of the Pro Grand Master."

## Fourth Mentors Conference – March 2012

I would like to give you an overview of our various initiatives and how they fit together into our overall strategy. You are all very well aware of the many factors that have been affecting the Craft over the last thirty years or so. All of which resulted in a negative image for Freemasonry, discrimination against our members and despite a rise in the population as a whole a steady decline in our own numbers. Whilst we are not alone in having a declining membership, I believe that we have something special to offer and that there are many men, who if they joined would enjoy and benefit from their membership, just as we have done.

So what is our strategy and how do you and the Mentors fit into it? Our first task was to counter unfair discrimination that our members were facing mainly in public office, local government and the armed services and to promote a positive image of the Craft. You will all know that Jack Straw had to change the Government's stance on Freemasonry and the Judiciary. Local Government has had to remove its discriminatory enquiries into membership of Freemasonry. At the same time both at a National and Local level we have

been talking to the Press, Chief Constables, Local Radio and Television to counter the misunderstandings that have arisen about the Craft. We have encouraged local Masonic Halls to open their doors to the public and we have promoted this building as a venue for Films, Fashion Shows, Launch Parties and other events. Whilst it brings in welcome revenue it has also meant the last year alone 50,000 members of the general public came into Freemasons' Hall to see for themselves that we had nothing to hide.

We have also reviewed our image on the Internet. Grand Lodge now has two sites. The Grand Lodge Website which is outwardly facing and is mainly for the use of the general public and prospective members, looking for information about Freemasonry, and the Freemasonry Today website which is for our members. This not only has copies of the latest edition of the magazine, but also other topical items of news and interest. In addition nearly every Province and District has its own website as do many Lodges.

All of this has made the Craft more accessible than ever before and is helping to dispel the myths and misinformation that have grown up about us. At the same time we have been developing the Universities Scheme. If young men become interested in Freemasonry and find it enjoyable then we are building a firm foundation for the future and they are spreading the word to the next generation.

But the best way to show the world what we stand for and that we have nothing to hide is through our members. If we have 250,000 members of the Craft talking confidently and competently to friends and family about their membership and why they enjoy it then word will quickly spread like ripples on a pond in ever increasing circles.

Brethren - enjoyment is the key and enjoyment comes through involvement and understanding and that is where the mentor comes in. When I addressed Grand Lodge last December I said that there were three stages to Mentoring. The first two cover logistics and a basic understanding of the ritual and developing a sense of belonging. The third is how to talk about our Freemasonry to the non-mason. To be able to do this confidently and competently our members must have a sense of involvement and understanding that comes from the other two stages.

I have said on many occasions that the key to our future is quality candidates, that is - men who will "come to appreciate the value of masonry" and who will indelibly imprint on their hearts its sacred dictates. But we must look after these candidates, make them feel welcome in fact treat them as we would wish to be treated ourselves. It is a simple message, the right men, properly looked after, enjoying and understanding what they have joined. We need these men to talk about their membership to others of like mind, who may then become interested enough to want to join as well.

I see pastoral care being – at the very least – eighty per cent of what mentoring is all about. Put simply, the real test is how you would like to have been welcomed when you first joined

and how you would like to have been supported from then onwards. I do not want, nor I am sure do any of us, to have a complicated or onerous scheme – rather one that is as natural as possible yet, at the same time, allowing consistency of advice and support.

The first stage is for each candidate to understand the basic logistics that are involved in becoming a Freemason. It is really about a proper welcome. I am not going into that in detail today – other than to say that a candidate should never feel under briefed and should be made aware of his financial and time commitment. During this stage the personal mentor answers any questions the candidate may have for him to gain a sense of belonging. In other words, there should never be any surprises.

The second stage is to understand the basics of the ritual, especially after initiation and then passing and raising. This understanding should lead to the ability to answer questions about the myths that non Masons have – so that right from the start, members can counter the questions about the so-called funny handshakes, the nooses and trouser leg being rolled up – all these classics. The questions on these myths need to be answered accurately and without embarrassment. I am not talking about an in depth knowledge, but more a common understanding. The Mentor can, of course, point them in the right direction for this additional and important information as they require it. I also see the Orator Scheme having an important part to play here. The Grand Secretary and the Grand Orator are working together to produce a range of talks that will help the brethren in their understanding of masonry.

We all understand the need to look after candidates, but it is the third stage of giving them the confidence – from the very outset – in order that they can speak to, in particular, family and friends about Freemasonry. That, Brethren, is vital to ensuring the future. A candidate – and indeed this applies equally to the rest of us – needs to understand how to talk to the non-Mason about what Freemasonry means. The aim is to have as many members as possible as ambassadors for Freemasonry.

Brethren let me repeat what I said in December that an ambassador is not a rank or office - it is a mode of behaviour. On the fundamental understanding that we recruit only people who live up to our principles – an ambassador will not only understand the basics of ritual but also, importantly will be able and willing, with our support and guidance, to talk to family and friends about their Freemasonry, as and when appropriate. We need to have confidence in them to do so competently. To quote the Grand Master, "Talking openly about Freemasonry, as appropriate, is core to my philosophy, central to our communications strategy and essential to the survival of Freemasonry as a respected and relevant membership organisation".

I hope that I have set in context the work you are going to do today. Firstly in helping Lodges to effectively adopt the new office of Mentor and secondly in discussing ways in which mentors can help our members become confident and competent ambassadors for Freemasonry. We at Grand Lodge will give you every support.

In a nutshell brethren our strategy is:

- To promote a positive image of the craft.
- To remove discrimination towards our members.
- To encourage the right men to join.
- To help them enjoy their membership.
- To encourage them to talk positively about Freemasonry.
- Thus completing the circle.

This is our strategy and you, brethren, and the Lodge and Personal Mentors are key to its success. "

#### IT and Internet Security

WBro Cowin then invited WBro Ian McLean, District Webmaster and mentoring Scheme team member, to advise those present on this extremely important topic.

"Good morning Brethren,

For those who don't know me I am WBro Ian Mclean, currently WM of Apollo Lodge and member of the District Mentoring team. But today I want to speak to you with my District Webmaster's hat on.

Firstly let me briefly explain the function of District Webmaster. I have been district webmaster for about 8 years now, I am answerable to the District Grand Secretary (my boss) and my duties are to keep the District Grand Lodge of Cyprus website up to date, to administer the DGL of Cyprus email system and email groups system, to keep a watching brief on the security of our website and email system and as I am doing here today to talk to the Brethren of the District about computer security and privacy issues.

As a Lodge Mentor you probably have personal information about Candidates and new members on your computer. The following is some useful guidance about safeguarding this information from falling into the wrong hands.

The following guidance not only applies to keeping your Masonic data safe but equally important your personal data too.

#### Passwords

A familiar topic for Freemasons. Make sure your computer is password protected so that

Unauthorized persons cannot start up your computer without the correct password.

Also if using a screensaver, in the screensaver settings there is an option to require the Password to come out of 'screensaver mode'. This will protect your computer if you leave it unattended for a short time. If you're leaving your computer unattended for a longer period of time, then log off or switch it off.

### User Accounts

For normal use log onto your computer using a normal user account, not one with administrator privileges, this way if someone does hack into your computer using your user account they will not be able to change any system settings. If you need to change settings you can log off and then log on as an administrator. Don't use the same password for both accounts.

### Password protect files

Files such as MS Word documents, XL documents and Adobe PDF documents can be password protected. See the help files in these programs for information on how to do this. You should consider password protecting documents containing personal or

Confidential information about members.

### 'Memory Sticks'

Memory sticks are now freely available at all computer shops and plug into your computer's USB ports. These are essentially removable drives and act just like an extra hard drive when plugged into your computer. In addition to the steps above, consider saving your password protected documents onto a memory stick. This has the advantage that you can carry it with you and the files are not on your computer.

### Keeping up to date

It goes without saying that everybody who uses a computer should have good anti-virus software installed on their PC and laptop. It is equally important that you keep this software up to date. Most good anti-virus programs have a built-in auto-update function which will automatically download all the latest virus definitions to keep your computer safe. However, to do this your computer has to be switched on long enough for the update to initialize, download and install. I had a case recently when someone got a virus on their computer even with good anti-virus software on board. The computer in question was a laptop, but this advice applies to all PC's. It turned out that the owner was in the habit of leaving his laptop switched off and only switching it on long enough to check emails and then he switched it off again. Not long enough for the laptop to do its' anti-virus update but long enough for it to get infected from an email he had opened. So my advice is this, if you do not leave your computer on for any significant length of time, whilst using it click on the anti-virus icon and update the definitions manually. The same applies to Windows updates which are equally important in protecting your computer. However, if your computer is on all the time or for several hours, the updates should occur automatically. But, if in doubt, do the updates manually.

## Virus Threats

It has been estimated that in normal web surfing and usage it only takes between 5 and 15 minutes for an unprotected computer to become infected with some kind of virus or malware. So what can you do?

Emails:

- NEVER open an email attachment from someone you don't know.
- NEVER ignore a virus warning or system warning thinking you know better.
- If you are in any doubt about an attachment you have opened carry out a full virus scan to be safe.
- NEVER answer any email purporting to come from a bank or similar institution asking you for any personal information or warning you that your account has been hacked/accidentally deleted or any other reason. This is called phishing and the senders are trying to trick you into giving them your personal information.

## Username & Passwords:

NEVER use the same username and password for different email or other online accounts such as eBay or PayPal and include letters, numbers and symbols in your password as this makes it very much harder to crack.

## Web Surfing:

It has been estimated that approximately 18% of all websites on the internet are infected with some form of malware including viruses. If your browser is up to date the chances are it will pick up the threat and warn you. You may get the option to proceed to the site anyway. Again unless you are sure the site is safe then do not go there.

## Google and other Search Engines:

Malware sites often have names similar to well-known and popular websites such as Gooble instead of Google. When you do a search for Google, the Gooble site will appear on the list and people sometimes will click on the wrong site on the list because they are not paying full attention and will be taken to the dangerous site where their computer will be infected very quickly.

## Real and Hoax Threats:

There are very many real viruses out there in the wild. There are also as many hoaxes out there too. As well as keeping your virus checker updated from time to time, you should go onto the website of your virus checker and check the latest news. This is the only place where you can be sure the information is accurate.

NEVER take at face value any email which tells you that unless you send it to EVERYONE on your contacts list all sorts of nasty things will happen...you just have to do one thing, send it to the recycle

bin. The sender has probably thought he has done a good thing by forwarding it to you as asked, but he is wrong for the following reasons:

- The information is probably false and the accuracy of its contents was not checked before forwarding it.
- If there happened to be some malware on the senders computer it would have sent a copy of the email to its creator thereby giving him all the email addresses on the list.
- Most importantly, this type of activity, with everyone sending the warning to everyone on their contact list increases internet traffic exponentially and slows the whole internet down, especially email servers, which was the intention of the author of the hoax in the first place.

So if you get such an email bin it and let the sender know so they don't send it out to anyone else. If you not sure if the warning is valid or not, do your own research using the email's header as the Google search criterion.

As always I am available to assist if your computer begins to behave badly. My contact details are below:

WBro. Ian McLean, Webmaster, Cyprus Freemasons [webmaster@cyprus-freemasons.org.cy](mailto:webmaster@cyprus-freemasons.org.cy)

[www.cyprus-freemasons.org.cy](http://www.cyprus-freemasons.org.cy)

Tel: 99951952"

### The District Mentoring Scheme

WBro Hubbard gave a comprehensive description of the materials available through the Mentoring Scheme and explained how access can be gained via the District Website. In explaining the background to the work undertaken by the Education Team, he highlighted the structure and progressive nature of the Factsheets and the importance of the Training Manual in enabling the Personal Mentor to understand and expand upon the information within each pack – Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason. He also highlighted the usefulness of 'the Mentor's toolkit' – a collection of rituals, UGLE and commercial publications to refer to and draw upon.

In addition he highlighted the other areas of the Mentoring section of the website. The District Grand Lodge supports the use of the Mentoring Scheme and urges lodges to draw upon the available materials in nurturing brethren throughout their progression to MM. It was not the intention of the scheme to 'dictate' methodology to lodges, but to ensure that a commonly accepted body of information and development materials should be available to all – including those beyond the rank of MM who had not enjoyed such support in their earlier years in Freemasonry.

The significance of the Fact Sheets being presented by the WM upon the attainment of a degree was explained, and the usefulness of the Candidate's Training Record in monitoring the progress made by each individual brother highlighted. It was emphasized that the Proposer and Secunder of a candidate ought to be considered most appropriate to fulfil the Personal Mentor's role – however, it would occasionally be necessary to allocate an alternative brother in order to engender a close and fruitful working relationship.

WBro Hubbard emphasized the importance of an acquired appreciation - of both symbolism and history - acting as a bulwark in defence of long established tradition and understanding.



## Open Forum

In a wide-ranging and informative debate the following topics were touched upon;

- The need to avoid undue haste in proposing candidates. The importance of utilising social or informal meetings to assess suitability.
- The importance of achieving 'professional' standards in the initial interview – both in setting, composition and the conduct of the interview.
- The usefulness of 'white meetings' in promoting greater understanding in the wider community.
- The need for sensitivity towards cultural differences and the importance of winning confidence through interpersonal relationships in society.
- The necessity for 'follow-up' when a brother fails to attend lodge.
- The importance of accompanied inter-visitation between lodges – both as a social tool and as a teaching aid – especially for inexperienced brethren.
- The recognition and acceptance of 'diversity of practise' – the ritual is the core but custom and practise within lodges will inevitably lead to variations in procedures and presentation.
- Availability of 'Freemasonry Today' electronically, and at no cost, through the District Webpage.
- [www.masonicmentoring.org.uk](http://www.masonicmentoring.org.uk) is a wonderful and very comprehensive resource for Mentors at all levels.
- Enquiries from non-masons for further information can be directed to the [www.ugle.org.uk](http://www.ugle.org.uk) website where the 'What's it all about?' leaflet, and a great deal of easily accessible information, will satisfy their curiosity or motivate them to extend their researches
- The importance of the Royal Arch Degree as the completion of 'pure and antient Freemasonry'.
- None of us 'know all the answers' – but with the support of one another, the Mentoring Scheme (and Team) and the UGLE websites, we will hopefully be able to find them!

WBro Cowin thanked all those in attendance, in particular WBros Hubbard and McLean, and closed the meeting at 12.30.

## Rob Cowin

WBro R W Cowin PJGD

PDepDistGM, DistGMentor

7<sup>th</sup> October 2012

Lodges represented:

St Paul's Lodge	Theocharous
Lord Kitchener	Hayes
Othello	Hayes, Kyriacou
Apollo	Baldwin, Cowin, McLean
Agapinor	Hubbard, Maybery, Motyer
Dionysos	Churchman, Gibbs, Hynes, Stephen, Winslow
St Hilarion	Roberts
Peace & Harmony	Johnson, Petrides
Lakeside	Gross

Lodges not represented:

St George's, Lusignan, King Tefkros, Phoenix, Zenon 18, Bellapais.