

On Saturday 11th March, the brethren of Queen's College, Taunton Lodge gathered at the Taunton Masonic Centre for what has been over 25 years in the waiting; a double second. If you weren't there, you can catch our double third on 12th July 2024. Our WM was there bright and early to own, drive and see that this was the great success that is now expected from Queens'.

Having dispensed with the initial routine agenda items, WBro Jonathan introduced a mysterious Item 5a which was, apparently, held over from a crowded Installation agenda in March. WBro Richard Baker, the outgoing LCO was to be thanked and congratulated for the sterling and simply splendid job he has done for 14 years in this position as well as 20 years previously as treasurer. (Many younger brethren would be unaware of earlier responsibilities – he is quite a pillar of the lodge!).

The Worshipful Master stepped through the resume of Richard, which was rather substantial and presented him with a collage, created by WBro Jim Wiltshire, reflecting aspects of his time as LCO. The brethren gave enthusiastic applause for the contribution he has given to the lodge. Taken by surprise and embarrassed, Richard had the grin a Cheshire cat which he brings to every meeting! WBro Richard responded by thanking the brethren for the special gift to which was added a surprise case of wine at the conclusion of the festive board.



The next item was equally important to the lodge and Province alike in that we received the Travelling Trowel, on its first step throughout Somerset. WBro Garry Sharp, ProvGDC, who had been delegated to present this special Trowel was unable to attend, so the responsibility passed to our very own WBro Ray Conneely, ProvGMentor, who together with WBro Tom

Nutt, PrAGDC presented it to the Worshipful Master with the usual aplomb we have come to expect from our Provincial Representatives.



Then we got down the (next) highlight of the afternoon, the double second. Bros Charlie White and Fraser Bell with a combination of enthusiasm and shellshock progressed through the passing participating and contributing along the way, the ceremony culminating in probably the best rendition of the Initiates' Charge by WBro Jim (next step Provincial Orator??) Virjee, PPrJGD, this too received applause commensurate with the effort he must have put in for the candidates. Charlie and Fraser came out of the other end of the ceremony, their faces each telling their own story of this unique occasion.



After all these superb items being conducted ultra-efficiently, we managed (contrary to our usual performances of taking timings to the wire and beyond) to bring dinner forward by 30

mins. This, of course, pleased all present, enabling us to enjoy the superb curry and all its trimmings by Karen, Hayley and their catering team at TMC.



We were delighted to have 34 brethren sat for dinner. With the Queens' brethren and their generous visitors we managed to achieve charitable funds of a further £600, towards the Master's chosen charity of St Margaret's Hospice, Taunton.

Next meeting: a double third on 12th July 2024 at the Taunton Masonic Hall.