

# How Does Sharing the Work Inspire?

## A Case Study

E.Comp. Len Purser joined The Chapter of St John No 8660 in 2002 at the relatively mature age of 63, after being a member of Sun and Sector Craft Lodge, Derwent Mark Lodge and Derwent Valley Ark Mariner Lodge for many years. This was on the recommendation of E.Comp. Mike Minshaw, who said he was sure he would enjoy the degree and should be the next one to join after the Third Degree in the Craft to complete his journey through Antient Freemasonry.

Len, after his exaltation, stated: *“When the blindfold was removed he was amazed and impressed by all that confronted him and had thoroughly enjoyed the ritual.”*

Len progressed steadily through the Offices to Scribe Nehemiah, but on being appointed S.W. and W.M in Sun and Sector Craft Lodge, he felt it was impossible to carry out the work in both Craft and Chapter, considering the amount of ritual to learn particularly with regard to the “traditional unshared” version of the Royal Arch ritual, therefore with regret, he stood down as a Chapter Officer.

After completing the Craft chair, Len was asked to return to the Chapter team as S.N., and it was very fortuitous that during that year the Chapter adopted the principal of sharing of the work and this initiative was mentioned as being of benefit and thus well timed for Len. Being a progressive Chapter and not afraid of change, their Chapter ritual was divided up by E.Comp. Archer and E.Comp. Dixon and the changes were approved by the permanent committee with the proviso that if it didn't work we would revert to the original working, simplistically on the basis of *“what's the worse than can happen?”*

Len's confidence in the ritual was greatly increased in learning shorter pieces and stated that he *“found the journey to the three Principals offices very fulfilling as learning and listening to the ritual clarified the meaning and understanding of the degree.”* Len intends to continue to take part in the lectures but as he gets older (he is 77) he says *“It is harder to learn large pages of scripture but the secret of his success story is little and often.”*

Len says: *“Sharing the work has definitely benefited our Chapter and made it more interesting listening to and taking part in the ‘all inclusive’ ritual for everyone. Having four Companions sharing the Historical Lecture has also worked well. From my own experiences and re-inspired by my own journey I am also willing to re-invest the confidence placed in me and will Mentor and encourage other Companions to come back and see what's on offer.”*

*“After seeing an elderly companion like me, progress through all three Principals' chairs, I am sure the younger companions must think ‘if he can do it, so can I’ and in doing so, I have thoroughly enjoyed my journey through all the Offices in the Chapter. The ritual has been nicely divided up and our present A.D.C. moved to 2<sup>nd</sup> Principal as I was installed as 3<sup>rd</sup> Principal and although he is extremely capable of remembering and delivering the ritual in the traditional manner, he can now see the benefits of sharing. Other Companions who have “done it all in one go” have also accepted that ‘sharing’ is the way forward as it not only encourages our members to move on to the 1<sup>st</sup>*

*Principals chair and gain the same satisfaction as I have, but sharing also involves many more Companions and somewhat enhances our RA ritual and team working bond”.*

*Report by E.Comp. Ken Archer, PGStdB – Scribe E*

*Comment by the Deputy Grand Superintendent:*

E.Comp. Len Purser - I thank you for your comments and offer you my sincere congratulations on your achievement. You have done no less work than those who went before you but, by adopting the principle of sharing your ritual it has enabled you to learn and deliver it well over a more ‘user friendly’ and achievable (by all) time scale, when we all but lost you from the team !

What you have achieved is exactly what was intended when I asked Chapters to seriously consider ‘sharing’ **their** ritual. We can no longer throw members on one side just because they were (or are) having difficulty learning and delivering long passages of ritual. Aren’t we supposed to be a caring and helpful society? Therefore, is it not our duty to encourage and assist **all** our members to progress to the 1<sup>st</sup> Principal’s chair and in doing so assist them to further develop confidence in their own ability and increase their understanding and enjoyment of this wonderful Order?

We are continually reminded to ‘enjoy our Freemasonry’! By adopting the principle of ‘sharing’ their ritual, the Chapter of St John has attracted at least a dozen new Candidates, their ceremonies are carried out in an excellent manner and clearly all those taking part **enjoy** what they are doing.

Their Festive Board is also well supported in a relaxed and very happy and enjoyable atmosphere. Why not visit them and see for yourselves what can be achieved?

Again – Many congratulations Len, may you continue to enjoy your Royal Arch Masonry and your Chapter for many years to come.

*E.Comp. Peter Mason, PGSwdB,*

*Deputy Grand Superintendent.*