



# LITTLE MESTERS CORKS

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## PROSPECTUS

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# Introduction...

Little Mesters Corks is a new Cork Lodge with its home at Dore Masonic Hall, Sheffield.

Whilst respecting the rituals of Ye Ancient Order of Noble Corks, Little Mesters Corks is also a celebration of the Sheffield area with local dialect incorporated into the Cork ritual as well as some Sheffield iconography.

Uniquely placed at Dore, just as the Old English word 'dore' denotes a passage between two kingdoms, Little Mesters Corks straddles the boundary of two Masonic Provinces, Derbyshire and Yorkshire West Riding and will be the first Cork Lodge in the Masonic Province of Derbyshire and the first, geographically, in Yorkshire.



# Background... Who are 'The Corks'?

The Ye Ancient Order of Noble Corks also known as 'The Cork', is an informal degree allied to Freemasonry. It is described as a "fun" degree and the ritual is distinctly nautical in form and although the origins of the degree are unknown, the ritual is satirical and based around the era of Noah and the great flood.

Candidates can be proposed and initiated on the same night and compared with Masonic meetings, dress is relatively informal.

The ritual and initiation part takes up the first part of the evening, followed by festivities that are "closer to a Scottish Harmony than an English Festive Board". Hats are worn during the meeting, with head-gear style being of personal choice - the sillier the better.

"Little Mesters Corks' will be an independent Cork Lodge, part of The Grand Fleet of Independent Corks with membership criteria set out in our by-laws and will join ten other Independent Cork Lodges in England.

The Cork is derived from the organisation's emblem of a cork with a corkscrew inserted at an angle.

Membership is not onerous—the only costs on top of membership being dining fees, drinks, etc. with the idea and aim to raise money for children's charities... and with 'Corkies' having fun in so doing.



# Background... The Little Mesters



The origins of the term 'little mesters' are uncertain. Mester is the Sheffield dialect variant of master, thus a Little Mester refers to a master craftsman working on a small scale and is a self-employed worker who rents space in a factory or works from their own workshop.

They were involved in making cutlery or other smallish items such as edge tools (i.e. woodworking chisels). The term is used almost exclusively to describe the craftsmen of the Sheffield area, and is mostly archaic as this manner of manufacture peaked in the 19th century and has now virtually died out. Little Mesters either worked alone or employed a small number of workers and/or apprentices.



Prior to the 18th century cutlery manufacture in Sheffield had been undertaken by individual master craftsmen who would make an item from start to finish. In the late 18th century there was a large increase in the size complexity of the cutlery and tool industries that made it necessary for craftsmen to focus on a single stage of the manufacture. Cutlery factories then rented workshops to self-employed craftsmen, the Little Mesters, each specialising in one step of production, such as forging, grinding or finishing.

# Meetings & Structure...

A quick browse around the internet or a google search will not reveal much about the current ten independent cork lodges in England, however those that do tend to show a fun, raucous meeting, Little Mesters Corks intend to have as much enjoyment at their meetings as possible, whilst still maintaining a proper ritual and standing in the meeting as we have become accustomed to through craft freemasonry at Dore.

We will have a 'uniform' written into our by-laws consisting of black trousers and shoes and an orange polo shirt with our badge embroidered on the left breast, there will also be cork regalia worn by the officers.

## Dates...

Anticipated as the 3rd Tuesday

- March
- June
- October (installation)

at Dore Masonic Hall, Sheffield

## Officers...

A list of Cork Lodge Officers and their Craft Equivalentents...

Rather Worshipful Admiral	Worshipful Master
Nearly Worshipful Vice Admiral	Immediate Past Master
Uncommonly Worshipful Mate	Junior Warden
Hardly Worshipful Look-out	Inner Guard
Almost Worthy Midshipman	Head Steward
Undoubtedly Ship's Writer	Secretary
Little Less Worshipful Doctor	Senior Deacon
Barely Worshipful Cook	Junior Deacon
Mainly Worshipful Bosun	Director of Ceremonies
Particularly Worthy Screw	Tyler
Highly Worshipful Purser	Treasurer
Particularly Worthy Quartermaster(s)	Steward(s)

# Membership...

Membership will be open to any Master Mason in good standing of a recognised Craft Lodge, initially a Craft Lodge based at Dore Masonic Hall but open to the wider region after the first meeting of Little Mesters Corks.

Several members who have expressed interest in founding the Lodge will be required to join an independent Cork Lodge, of which we currently have two sponsoring Cork Lodges, the remaining founders will be initiated at the first meeting of Little Mesters Corks.



# Fees...

Each Cork Lodge set their membership fee criteria based on venue hire and costs for dining, we envisage the fees for Little Mesters Corks to being the following...

Annual Membership	£60
Founders Fee	£50
Dining Fees	£16/per meeting



Serious ritual, fun festive board and fraternal companionship aside, the main focus of Little Mesters Corks is for charitable causes in and around the Sheffield area.

Cork Lodges always support children's charities.

This is nothing new, in 2020, Dore Masons have raised over £5000 for Roundabout, a local youth housing charity. Other Children's charities which have received donations include The Sheffield Children's Hospital, The Golddigger Trust & STEPS.

Little Mesters Corks will nominate a children's charity to support each year as well as taking personal members' requests to nominate a charity of their choosing to support at each meeting.

Our by-laws will stipulate a number of 'fines' to be imposed on members to aid in the charity collection such as not wearing the same colour socks as the Admiral, or if you cannot produce your Cork Jewel when challenged to do so.

50% of fines, collections, proceeds of raffles etc will be donated to either the annual nominated charity and the remaining 50% to the nominated charity for that meeting.



# Committee, Sponsors & Consultants...

## Committee

Bro Andy Graves  
Amadeus Lodge

Bro Jason Kocsis  
Amadeus Lodge

Bro Steve Gyte  
Dronfield Lodge

W.Bro Stuart Bamber PPJGW  
King Egbert Lodge

W.Bro Steve Williams PJGD  
Round Table Lodge of Derbyshire

## Sponsors & Consultants

Wantsum Corks  
Thanet

Nelson Cork Lodge  
Beconsfield

VW.Bro John Beard PGSwdB  
Honorary Member of Amadeus Lodge

W.Bro Dr. John Wade PAGDC  
Cork Lodge Italia, Arezzo, Tuscany