CONNAUGHT 361

A Research and Archive Publication

Vol. 1 No. 1 **June 2026** **For Private Circulation**

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Archival Snapshot (1 May 2026)

Registered users	20
Contributing users	6
Documents in archive	617
Distribution of documents:	
Craft Lodges	489
(of which 385 from Pretoria Leinster)	
General Research	37
District Grand Royal Arch Chapter	23
Grand Lodge of Ireland	15
Provincial Grand Lodge	14
Connaught Lodge	14
Other collections	25

Next Submission Date

Submissions for the next issue may be sent to secretary@example.org.

Suggested contributions:

- formal papers;
- shorter reflections;
- historical notes;
- archival discoveries.

The Work of a Lodge of Research

By Connaught Lodge of Research

The re-launch of Connaught Lodge No. 361 I.C. as a Lodge of Research, marked by its stated communication on 11 October 2024, presents both an opportunity and a responsibility. Within the Provincial Grand Lodge of South Africa Northern (Irish Constitution), it offers a focal point for the thoughtful study of Freemasonry, its history, its symbolism, and its practical expression in the life of the Craft.

A Lodge of Research does not replace the work of other lodges, but rather complements it. Where the ordinary lodge is concerned with the practice of ritual and the cultivation of fellowship, the Lodge of Research is concerned with reflection, enquiry, and the preservation of knowledge. It seeks to ask not only how things are done, but why they are done, when they emerged, and what circumstances shaped their development. In doing so, it considers the historical, social, and organisational forces that influenced those decisions, and the meanings they continue to carry within the Craft.

In recent years, the need for this work has become increasingly evident. Records are dispersed, institutional memory is at risk of being lost, and valuable insights often remain confined to individual lodges. Through the development of a central research and archive initiative, Connaught Lodge aims to bring together material that might otherwise remain inaccessible and to make it available in a form that is both useful and enduring.

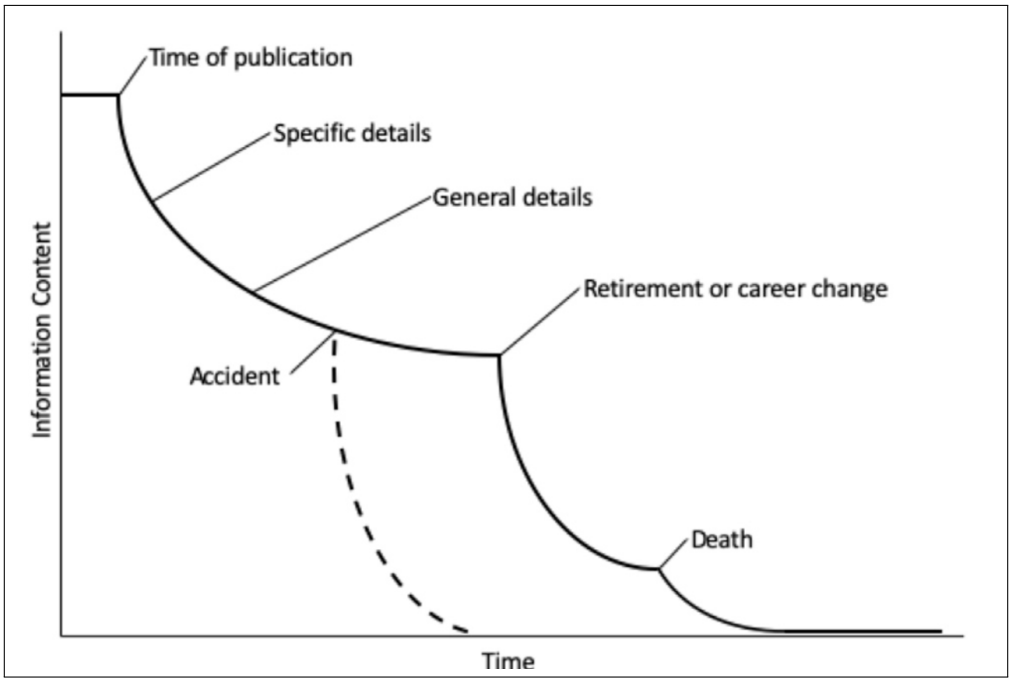
On the Decay of Information

Information entropy describes the gradual loss of meaning over time: although data may endure, the context and metadata required to understand it diminish. Within the Craft, this has a particular significance. Records, minutes, lectures, and traditions may survive in form, yet without their context, authorship, and purpose, their meaning becomes obscured or misunderstood.

Beyond this, there remains the further risk that the data itself may be lost through neglect, obsolescence, or inadequate preservation, resulting not only in gaps in the record but in a fragmentation of the Lodge's institutional memory. As Ted Habermann (2020) notes, metadata and reuse are the key antidotes, preserving interpretability and extending the life and value of knowledge.

In this light, the work of a Lodge of Research becomes essential: not merely to preserve records, but to preserve their meaning, their context, and their place within the ongoing life of the Province.

Continued on page 2



Conceptual representation of information entropy and the decline of information value over time, adapted from Habermann (2020).

A Living Function within the Province

The work of a Lodge of Research is not purely historical. It is, in many respects, contemporary and practical. Reflections arising from the Class of Instruction, observations on ritual delivery, and the sharing of experience across lodges all contribute to a deeper and more consistent understanding of the Craft.

Equally, preserving data provides a clearer picture of how the Province functions. More importantly, it retains insight from past activity, allowing it to be examined, compared, and applied in future work. In this way, it enables research, informs decision-making, strengthens communication, and supports effective engagement.

> *"A Lodge of Research should not only preserve the past, but also illuminate the present and strengthen the intellectual life of the Province."*

It is in this spirit that *Connaught 361* is introduced. This publication is intended as a platform for the sharing of research, reflection, and insight. It brings together formal papers, practical observations, archival developments, statistics, and provincial perspectives into a single, coherent voice.

The first issue also incorporates the Incoming Master's review of the past year, reflecting on the re-establishment of the Lodge, the progress made, and the work that lies ahead. In doing so, it sets a precedent for future issues to capture not only research and record, but also considered reflection on the evolving life of the Lodge.

Brethren are encouraged to contribute to this work. Whether through formal research, shorter reflections, or the sharing of historical material, each contribution adds to the collective understanding of the Craft within the Province.

In this way, the Lodge of Research becomes not merely a repository of knowledge but a living and active part of Masonic life.

Reference: Habermann, T. (2020). *Metadata and Reuse: Antidotes to Information Entropy. Patterns*, 1(3). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.patter.2020.100004

1. Featured Paper

Connaught Lodge No. 361 I.C.: Foundation, Continuity, Decline, and Re-emergence

By V. W. Bro. Marc Pienaar, Incoming Master

Connaught Lodge No. 361 I.C. was originally constituted in 1903, at a time of renewed Irish Masonic activity in South Africa following the Anglo-Boer War and during a broader period of reconstruction and consolidation.

Connaught Lodge bears a Warrant of considerable antiquity and distinction. Warrant No. 361 was first issued by the Grand Lodge of Ireland to a Lodge in Tandragee, County Armagh, on 4 December 1760. It was subsequently cancelled in 1822, reissued in 1826 to a Lodge in Ballynahinch, County Down, and again cancelled in 1852. It was later issued to Lake Lodge in Longford, Tasmania, in 1887, before that Lodge ceased operations.

On 3 October 1903, the Warrant was reissued for the third time to Connaught Lodge in Pretoria (then Transvaal, South Africa), following a petition supported by Lodges Abercorn 159, Croghan 247, and St Patrick's 199. The Lodge was duly constituted and consecrated on 28 November 1903.

Connaught Lodge thus forms part of a wider tradition within the Irish Constitution, where older Warrant numbers were historically reassigned to Lodges across the globe.

As with many institutions, however, Connaught did not remain immune to the pressures of time. In more recent years, activity diminished to the point where the Lodge was sustained largely through the commitment of a single active member, Rt. Wor. Bro. Tommy Adlem. At that stage, the Lodge faced a difficult reality: either lapse into inactivity or be deliberately revived with a renewed, clearly defined purpose.

The decision to re-establish Connaught as a Lodge of Research was a conscious response to that challenge. Rather than allowing the Lodge's history to conclude, it was repositioned to serve a distinct and necessary function within the Province.

Foundation and Growth of Connaught Lodge No. 361 I.C.

Summarised from Connaught Lodge No. 361 I.C., One Hundred Years, compiled by Dr. B. P. Coetzee and Dr. F. J. Nöthlingh[1]

The first Foundation Meeting was held on 1 April 1903 at the initiative of Bro. S. M. Tweddill in Pretoria, where it was unanimously agreed that a Lodge under the Irish Constitution should be established and that a Charter and Working Warrant should be petitioned for.

Following several meetings, and the unification of efforts with Bro. A. F. J. Handley, Wor. Bro. W. A. Milne, a Past Master in the Irish Constitution, was selected as the first Master. The Lodge was formally constituted and consecrated on 28 November 1903 at the Masonic Temple in St. Andries Street, Pretoria, by Wor. Bro. Capt. J. M. Fuge, acting in place of Lt. Wor. Bro. Dr. Kendal Franks.

In its early years, Connaught Lodge developed steadily, with frequent meetings and a growing membership. This period included both internal and civic contributions. Bro. A. F. J. Handley submitted a design for the Foundation Jewel, while the Lodge participated in community initiatives such as the laying of the Foundation Stone of the Victoria Cottage Hospital.

Relations with the newly formed Leinster Lodge No. 399 I.C. developed during 1906. Although differences arose between the two Lodges, these were resolved, and by 1907 a spirit of cooperation prevailed, as noted by Rt. Wor. Bro. Sir Kendal Franks.

In 1908, the Lodge faced internal difficulties, with irregularities resulting in the absence of Provincial Grand Lodge representation at the Installation Ceremony. Despite this, Lodge activities continued, including the development of Lodge communications and the presentation of Foundation and Past Master's Jewels.

Membership grew to sixty-seven by 1910, and the standing of the Irish Lodges in Pretoria was recognised. The dedication of the new Masonic Temple at 424 Van der Walt Street, Pretoria, in 1912 marked an important milestone, and Life Membership was conferred on V. Wor. Bro. S. M. Tweddill.

During the First World War (1914–1918), many Brethren were called to active service. The Lodge entered a period of mourning following the death of V. Wor. Bro. Tweddill, and the loss of Bro. H. J. Kerswill on active service. The reduced membership affected Lodge operations.

The Lodge held its first meeting at the Masonic Centre, 424 Van der Walt Street, Pretoria, on 9 August 1918. A combined meeting of Lodges under the English, Irish, and Scottish Constitutions was later held to mark the cessation of hostilities.

By 1919, organisational changes included the calling in of the Charter of Leinster Lodge. In 1920, the Lodge again entered a period of mourning following the death of Rt. Wor. Bro. Sir Kendal Ferguson Franks. Membership increased to seventy-five by 1922 and eighty-nine by 1924. The Lodge remained financially stable and marked its 21st Anniversary in 1924.

Through the mid to late 1920s, attendance remained strong, and senior Brethren continued to receive Provincial recognition. Organisational practices were refined, including the regularisation of Standing Committee meetings and the establishment of initiatives such as the Provincial Grand Master's Lodge Patron Fund.

Despite the economic pressures of the early 1930s, Connaught Lodge remained financially sound and active.

By 1934, the Lodge membership largely comprised employees in the Government and Railway Services. During this period, the Grand Lodge directed that all future Jewels be manufactured in silver.

In 1937, the Lodge considered a proposal to sponsor the formation of a new Lodge under the Irish Constitution in Pretoria. After deliberation, the proposal was not adopted (fourteen votes for, six against, and four abstentions). While the proposal was supported on grounds of population growth and wider Masonic engagement, concerns were raised regarding attendance at existing Lodges and the need to strengthen current membership. The Lodge therefore resolved to prioritise consolidation over expansion.

During the Second World War (1939–1945), the Lodge adapted to the circumstances of its members on active service. In 1940, fees and dues for those on war service were remitted, and attendance requirements were relaxed. By 1943, the Lodge continued to support its absent Brethren, offering prayers for their well-being, while maintaining its regular governance through Standing Committee meetings. On 11 May 1945, a joint thanksgiving service was held to mark the cessation of hostilities in Europe. Notably, the Lodge suffered no losses among its members on active service.

In the post-war period, the Lodge resumed its growth and external engagement. In 1948, it sponsored the formation of the Henry C. Shellard Lodge in Vanderbijlpark. Although an initial proposal to revive Leinster Lodge in Pretoria was not supported, a subsequent ballot in 1949

[1]Connaught Lodge No. 361 I.C., *One Hundred Years*, compiled by Dr. B. P. Coetzee and Dr. F. J. Nöthlingh, ISBN 1-919740-23-6; Connaught Lodge Archive ID: a415b62c-f386-467a-a76f-f980feefebeb, available at `https://www.connaught361.co.za/`.

resulted in approval, and Pretoria Leinster Lodge was established in 1950. During this time, Connaught Lodge also contributed to the maintenance and improvement of its regalia and became a partner in the United Masonic Lodges Trust, supporting the development and upkeep of Masonic facilities.

The Golden Jubilee of Connaught Lodge was celebrated on 28 November 1953, marking fifty years since its consecration. During the mid-1950s, the Lodge temporarily relocated its meetings to Beatrix Street due to alterations to the Masonic Temple in Van der Walt Street. The Lodge continued to support the wider Masonic community, including sponsoring the formation of Tzaneen Lodge and contributing financially to the Temple and Trust infrastructure.

Through the late 1950s and 1960s, the Lodge remained active and financially stable, investing in new regalia and securing its position within the United Masonic Lodges Trust. Membership reached ninety-one in 1960 and remained relatively strong through the decade, though gradually declined in the early 1970s, reaching a low point of sixty-six members in 1971 before recovering slightly thereafter.

During the 1970s, the Lodge continued to participate in broader Masonic initiatives, including support for the establishment of a Masonic Haven for aged Freemasons and engagement with Irish Masonic identity through local cultural groupings. Membership fluctuated during this period, reflecting broader social changes.

By 1982, rising costs led to adjustments in Lodge practices, including requiring candidates to contribute toward the cost of regalia. The same year marked the final meeting held in the Beatrix Street Temple before its demolition.

From the mid-1980s, Connaught Lodge experienced a sustained decline in membership, from 57 in 1985 to 29 by 1992. During this period, significant structural changes occurred, including the proposed sale of the Masonic Hall in Van der Walt Street and the Lodge's reaffirmation in 1987 of its continued membership under the Irish Constitution.

In 1988, attention was given to the history of Warrant No. 361 I.C., confirming its origins in 1760 and its reissue to Connaught Lodge in 1903. It was further noted that, under new Grand Lodge regulations, Connaught would be the last Lodge to hold this number.

The early 1990s were marked by continued membership decline, reaching thirty-four in 1991 and twenty-nine in 1992, prompting a renewed focus on strengthening the Lodge internally before expanding external engagement. During this period, tensions arose with Pretoria Leinster Lodge, including objections to officer appointments and concerns regarding member affiliation. These matters required engagement at the Provincial Grand Lodge level in 1993.

Organisational and governance challenges continued through the mid-1990s, including a vote of no confidence in the Masonic Lodges Trust Committee in 1994. In response to changing circumstances, the Lodge undertook significant restructuring, relocating in 1996 from the Van der Walt Street Temple to the Pretoria Masonic Centre at The Willows, and adjusting its meeting schedule accordingly.

Membership continued to decline through the late 1990s, reaching 25 in 1997, before stabilising slightly toward the early 2000s, with membership recorded at 24 in 2002 and 26 in 2003.

The record of the Lodge from 2003 onward is limited in this account. It is hoped that these gaps may be addressed in future by Brethren who are able to contribute further detail and documentation.

From Activity to Survival (2016–2023)

The following account is drawn from my own experience, together with correspondence and records available to me, including email communications, circulars, and minutes.

At the Stated Communication of the Provincial Grand Lodge on 10 September 2016, 10 Brethren of Connaught Lodge were recorded as present according to the minutes. The Lodge remained active in the years that followed, including conducting a Second Degree working in June 2018 for Bro. Jacus Pienaar, carried out under the authority of Connaught Lodge in support of Pretoria Leinster Lodge.

By late 2018, however, the Lodge had reached a critical stage. Having assumed the Chair of Pretoria Leinster Lodge No. 743, I became aware, through correspondence from the Secretary of Connaught Lodge, Rt. Wor. Bro. T. L. Adlem, that effectively only two active Brethren remained. In response, Pretoria Leinster 743 explored the possibility of "piggy-back" meetings, whereby Connaught would meet with Pretoria Leinster prior to its meeting to ensure sufficient attendance and reduce operational costs.

In a circular issued ahead of the meeting scheduled for 5 October 2018, Rt. Wor. Bro. Adlem emphasised that assistance was urgently required to open the Lodge and to conduct essential business. The meeting, however, was ultimately cancelled, reflecting the severity of the Lodge's operational constraints at the time.

From this point onward, Rt. Wor. Bro. Adlem carried the continuity of the Lodge in his capacity as Secretary. His correspondence illustrates both the administrative strain placed on the Lodge and the extent to which it relied on the goodwill and support of neighbouring Lodges, particularly Pretoria Leinster.

During 2019, efforts to sustain Connaught became more structured. Proposals were advanced to better align meeting schedules with Pretoria Leinster, including later start times to accommodate Brethren travelling from the East Rand and Johannesburg. In August 2019, Connaught held its first meeting in over a year at the Central East Rand Temple (CERT), in conjunction with Ulster Lodge. Communication circulated by the provincial grand secretary, Rt. Wor. Bro. Bruce Davis, at the time emphasised the need for Provincial support, noting that the Lodge required assistance to open and conduct its meetings.

In parallel with these efforts, other collaborative initiatives were explored. These included joint fundraising activities, such as a proposed family day, in conjunction with Pretoria Leinster, which committed to supporting Connaught in this manner.

The period from 2020 to 2021 introduced further disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Lodge activity was significantly curtailed. Despite these constraints, discussions regarding the future of Connaught continued at both Lodge and Provincial levels.

By November 2021, the condition of Connaught Lodge had become critical within Provincial structures. Proposals

were considered to provide structured assistance, including shared meeting arrangements and the encouragement of affiliations from other Lodges.

At Provincial Grand Lodge level, the broader challenge of struggling Lodges was also formally recognised. Rt. Wor. Bro. Nic Benson, the then Provincial Grand Master, initiated efforts to address Lodge sustainability across the Province, with Connaught identified as one of the cases requiring intervention.

By early 2022, while administrative discussions continued, the Lodge remained dormant in practical terms.

In September 2022, a discussion document was circulated via Pretoria Leinster Lodge outlining a possible way forward for Connaught. While this represented an initial attempt to address the Lodge's condition, it did not result in a clearly adopted or sustainable course of action.

The discussion was revisited in late 2023, when renewed attention was paid to the state of Connaught (prompted by interest from W. Bro. Shaun Stearn of Pretoria Leinster 743) and the need for a more deliberate, structured solution. From this point, the concept of reconstituting the Lodge as a Lodge of Research began to take shape. This idea was developed and carried forward by many of the Pretoria Leinster members, but principally by Francois van de Merwe, Shaun Stearn, and Marc Pienaar.

From Proposal to Relaunch

The revival of Connaught did not arise by accident. A formal proposal was submitted to the Council of Management of the Provincial Grand Lodge of South Africa Northern, Irish Constitution, by brethren of Pretoria Leinster Lodge No. 743 I.C. That proposal identified the immediate problem clearly: Connaught had become dormant due to a critical loss of membership, its finances and records required recovery and assessment, and the Lodge was at risk of disappearing.

The proposal also set out a practical solution. Connaught was to be repurposed as a Lodge of Research, with a focus on Masonic education, research, record-keeping, and broader provincial engagement. It envisaged a digital infrastructure for records and research materials, support for lectures and study initiatives, and a travelling component through meetings held at different venues within the Province. It also recognised that the Lodge first had to become operational again, through affiliations, the filling of offices, and a structured programme of meetings.

That vision moved beyond intention into formal reality at the Stated Communication held on Friday, 11 October 2024, at the Central East Rand Temple in Boksburg. That meeting marked the effective relaunch of Connaught Lodge No. 361 I.C. as a Lodge of Research and brought together strong support from across the Province. A total of 21 brethren were in attendance, including Provincial Grand Lodge officers, visitors, and brethren affiliating from a number of lodges.

At that meeting, a Research Charter was formally signed, acting officers were appointed, and officers for 2024/25 were elected. Specific offices associated with the Lodge's new function were also established, including Research Officer, Social Media Officer, Editor (Publications), Archivist, and provision for a Webmaster. The relaunch was therefore not merely symbolic. It provided the Lodge with both constitutional footing and practical direction.

Installation, Membership, and Structure

Following the October 2024 meeting, the Installation was initially scheduled for February 2025. Owing to unforeseen circumstances, it was postponed to June 2025. While this delayed the formal installation of officers and completion of affiliations, it did not impede the broader process of revival. Instead, these elements were progressed in stages, allowing the Lodge to begin functioning while its formal structure was being consolidated.

By mid-2025, Connaught Lodge was operational through stated communications and ongoing administration. This reflects the phased approach outlined in the original revival proposal: first to restore the Lodge as a functioning entity, and thereafter to develop its research mandate on a stable administrative foundation.

Connaught's meeting cycle further reflects its specialised role. Rather than operating as a conventional Lodge with frequent meetings, it was structured to meet four times annually, typically on the second Friday of the relevant months. The Installation is ordinarily held in February at Willows Masonic Centre in Pretoria, followed by three stated communications during the year: in June at the Roodepoort Masonic Centre, in August again at Willows, and in October at the Central East Rand Temple (CERT) in Boksburg.

This distributed meeting pattern reinforces the Lodge's intention to serve the Province broadly, rather than function as a purely local Lodge, while also maintaining a predictable and manageable cycle of activity.

Alongside its formal meetings, a significant portion of Connaught's work occurs outside the Lodge room. The Lodge operates on two parallel tracks: its regular Masonic administration and its research and development work as defined by its Charter. The former is now well established, while the latter continues to develop through several key initiatives.

Central to this work is the development of a digital archive, hosted at `https://www.connaught361.co.za`, that serves as a structured repository for historical material and ongoing research. Complementing this is the Lodge's contribution to Provincial communication through established platforms, including the Provincial Grand Lodge's Facebook presence under the direction of the Social Media Officer, and the continued publication of *Looking East*, which serves as an important vehicle for sharing research, commentary, and updates across the Province.

The forthcoming Installation, scheduled for June 2026 rather than February because the Master-elect was overseas, again illustrates the Lodge's adaptability. While timelines may shift, the direction remains consistent: to build a sustainable structure through which research, archival development, and informed engagement can be carried forward in a deliberate and organised manner.

The Year Ahead: Archive, Research, and Publication

In the year ahead, as incoming master of Connaught Lodge 361, I believe our focus should be on consolidating and advancing Connaught's archive and research infrastructure as the foundation of the Lodge's work. There is scope to

discuss directions for both the Connaught website and the Provinival grand Lodge website, perhaps even with some form of database integration; the archival framework is already established, providing more than a technical platform to potentially feed both; it forms the basis for continuity, retrieval, and structured study within the Province. We should actively build on this foundation and ensure that it becomes both widely used and properly understood (the looking east, for instance, is already archived therein).

Further, historical material does not preserve itself in any meaningful way simply by surviving. Minutes, summonses, correspondence, lectures, and related records may remain in existence, yet be effectively lost if they are inaccessible, poorly organised, or detached from the context required to interpret them. The work of digitisation, supported by consistent cataloguing and metadata, should therefore be actively pursued, not as a matter of convenience, but as a deliberate act of preservation, recovery, and use.

A key objective will be to ensure that research conducted under Connaught is realistic. Each contribution, whether a paper, a lecture, or a study, will be recorded as a distinct entry in the repository, assigned a unique identifier, and preserved in a structured system. In this way, research outputs will form part of a growing, cumulative body of work rather than remain isolated contributions.

With this foundation in place, the Lodge's work must move decisively from preservation to active use, including the actual housing of documents. Connaught must actively pursue structured research and study within the Lodge: identifying topics, encouraging participation, and ensuring that outputs are properly documented and retained. Publication will form an essential part of this process. This publication, for instance, is not intended as an additional newsletter, but as a complementary platform within the Lodge's broader communication framework. While established publications such as *Looking East* continue to fulfil their role, this publication is envisaged as a focused vehicle for research, archival insight, and statistical reflection.

2. Research & Archive Update

As at May 2026, the digital repository contains a total of 617 documents. Upload activity has been concentrated within a relatively short initial period, with the majority of records added between August 2025 and January 2026. The initial population phase in August 2025 alone accounts for approximately 41% of the total repository. While contributions continued through late 2025 and early 2026, upload activity has slowed in recent months.

The historical coverage of the archive is broad, with records dating as far back as 1858. However, this coverage is uneven, with stronger representation in the mid-20th century (particularly the 1950s–1980s) and in more recent years. A notable increase in contemporary material is evident, with 115 documents from 2025 and 23 from 2026 currently included. The repository therefore reflects a combination of retrospective digitisation and more recent efforts to capture current Lodge records.

Analysis of repository contributions indicates that the current body of material has been driven largely by a small number of contributors. A single contributor accounts for approximately 82% of all uploaded material, with the remaining contributions distributed across a limited number of Brethren.

While several Lodges and individuals have engaged with the repository, broader participation across the Province is still developing. This suggests that, although the technical infrastructure for digital archiving is in place, the routine submission and shared ownership of the archive is still in the process of being established.

Taken together, these findings point to a successful initial mobilisation effort, and provide a clear foundation on which to build. Continued progress will depend on broader engagement, clearer guidance to Lodge Secretaries, and the gradual establishment of consistent practices for the digitisation and submission of Lodge records. As a Lodge of Research, the long-term value of the repository will depend not only on its initial population, but on the continuity, completeness, and quality of contributions over time.

3. Provincial Insights

3.1. Provincial Annual Summary 2024

Membership

Membership movements during 2024 reflected both attrition and renewal.

Six resignations were recorded across Erin, Erin Go Bragh, Kendal Franks, Lodge Lurgan, and Achill Lodges. In addition, eight Brethren were struck off across multiple Lodges due to arrears.

These losses were partially offset by new candidates approved across Tirmochree, Pretoria Leinster, Petit, Clara, and Edward H Croghan Lodges. Affiliations between Lodges remained largely internal to the Province.

The most notable membership development occurred in November, when nine Brethren affiliated to Connaught Lodge No. 361.

Connaught Lodge No. 361

The re-establishment of Connaught Lodge No. 361 was a particularly notable Provincial development during 2024.

The Lodge was revived through an affiliation-driven initiative, primarily supported by members of Pretoria Leinster Lodge No. 743. It was established with a clear mandate as a Lodge of Research.

The first Meeting was successfully held on 11 October 2024 at CERT, marking the Lodge's formal return to activity. By November, membership had consolidated sufficiently to support its continued operation.

Lodge Operations

Several operational adjustments were implemented during the year:

- Kendal Franks and Tirmochree Lodges exchanged meeting dates and venues
- Edward H Croghan Lodge relocated to the Scottish Masonic Centre
- Kendal Franks and Mac Mac Lodges received dispensation for permanent moves to CERT
- Pretoria Leinster Lodge rescheduled its July meeting

- Lodge Lurgan rescheduled its Installation to July
- Capricorn Lodge initiated a proposed relocation to Rustenburg

Governance and Administration

There was a clear focus on improving administrative discipline across the Province.

Key measures included:

- Enforcement of Provincial Grand Lodge entry at Installations at 19H30
- Revision of the candidate questionnaire
- Strict deferral of late submissions to the Council of Management
- Enforcement of timely submission of Officers Elect forms
- Formal implementation of the TIMC grant process with defined deadlines
- Clarification that only invested Provincial Wardens may occupy Warden chairs
- Reinforcement of the requirement for timely Almoners' reports
- Introduction of a restriction on social or fundraising events on Installation days

Provincial Initiatives

The Province continued to expand its communication and outreach activities.

A public presentation on Freemasonry was delivered in July, and further work was undertaken to communicate the practical and financial aspects of membership.

The *Looking East* publication continued to develop, supported by ongoing calls for Lodge contributions. In parallel, the Provincial social media presence expanded, including the introduction of a podcast series.

Leadership and Honours

Rt Wor Bro Tony Bosch assumed the Chairmanship of the TIMC in August 2024, providing continuity in Provincial administration. During the year, he was also awarded Honorary Membership within the Scottish Constitution.

Rt Wor Bro Craig Russell resigned as Provincial Assistant Grand Master due to external commitments.

Recognition was also given to several Brethren:

- Very Wor Bro Justin Dawe — Past Grand Assistant Director of Ceremonies
- Very Wor Bro Francois van de Merwe — District Deputy Grand King (Royal Arch)
- Wor Bro Reshat Herrington — Provincial communications and media initiatives
- Very Wor Bro Garth Leech — 50 years of Freemasonry

Charity, Fundraising and Engagement

Charitable and fundraising activity remained strong throughout the year, driven both by Irish Masonic Services and by individual Lodge initiatives across the Province.

Through Irish Masonic Services, Lodges supported coordinated outreach including blanket drives, clothing distribution, and food and soup initiatives.

At Lodge level, a wide range of fundraising and social events were held, contributing both to charitable efforts and to fraternal engagement:

- **Lodge Lurgan No. 767** — Annual Quiz Evening
- **Tirmochree Lodge No. 523** — Golf Day and Music Evening
- **Clara Lodge No. 288** — Raffle and Ging Trip, together with food parcel distribution to old age homes
- **Edward H Croghan Lodge No. 247** — Flu Mu Day
- **Erin Lodge No. 364** — Bowls Day
- **Pretoria Leinster Lodge No. 743** — Annual Putt Putt Day
- **Erin Go Bragh Lodge No. 370** — Whisky Raffle and Fishing Weekend
- **Petit Lodge No. 901** — All Hallows Ball
- **Provincial / Inter-Constitutional** — Bowls Day with the Scottish Constitution

In addition, Brethren supported external charitable initiatives, including the Kidz Friends children's home. The iKhaya Da Luz chicken coop project progressed significantly during the year through combined Lodge support and was scheduled for completion in early 2025.

Health and Welfare

Health and welfare matters were a significant feature of the year, encompassing both bereavements and a high volume of serious medical cases across the Province.

Bereavements

The Province recorded the passing of several Brethren during the year, including Wor Bro Uys de Villiers (Tzaneen Lodge No. 773), Rt Wor Bro John Harmse (multiple Lodges), Very Wor Bro Eddie Ives (Pretoria Leinster Lodge No. 743), Very Wor Bro Eben Lombard (Lodge Lurgan No. 767), Very Wor Bro Man Jansen (Emerald Lodge No. 392), and Bro Tony Nicholls (former Kildare Lodge).

In addition, many Brethren experienced the loss of close family members, including parents, spouses, and children. These losses were felt widely across Lodges and underscore the importance of continued support at Lodge level.

Health

A high number of Brethren experienced serious medical conditions, including cardiac procedures, cancer treatment, major surgeries, and extended hospitalisation. Several cases required ICU care.

Notable cases included:

- Very Wor Bro John Druez — declared cancer-free
- Very Wor Bro Terry Nicholls — clear medical results
- Rt Wor Bro Thinus Kriel — recovery following cardiac and respiratory issues
- Rt Wor Bro Tony Bosch — recovery following surgery
- Very Wor Bro Grant Devine — stroke and ongoing recovery
- Wor Bro Renier Shields — recovery following chemotherapy and return to Lodge
- Very Wor Bro Alan Kenny — recovery following ICU admission
- Rt Wor Bro Nic Benson — recovery following knee replacement
- Bro Ettienne Grobbelaar — cancer in remission

Despite these challenges, there was strong and consistent support provided through Lodges and Almoners.

Events

The Province maintained a full calendar of activity, including:

- Provincial Grand Lodge Stated Communications in March and September
- Open Evenings in March and April
- Multiple Lodge Installations between March and August
- Classes of Instruction in August and October
- Connaught Lodge first Meeting in October
- Widows and Widowers Luncheon in November
- Inter-Constitutional Bowls Day in November

Attendance and participation remained steady across these events.

3.2. Provincial Annual Summary 2025

Membership

Membership activity during 2025 reflected a stable but uneven pattern across Lodges.

Resignations were recorded across Tirmochree, Erin Go Bragh, Lodge Lurgan, Petit, Achill, and Mac Mac Lodges, with a concentration of four resignations within Erin Go Bragh Lodge No. 370 in April. A final resignation was recorded in December, with membership retained elsewhere.

Affiliation activity was limited during the first half of the year. July recorded one internal affiliation to Erin Lodge No. 364, while October saw three affiliations across Edward H Croghan and Kendal Franks Lodges, including Brethren affiliating from both Scottish and English Constitutions. November recorded a further affiliation to Connaught Lodge No. 361.

Striking off remained limited during the first half of the year, with two cases recorded in October and a further three in November. No additional striking off was recorded in December.

Candidate intake slowed between April and June, with only limited approvals recorded. A single candidate was approved in July, none in August, and modest recovery was observed in October, November, and December, with candidates approved across Kendal Franks, Erin, Edward H Croghan, and Achill Lodges.

Overall, membership remained stable, though earlier attrition and modest intake indicate a continued need for focused recruitment and retention at Lodge level.

Lodge Operations

Lodge operations remained consistent, supported by a full programme of Installations and regular meetings.

Installations were conducted across multiple Lodges during the year, with a concentrated cycle in July, August, and September:

- Edward H Croghan Lodge No. 247 — July 2025
- Connaught Lodge No. 361 — August 2025
- Petit Lodge No. 901 — August 2025
- Achill Lodge No. 853 — August 2025
- Pretoria Leinster Lodge No. 743 — September 2025
- Tirmochree Lodge No. 523 — September 2025
- Clara Lodge No. 288 — September 2025
- Mac Mac Lodge No. 862 — September 2025

The operational cycle continued into year-end, with forward planning already in place for early 2026 Installations across Erin, Connaught, Ulster, and Erin Go Bragh Lodges.

Operational adjustments remained limited, including minor rescheduling and dispensations earlier in the year. Overall, Lodge activity remained stable and well supported.

Governance and Administration

Governance throughout the year reflected a continued emphasis on compliance, structure, and forward planning.

A Grand Lodge directive required Lodges holding Installations between July and December 2025 to elect Officers by **30 April 2025**.

Following the passing of the Most Worshipful Grand Master in March, Lodges implemented prescribed mourning protocols.

Additional governance clarity was provided during the year:

- Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts may not visit Sister Constitutions until attaining the rank of Master Mason
- Reinforcement of Provincial Grand Lodge By-Laws regarding Summons distribution timelines:
  - Elections — minimum 10 days
  - Ballots — minimum 14 days
  - Regular Meetings — minimum 7 days

- Submission of Worshipful Master's Reports at least two weeks prior to Installation Meetings
- Reinforcement of correct submission procedures for Officers Elect, resignations, and striking off documentation

The Connaught Lodge Research Programme formalised document management across Lodges, requiring the submission of agendas, minutes, and governance records.

In December, an additional Provincial directive introduced a formal **Dress Code Policy**, which came into effect across the Province.

Additional discipline was applied to Provincial events, including formal seating and attendance requirements for the September PGL Stated Communication.

Provincial Initiatives

Provincial initiatives remained focused on Tercentenary preparation, communication, and Lodge development.

Planning for the Tercentenary celebrations culminated in the **PGL Stated Communication and Gala Evening on 13 September 2025**, which was widely regarded as a significant success.

Connaught Lodge No. 361 continued to develop as a Lodge of Research, with its Installation successfully held in August 2025 and its research platform now supporting Provincial governance documentation.

The *Looking East* publication remained active throughout the year, with continued Lodge contributions and multiple editions released.

Provincial communication platforms continued to expand, including steady growth in social media engagement and ongoing podcast development.

Classes of Instruction were held in January, May, and July, supporting Lodge development and engagement.

Leadership and Honours

No major Provincial leadership changes were recorded during the year.

The passing of the Most Worshipful Grand Master in March was the most significant leadership event affecting the Province.

Provincial representation remained strong, including attendance by senior Brethren at the Grand Lodge Tercentenary Celebrations in Ireland.

Nominations for Provincial Grand Lodge Office and Council of Management supported forward leadership planning.

A notable transition was recorded at year-end, with Rt Wor Bro Gerhard van Staden standing down as Chairman of Irish Masonic Services.

Charity, Fundraising and Engagement

Charitable and fundraising activity remained active and well supported across the Province.

Irish Masonic Services continued to coordinate:

- Soup and blanket drives
- Distribution of clothing and charitable goods
- Support to Sister Constitutions through medical equipment
- Toy Drive initiatives, including the collection of over 500 donated toys

The **Inter-Constitutional Bowls Day** generated **R7,957.33**, with **R4,000.00 donated to Irish Masonic Services**.

The **TIMC Horse Racing Day** was a major success, raising approximately **R180,000.00**.

The **PGL Tercentenary Gala Evening** was also reported as a highly successful and well-supported Provincial event.

Lodge-led activity continued to drive engagement:

- **Petit Lodge No. 901** — Games Day and All Hallows Ball
- **Achill Lodge No. 853** — Valentine's Dinner Dance
- **Tirmochree Lodge No. 523** — Annual Golf Day and Barnyard Event
- **Edward H Croghan Lodge No. 247** — Fly Mu Day
- **Pretoria Leinster Lodge No. 743** — Annual Putt Putt Day
- **Lodge Lurgan No. 767** — Whisky and Wine Evening and Open Evening
- **Erin Go Bragh Lodge No. 370** — Fishing Weekend

The iKhaya Da Luz chicken coop project, completed earlier in the year, remains a strong example of inter-Lodge cooperation.

Health and Welfare

Health and welfare matters remained a significant feature of the year, encompassing both bereavements and ongoing medical cases.

Bereavements

The Province recorded the passing of **Wor Bro Chris Anderson (Erin Lodge No. 364)** in June.

No Provincial Brethren deaths were recorded in the latter part of the year; however, a number of bereavements affecting family members of Brethren were recorded.

Health

A continued high volume of health-related cases was recorded, including surgery, chronic illness, injury, and recovery.

Notable cases included:

- Very Wor Bro Grant Devine — ongoing recovery following stroke and subsequent heart complications
- Rt Wor Bro Thinus Kriel — persistent respiratory issues
- Rt Wor Bro Tommy Adlem — ongoing mobility and health challenges

- Rt Wor Bro Gerhard van Staden — cancer diagnosis and recovery following surgery
- Bro Dewald Nienaber — post-surgical complications
- Wor Bro Renier Shields — physiotherapy and recovery
- Very Wor Bro Paddy Quinn — favourable MRI outcome

Additional cases throughout the year included orthopaedic injuries, surgical procedures, chronic illness, and family-related health matters.

Support from Lodges and Almoners remained consistent and essential throughout the year.

Events

The Province maintained a consistent and active programme throughout the year.

- Provincial Grand Lodge Stated Communication — March 2025
- Inter-Constitutional Bowls Day — April 2025
- Classes of Instruction — January, May, and July 2025
- Memorial Service for Wor Bro Chris Anderson — June 2025
- Lodge Installations across multiple Lodges from February to September

Key events in the latter part of the year included:

- **PGL Stated Communication — 13 September 2025**
- **Tercentenary Gala Evening — 13 September 2025**
- TIMC Horse Racing Day — October 2025
- Lodge Lurgan Open Evening — November 2025
- PGL Widows Luncheon — November 2025

Planning was already in place for early 2026 Installations and Provincial activities.

Participation and attendance remained steady across the Province.

3.3. Provincial Overview: February–April 2026

Membership

Membership activity during the first quarter of 2026 remained stable but subdued.

No affiliations, re-joinings, or striking off were recorded during this period. Resignations were limited to a single case in April, where Very Wor Bro Garth Leech resigned from Emerald Lodge No. 392 while retaining membership at Connaught Lodge No. 361.

Candidate intake was modest, with approvals recorded at Tzaneen Lodge No. 773 in February and Edward H Croghan Lodge No. 247 in April. No candidates were approved in March.

Overall, membership trends indicate stability, though recruitment remains limited and continues to require focus at Lodge level.

Lodge Operations

Lodge operations continued in a stable and orderly manner, supported by regular meetings and scheduled Installations.

Installations during the period included Ulster Lodge No. 400 and Erin Go Bragh Lodge No. 370 in February, with Emerald Lodge No. 392 following in March. Forward planning is in place for further Installations across multiple Lodges through mid-year.

A number of operational adjustments were managed through dispensations, including:

- Rescheduling of Meetings due to public holidays and the Easter weekend
- Cancellation of Erin Lodge No. 364 Meeting due to venue maintenance
- Rescheduling of Connaught Lodge No. 361 Installation to June 2026

Overall, Lodge activity remains consistent and well coordinated.

Governance and Administration

Governance during the period reflected continued emphasis on compliance, structure, and administrative discipline.

Key measures included:

- Ongoing enforcement of submission requirements for Worshipful Master's Reports
- Continued use of the **Connaught Lodge Research Programme** for Lodge documentation and record management
- Reinforcement of attendance requirements at Provincial Grand Lodge events
- Introduction of a requirement for Master Masons and above to submit written apologies for non-attendance at PGL Stated Communications

Structural improvements were also implemented, including the formal allocation of **Chains** to Lodges, strengthening communication and oversight across the Province.

It was further confirmed that **Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodge capitation fees increased by 10% with effect from 1 April 2026**.

In addition, the **PGL Stated Communication was rescheduled to 29 August 2026** to coincide with the visit of the Most Worshipful Grand Master.

Provincial Initiatives

Provincial initiatives during the period focused on communication, coordination, and Lodge development.

The **Connaught Lodge Research Programme** continued to expand, supporting both Lodge administration and Provincial governance.

The *Looking East* publication remained active, supported by ongoing Lodge contributions, while Provincial social media platforms continued to grow in reach and engagement.

Classes of Instruction and Lodge-level engagement initiatives remained central to strengthening standards and participation across the Province.

Leadership and Appointments

A number of important leadership developments occurred during this period.

Rt Wor Bro Craig Russell returned from sabbatical and was re-appointed as **Provincial Assistant Grand Master**.

Very Wor Bro Geoff Tyrer was appointed as **Chairman of Irish Masonic Services**, marking a transition in leadership within IMS.

In addition, Very Wor Bro Francois van de Merwe was appointed as **PGL SANIC Representative** for the Masonic Haven in Pretoria.

Charity, Fundraising and Engagement

Charitable and fundraising activity remained active and well supported across the Province.

Irish Masonic Services continued to coordinate key initiatives, including:

- Blanket Drive for the 2026 cycle
- Soup Drive, with a target of 1,000 bottles for distribution in July 2026

Lodge-led fundraising and engagement initiatives include:

- **Achill Lodge No. 853** — Valentine's Dinner Dance
- **Lodge Lurgan No. 767** — Potjie Kos Competition and Quiz Evening
- **Tirmochree Lodge No. 523** — Annual Golf Day
- **Achill Lodge No. 853** — Battle of the Braais
- **Tzaneen Lodge No. 773** — Charity Golf Day
- **Edward H Croghan Lodge No. 247** — Drives for Dreams
- **Erin Lodge No. 364** — Bowls Day
- **Erin Go Bragh Lodge No. 370** — Fishing Weekend

Additional charitable engagement included support for visually impaired bowlers, Bloemshelter, and other community initiatives, reflecting continued Lodge-level participation.

Health and Welfare

Health and welfare matters remained a significant feature of the period, encompassing both bereavements and ongoing medical cases.

Bereavements

The Province recorded the passing of **Very Wor Bro Grant Devine** in February and **Bro David Warren-Marrs (Kendal Franks Lodge No. 265)** in March.

In addition, several bereavements affecting family members of Brethren were recorded during this period.

Health

A continued high volume of health-related cases was reported, including surgery, chronic illness, injury, and recovery.

Notable cases included:

- Rt Wor Bro Thinus Kriel — ongoing respiratory issues
- Rt Wor Bro Tommy Adlem — ongoing mobility and health challenges
- Very Wor Bro Richard King — recovery following complications and ICU admission
- Very Wor Bro Geoff Tyrer — diagnosed with atrial fibrillation
- Wor Bro Renier Shields — recovery following stroke
- Bro Frank Slabbert — cancer diagnosis and treatment

Additional cases included hospitalisation, post-operative recovery, and chronic medical conditions affecting both Brethren and their families.

A serious incident involving an armed robbery of Wor Bro Charles Pienaar was also reported.

Support from Lodges and Almoners remained consistent and essential.

Events

The Province maintained a consistent programme of activity during the period.

- Lodge Installations from February to March 2026
- PGL Stated Communication — 14 March 2026
- Classes of Instruction and Lodge-level engagement events

Forward planning includes:

- Lodge Installations across multiple Lodges from May to June 2026
- Class of Instruction — July 2026
- **PGL Stated Communication — 29 August 2026, with the Grand Master in attendance**

Participation and engagement remained steady across the Province.

4. Masonic Note

Why Records Matter

Freemasonry is often described as a living tradition. It is preserved not only through ritual, memory, and personal example, but also through the records we leave behind.

Minutes, summonses, installation programmes, lectures, photographs, correspondence, and reports may appear ordinary at the time they are produced. Yet, over time, they become the evidence from which future Brethren understand how Lodges lived, worked, struggled, adapted, and served.

A Lodge record is therefore more than an administrative document. It is part of the memory of the Craft.

When records are lost, scattered, or left without context, important parts of our history become difficult to recover. Names disappear from view, decisions lose their meaning, and the work of Brethren who gave time and service to their Lodges may no longer be properly remembered.

The work of preserving records is therefore not merely clerical. It is an act of respect: respect for those who came before us, respect for the Lodges we serve today, and respect for those who will one day ask what we did with the inheritance entrusted to us.

Connaught Lodge No. 361 I.C., as a Lodge of Research, has a particular duty in this regard. Its work is not only to collect material, but to help ensure that such material remains usable, searchable, and meaningful.

Every Lodge can assist in this work. A summons, a photograph, a short note on an event, or a properly labelled set of minutes may one day become an important part of the Provincial record.

In preserving the record, we preserve more than paper. We preserve continuity.

5. Contributions & Call for Papers

Brethren are invited to submit material for future issues of *Connaught 361*. Contributions may be formal or informal, provided they support the purpose of the Lodge of Research: to preserve, study, and share material of Masonic, historical, archival, or Provincial interest.

Suggested contribution types include:

- formal research papers;
- short reflections or observations;
- historical notes on Lodges, Brethren, events, or places;
- archival discoveries, photographs, summonses, minutes, or correspondence;
- summaries of lectures or Class of Instruction discussions;
- questions or topics for future enquiry.

Submissions should, where possible, include the contributor's name, Lodge, date, and any relevant source or archival information. Material does not need to be fully polished before submission; suitable contributions can be edited and prepared for publication.

Submissions and correspondence may be directed to:

- connaught361@gmail.com
- marc.pienaar@gmail.com