

# *W. Bro Mike Fitz-Gerald*

## *Provincial Grand Almoner Bedfordshire*

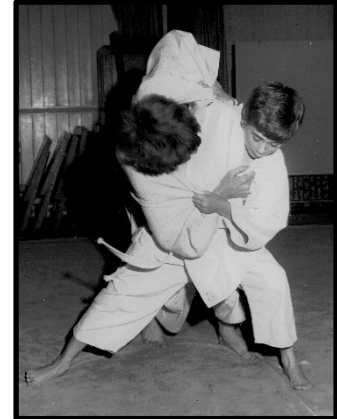


I was born in **Lambeth** in 1958, having lived in Dulwich and Nunhead my mother and I settled in Bedford. I have been Married to Karen for over Forty years having met her at Senior school. We live in Kempston Bedford

### **Judo Career**

In my early years attended Goldington Road Junior school before moving to Goldington Senior school in Bedford. Incidentally, Goldington Road school is where the great **Heavyweight Boxer Joe Bugner** was educated, Joe trained at Bedford Boys club and that was in 1969

my interest in Martial Arts came joining the Bedford Judo Club training under Mr James. My rise in belt colours eluded me but enjoyed competitions in and around Bedfordshire.



### **Karate Career**

At the **age of 45** I decided it was time to get back into a Gi so in 2004 myself and wife Karen joined Tiska Karate Club in Bedford where **Sensei Gursharan Sahota** was the Chief Instructor, unknow to me at that time Gursharan was a member of the Shotokan Karate Lodge! Our club trained in Wootton just outside Kempston and our instructor who became a friend was **Sensei Pedro Barker** and occasionally his wife Mrs Barker both very good instructors.



After a few years, our club instructor changed to Sensei Sembi. Karen and I progressed through the grading syllabus's unfortunately an old motorcycle injury turned out to be the start of my Hip needing replacing, leading to a halt to my Karate career. I managed grading up to 1<sup>st</sup> Kyu, Brown/Red Belt but it was impossible to carry on and had to hang up my Gi but continued to enjoy being part of Karen's Black belts journey to Nidan.

We very much enjoyed the years of training and new friendships, for me, Karate highlighted the similarity with freemasonry of traditions, discipline, and respect.

### **Masonic Career**

I was initiated into the **Russell Lodge** No. 4413 on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2001 at the Keep Masonic centre Kempston Bedford, an old Victorian Military building. Was passed on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2001 and Raised on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2002.

I was installed as Worshipful Master in my Mother Russell Lodge on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2008, W. Bro Barnett, Coppen, Green and Dinsdale attended on behalf of the Shotokan Karate Lodge.

From 2009 – 2013 I was the **Russell Lodge Almoner** and was invited to resume this role again in 2019. From 2012 – 2016 became Russell Lodge Director of Ceremonies, Lodge of Instruction DC, and Preceptor from 2009 – 2015 after becoming the LOI Secretary until 2020.



In 2007 I was invited to join the **Shotokan Karate Lodge** (MetGL) and honour and privilege. Was appointed Lodge Almoner in 2008 to the present day. I have attended many MetGL Almoner workshops and lectures. I became the Lodge Assistant Director of Ceremonies in 2011 and stood in for the DC on many occasions. Acting as Lodge Secretary 2014 – 2016, lodge preceptor since 2016 and **lodge Treasurer** since 2015.

And in 2022 was awarded with **London Grand Rank**



### Provincial Officer

My first **Bedfordshire** promotion came in 2013 when I was appointed Acting Provincial Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies an unexpected honour and one, I very much enjoyed. The position involved escorting the Provincial Grand Master his Deputy, and Assistant to lodge meetings in Bedfordshire particularly Installation and special event meetings.

A second Provincial Promotion came in 2018 when I was appointed the Provincial **Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies** of Bedfordshire a fantastic honour. This position is very active in supporting the Prov Grand Director of Ceremonies in all types of meetings.



A two-year tenure which ended up being three years due to the COVID Pandemic.

Duties mainly accompanying and escorting the Provincial Rulers around Bedfordshire attending Provincial Grand Lodge meetings, acting as Master of ceremonies at special luncheons and events in the province.

As Deputy I was privileged to be invited to attend other Provincial Grand Lodge meetings around the country.

My next promotion came in 2022 when I was appointed **Provincial Grand Almoner** for the province of Bedfordshire, a great honour and privilege to support the brethren and their families in the province whilst supporting 57 lodge Almoners. An amazing role that I thoroughly enjoy.



### Royal Arch Chapter

Late 2008 was when I was near to my completion of being Worshipful Masters in Russell lodge L4413 I was approached by the Shotokan karate lodge secretary to join a MetGC and was duly Exalted into the **Old Concord Chapter No 172** on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2008 at Freemasons Hall. Rising through the offices to be installed as MEZ in 2018 with Ex Comp Andy Soos as Haggai and Ex Comp Dean O'Connell as Joshua both exaltees to OCC from Bedfordshire.



In March 2023 I was appointed **Provincial Grand Chapter Almoner** linking together Craft and Royal Arch, another great honour and privilege to support the Companions and their families in Bedfordshire.

### Mark Master Masons & Royal Arch Mariners

Another calling came when I was invited to join **Stuart Lodge No. 434** of Mark Master Masons and was duly advanced April 2012, a ceremony that I remember with great fondness. In offices up to Senior Deacon but in 2017 the position of Treasurer became vacant so decided this was a role I could make a difference and was appointed in 2017. As a Mark Master Mason, I was invited to **join Royal Ark Mariners** and was elevated in 2014, at this time not in any rush to progress the ranks.

In April 2023 I received my first appointment in Mark Masonry to **Past Provincial Grand Junior Deacon**



## **The Russell Lodge No 4413, Prov of Bedfordshire**

**Worshipful Master: 2008 - 2009**

Almoner: 2009 – 2013  
Almoner: 2019 to 2022  
Assist Dir of Ceremonies: 2010 - 2012  
Director of Ceremonies: 2012 - 2016  
Lodge of Instruction Preceptor: 2009 - 2015  
Lodge of Instruction Secretary: 2015 – 2020

*Prov Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies Bedfordshire 2013 – 2015*

*Prov Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies Bedfordshire 2018 – 2021*

*Provincial Grand Almoner Bedfordshire 2022*

## **The Shotokan Karate Lodge No 9752 MetGL**

Joining Member, The Shotokan Karate Lodge 8th December 2007

Almoner: 2008 - Present  
MetGL Almoner Workshop programme 2009  
Assist Dir of Ceremonies: 2011 – Present  
Acting Secretary: 2014 - 2016  
Treasurer 2015 – Present  
Preceptor 2016 - Present

## **Old Concord Chapter No 172 Met Grand Lodge**

Exalted: 8th October 2008

MEZ: 2019 - 2022

## **Bedfordshire Chapter of Prov Grand Stewards No 9677**

Joining Member: 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023

*Provincial Grand Almoner Bedfordshire - 2023*

## **Stuart Lodge Mark Master Masons No 434, Prov of Bedfordshire**

Advanced: 19th April 2012  
Senior Deacon: 2015  
Treasurer: 2017 – Present

*Past Provincial Grand Junior Deacon*

## **Stuart Lodge Royal Ark Mariners No 434, Prov of Bedfordshire**

Elevated: 2014

## **Amphill Preceptory No. 260, Knights Templar, Province of Bedfordshire**

Installation: 2022

*I love my Freemasonry and everything we stand for, the friendships and companionship of a wonderful fraternal organisation.*