

Why did the Queen's cousin not declare his directorship in a company helping Freemasonry? Pete Sawyer reports

Prince Michael of Kent makes his money by selling "business expertise" and his royal connections to companies and organisations. But while the prince, the Queen's cousin, makes a tidy income from these rent-a-royal activities, his financial acumen does not appear to extend as far as a basic knowledge of UK company law.

On official annual returns submitted to the Department of Trade and Industry by business consultancy Cantium Services, of which he is a director, and his wife's interior design company, Szapar Designs, of which he is also a director, he has failed to declare his directorship of a much more intriguing company called the Middlesex Masonic Fund Ltd.

Quite why Prince Michael should choose to be so modest about this role is unclear, but it is clearly a directorship which those intending to hire the Prince should be made fully aware of.

The Middlesex Masonic Fund provides loans for "maintenance

A law unto himself



PURSUIT OF THE HIRSUTE: Companies House must chase up complaints over Prince Michael

and improvement" of Masonic property. It was set up by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Middlesex in 1994 and Prince Michael became a director in December that year.

The Prince is a leading figure in Freemasonry. Among other things, he is an honorary member of the Supreme Council 330 and Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons.

His brother, Prince Edward, the Duke of Kent, is Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England.

As Prince Michael should know, his failure to declare this directorship is a breach of Section 289 of the 1985 Companies Act, under which all UK directorships held within the last five years must be disclosed.

Companies House told *Punch*

that if a director files incorrect and misleading information and a member of the public writes to complain, it is "duty bound" to chase it up. There are no exceptions, they said — not even for minor royalty. So send your letters about this royal for hire's small but significant oversight to the Document Examination Branch, Companies House, Crown Way, Cardiff CF14 3UZ.