



Within Your Province

The Periodical for Staffordshire Freemasons

Spring 2018

Issue 40



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Passed to the Grand Lodge Above

It is with regret that we record the passing of the following brethren to the Grand Lodge above.

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W. Bro. C.F. Kemper	Ethelfleda Lodge	No. 6600
Bro. F. Horton	Ethelfleda Lodge	No. 6600
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W. Bro. P.J.W. Woolley	Ashmole of Lichfield Lodge	No.8405

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Within Your Province
The Periodical for Staffordshire Freemasons

Within Your Province is published twice yearly, in March and September and any contributions, ideas or suggestions will be welcomed by the Editor, W. Bro. Paul Ashcroft by e-mail to editor@pglstaffordshire.co.uk or by post to Paul Ashcroft, c/o Provincial Grand Lodge Office, 211 Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton, WV6 0DD.

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Foreword

R.W.Bro. John Lockley, P.G.M..



As we look forward to a new year, we turn our attention to the launch of our 2024 festival on May 15th. in support of our charity, the Masonic Charitable Foundation. During 2017 our province benefited with grants from the MCF to numerous charities. I had the privilege of meeting with many of the recipients and they without question thank you, our brethren in Staffordshire, for your generosity. Our target for 2024 is £2,000,000, which, a substantial amount, is achievable with your help and support. This is our charity and one we can all take pride in being a part of.

I know our festival team under the chairmanship of W Bro Malcolm Phillips has created a magnificent start-up fund with which to launch our efforts. Our goal is six years away, giving us an extra year on previous festivals and with the help from Inland Revenue and at less than the cost of a daily newspaper we can achieve the target.

Last year we as a province had a nett gain in membership. I wish to thank everyone for this result and please keep up the momentum. To all who have become Freemasons in the previous year and to those joining us in 2018, I bid you a sincere and warm welcome to our province and the worldwide fraternity of Freemasonry. I had the pleasure of meeting some of you at the initiates brunch on Sunday, February 4th., and look forward to meeting you all during the year. Take time to enjoy your Masonic journey which will reward you in more ways than you can imagine.

Thank you for making me and the provincial team welcome whenever we have visited your lodges. The support you give to your lodges and the province is vital to our success.

Thank you for being Freemasons and thank you for being my friends. We are a force for good in the world, so be proud of being a Freemason.

Continue to enjoy your Freemasonry and may God bless you all.

John.

Forthcoming Events 2018

4/2/2018	Welcome Brunch	Chase Golf Club, Penkridge
7/2/2018	Lodge General Purposes	Wolverhampton
14/03/2018	Chapter General Purposes	Wolverhampton
17/03/2018	Ceramic Lodge No 3827 -	Centenary Meeting
10/04/2018	Provincial Grand Chapter	Annual Convocation Stafford
25/04/2018	Grand Lodge	Annual Investitures
26/04/2018	Supreme Grand Chapter	Annual Investitures
15/05/2018	Provincial Grand Lodge	Annual General Meeting Stafford
23/05/2018	Walton Walker & Sandwell Lodge No 3847	Centenary Meeting
24/06/2018	Provincial Grand Lodge Church Service	Lichfield Cathedral

Editorial

The passing of the old year has brought with it the realisation that the Staffordshire 2024 Festival is only weeks away from its launch. The 2013 tie has already given way to the 2024 tie and is selling well, a favourable portent of what is to come. At January’s meeting of Foster Gough Lodge 86 brethren out of 88 were already proudly sporting the apparel. What better time to announce the forthcoming appointments of the two Provincial Wardens who are to be invested at May’s A.G.M., W. Bro. Selwyn Burton and W. Bro. Philip Baker. Our congratulations go out to them and also to W. Bro. David Thomas who is to succeed V.W. Bro. John V. Renaudon as Dep.P.G.M..

German has a superbly succinct concept, ‘Erhabene Stimmung’, which sums up the capacity to rise above adversity with dignity, a quality which Freemasonry has displayed time and time again in the face of unwarranted deprecation and misrepresentation. How refreshing it was, therefore, to see Dr.David Staples’ open letter in the Times and other newspapers on February 8th.announcing enough was enough and that UGLE is no longer prepared to turn the other cheek in the face of the assaults of the ignorant.



The days of the soft target are drawing to a close, we may hope, as Freemasonry announces its intentions to consider legal response to what is perceived as discrimination.against Freemasonry.

In the meantime it is hoped that brethren might be able to offer *WithinYour Province* details of instances where they may have experienced discrimination or misrepresentation on account of their Freemasonry. One such example in this edition will hopefully set the ball rolling.

Three years have now passed since the R.W.P.G.M. offered me the opportunity to take on the editorship of *Within Your Province*. “Do it for three years,” he said. “That’ll be plenty.” Thus it is that my three years are nearly over and this edition will be my last. My thanks go to all who have helped with and contributed to the past six editions and to those lodges and chapters who kindly offered sponsorship to secure the economic future of our journal.

Avete atque valete, cari lectores !

Paul Ashcroft

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WYP is taking advantage of the opportunity of including a copy of the full-page open letter from Dr. David Staples, the Chief Executive of the United Grand Lodge of England, which appeared in a number of newspapers on Thursday, February 8th.. The letter, headed 'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH', outlines Grand Lodge's dissatisfaction with the deprecating attitude often adopted towards Freemasonry in the public eye. It spells out clearly how Grand Lodge views such perceptions and how it might choose to respond thereto.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

At the United Grand Lodge of England, we value honesty, integrity and service to the community above all else. Last year we raised over £33 million for good causes.

As an organisation we welcome individuals from all walks of life, of any race, faith, age, class or political persuasion.

Throughout our 300 year history, when people have suffered discrimination Freemasonry has embraced them into our lodges as equals.

The United Grand Lodge of England believes that the ongoing gross misrepresentation of its 200,000 plus members is discrimination. Pure and simple.

Our members shouldn't have to feel undeservedly stigmatised. No other organisation would stand for this and nor shall we.

I have written to the Equality and Human Rights Commission to make this case.

I appreciate that you may have questions about who we are and what we do, so why not ask those who know? Over the next six months our members will be running a series of open evenings and Q & A events up and down the country. These will be promoted in the local media and on our website.

I am also happy to answer any queries directly. Please feel free to write to me here at Freemasons' Hall, 60 Great Queen Street, London WC2B 5AZ and I will come back to you.

We're open.

Dr David Staples
Chief Executive

The United Grand Lodge of England
www.ugle.org.uk

Have you experienced Discrimination as a Freemason ?

In the light of the open letter sent by the UGLE Chief Executive, Dr. David Staples, to various newspapers on Thursday, February 8th., Within Your Province is proposing to invite submissions from brethren who consider they have been the victims of discrimination on account of their being Freemasons. It is hoped that such submissions will form the basis of objective accounts of such experiences for inclusion as articles in forthcoming editions of WYP..

Discrimination at a professional Level

Turning the clock back to the mid-eighties, many brethren will recall the groundswell of anti-Masonic sentiment which grew with local authorities and other public institutions expressing their concern that public service was not enhanced by their employees' membership of a Masonic lodge. As one such employee holding a middle-management position in the education service, the central figure in this article first had his concerns awakened by a circular issued by the local authority requiring schools to submit the names of any members of staff who were known to be Freemasons. Some months later, believing this questionable focus on Freemasonry to have faded from the limelight, our central figure was disturbed to discover what had appeared on the back of the four-page application form for any teaching position with the LEA. To this day he still retains copies of those application forms.

The LEA was asking the direct question,

"Are you a member of a Masonic Lodge ? Yes or No "

This question was followed by another question,

If the answer to this question is 'Yes', would you be prepared to resign your membership.

Yes or No ?"

Beneath these questions was a statement which expressed the LEA's view that membership of a Masonic lodge was not considered to be compatible with the functions of an LEA..In January, 1985, our central figure applied for a deputy headship at a popular and well-regarded comprehensive school to the south of the county. His references were taken up and in due time he was summoned for interview. On the Friday preceding the day of the interview, the following Tuesday, our brother found himself in conversation with the LEA's relevant Subject Adviser who informed him that the school was ideally looking for a male linguist. As our brother was the sole male linguist on the shortlist, he was encouraged to approach the interview with confidence.

On the Monday before the interview he received a telephone call from the headmaster's secretary at the school in question to say that he should not come for interview for the deputy headship as there was adequate quality in the shortlist and that his presence was no longer required. He immediately contacted the Subject Adviser to try and find out what was going on. His Adviser promised to look into the matter and duly returned the call two or three days later

"You are a Freemason, aren't you ?" were his first words.

The implication was: that said it all. Remonstrating that he had no connection with Freemasonry in this particular county, and was this not indeed an invasion of personal privacy, our central figure was told that such was the stance of the LEA.

A clearer example of discrimination would be hard to find. This was compounded by the news that any application to another LEA of similar political persuasion would meet with the same outcome. That came as a bit of a shock to one who had grown up in a family steeped in similar political values.

The story has a happy ending, though, because our brother, who had refused to turn his back on Freemasonry, later landed himself a deputy headship at an independent grammar school which in the mid-nineties was, according to The Independent, the top co-educational independent grammar school in Britain. Life's intricate windings had turned a discriminatory brick wall into a wonderful opening.

Interesting Artefacts

Many could be forgiven for shying away from the opportunity of visiting either of the two lodges in Leek when snow is expected, as it is at the time of writing this article. Yet, by so doing, one can easily miss out on an enjoyable and rewarding experience, because tucked away in the various nooks and crannies of the Masonic hall are several items of historical interest to the Freemason.

Amongst them is a suite of some forty upright chairs which complement the furniture adorning the principal officers' stations. These forty chairs were presented to St. Edward's Lodge No. 966 sometime before the First World War, probably in 1913, but one of them differs quite remarkably from the other thirty nine.

All the chairs bear the square and compasses motif elegantly carved into the top central panel of the backrest. One of these carvings, however, shows the square and compasses inverted, the reason being that the chair is to remain unoccupied when the lodge has suffered the death of one of its brethren, as a further token of respect to departed merit and to serve as a tangible expression of loss. Contrary to what one might find on the Internet, we can rest assured there is no connection with any demonic forces some non-Masons have inferred from the depiction of the inverted square and compasses. Indeed, in the centre of the motif is a depiction of the all-seeing eye, emphasising God's observing presence in this world and the next. This one chair is usually to be seen in the foyer outside the temple but when necessity dictates, its appearance within is discreetly arranged.

W. Bro. Rob Barker, who often attends to such matters, also talks of the addition of a cushion on such occasions in former times but the significance thereof is uncertain.

One of the few visitors to the Masonic hall in King Street to have made reference to this chair was R.E. Kt. D. Gary Read when he presided at December's Installation meeting of Ranulph de Blundeville Preceptory, highlighting its equal significance to Knights Templar in similar sad circumstances, when such a chair may be positioned to the Eminent Preceptor's right, there to remain unoccupied.

It is also worth pointing out that there is a depiction of the inverted square and compasses in the Grand Temple at Great Queen Street which was the focus of an article published in 'Freemasonry Today' almost two years ago. There, as in Leek, the significance is the same but it remains a matter for conjecture which is the older. It would be interesting to know whether there are any other Masonic halls in the Province which have a chair or other furniture with the same symbol, especially if made prominent when sad circumstances dictate. *JPA*



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W. Bro. Douglas P. Brundle, P.Pr.S.G.W. - Sixty Years in Freemasonry

On Friday, December 8th., the P.G.M., R.W. Bro. John Lockley, visited W. Bro. Douglas Brundle, P.Pr.S.G.W., an honorary member of Old Masonians Lodge No. 6762. The purpose of the visit was to mark and celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of W. Bro. Brundle's initiation. As befitted this special occasion, the P.G.M., who was accompanied by W. Bro. Richard Scott, P.Pr.S.G.W., the lodge's Provincial Visiting Officer, presented W. Bro. Brundle with a Provincial certificate commemorating his sixty years in Freemasonry.



Pictured are W. Bro. Eric J. Rymer, P.S.G.D., W.M. ; W. Bro. Robert A. Phipps, P.Pr.G.Swd.B., almoner ; W. Bro. Ken Oliver, secretary, W. Bro. Brundle and Mrs. Dorothy Brundle, seated, and Mrs. Iris Phipps.

With thanks to W. Bro. Ken Oliver for providing the information and photograph.

W. Bro. Ted Tomkins instigates £250 Presentation to the S.S.A.F.A..



For the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of W. Bro. Ted Tomkins, P.Pr.G.Swd.B., of Sutherland Lodge No. 451 the lodge was unable to provide a photograph but, as part of the event, and in view of his keen involvement and interest in the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association, the lodge presented him with a cheque for £250.00 to be passed on to their charity. At the October meeting of Sutherland Lodge W. Bro. George Steele, a Past Master of William Rogers Lodge No. 2823 and the Chairman of the Staffordshire Branch of the S.S.A.F.A., thanked the brethren for the generous donation and presented an official certificate of thanks to the Worshipful Master of Sutherland Lodge, W. Bro. Ralph Ritchey, P.Pr.J.G.W.. The photograph shows from left to right W. Bro. Eddie Campion, P.Pr.J.G.W., of Ready Lodge No. 4008 and also a representative of the S.S.A.F.A., W. Bro. Ted Tomkins holding his previously presented fifty-year certificate, W. Bro. George Steele, W. Bro. Ralph Ritchey, W.M., holding the S.S.A.F.A. certificate, and W. Bro. Jim Wilson, P.Pr.S.G.D., Sutherland Lodge's almoner.

W. Bro. Norman J. Raison, P.Pr.S.G.W. - Sixty Years in Freemasonry

On Saturday, November 18th., the R.W.P.G.M., John Lockley, met with W. Bro. Norman and his family at Tettenhall Road to present him with a certificate in celebration of his sixty years in Freemasonry. At the same time and in the company of many Masonic friends as listed below the P.G.M. also promoted him 'in the field' to P.Pr.S.G.W.. Initiated in Victoria Lodge No. 2848 in November, 1957, Norman had first received Provincial honours in 1982 as P.Pr.Asst.G.Sec. He was subsequently promoted to P.Pr.G.Supt.Wks. in 1993, P.Pr.G.Reg. in 2000 and P.Pr.G.J.W. in 2007.

Norman John Raison was born on March 15th., 1922. Directly from leaving school Norman joined Fischer Bearings Co. Ltd. in their purchasing department, but with the onset of war in 1939 he volunteered for the Royal Navy. He was assigned the rôle of certified wireless telegraphist in association with Special Branch. He was subsequently posted to Gibraltar where he was involved in land-based operations tracking enemy submarines. To escape the claustrophobic nature of service on Gibraltar, Norman volunteered for service on one-man submarines but the posts available proved to be oversubscribed. He was subsequently reassigned to an officers' training course which brought him promotion to sub-lieutenant and further training on motor torpedo boats, but the vessel on which he was to serve had been damaged in action and was under repair. Eventually he found himself working with mark 3 landing craft for the D-Day landings during which he made repeated crossings of the Channel.

His experiences prepared him well for his next posting which saw him in command of a mark 5 'Star' landing craft at Ramree Island and promoted to the rank of lieutenant. The Royal Navy subsequently offered Norman a commission but he chose to return to civilian life after the war, becoming Chief Engineering Buyer for Goodyear Tyre and Rubber Company, handling their large expansion scheme in Wolverhampton and Scotland. Later, as Personnel Manager, Norman assumed responsibility for all remould tyre plants, warehouses and the Racing Division, followed by Sales and the Wolverhampton Staff and Engineering Division. His principal hobby was and remains golf at Oxley Park Golf Club where he was a committee member for fifteen years, the club captain, the senior section captain and then President for three years. He is now an honorary life member and a keen player of Bridge.

Norman wishes to acknowledge the years of friendship and fellowship he has always enjoyed with W. Bros Terry Macey, Ted Kanas, David Barnfather, John Fox, Phil Morris, David Lockley, Andy Williams and many more including the P.G.M., R.W. Bro. John Lockley.



W.Bro. Cyril T. Williams P.Pr.S.G.W.. - Fifty Years in Freemasonry

Following a long and debilitating illness it was a source of great delight to all who know W. Bro. Cyril that he was now well enough again to attend this special evening at Hanliensian Lodge No. 3935 on October 5th. and to celebrate his fifty years in Freemasonry. As R.W. Bro. Kevin Chawner pointed out in his address, this was due not only to advances in medical science but also to the loving care and attention given by Cyril's wife, Pamela., and to reiterate R.W. Bro. Chawner's sentiments, long may this good progress continue.

Cyril would have been aware at quite an early age that both his father and uncle were Freemasons. Cyril's father was W.M. of the lodge in 1938 and later served as lodge secretary. Although his father was a teacher at Hanley High School, Cyril was educated at Newcastle High School, a fact belied by the gusto with which he sings the school song at lodge meetings.

On leaving school Cyril was called up for national service and served in the King's Shropshire Light Infantry, the North Staffordshire Regiment and the Royal Army Service Corps, spending much of his time in Berlin. After leaving the army he started civilian life as a cooper. In time he moved to Belstaff, the industrial clothing manufacturers, before deciding to follow his father's footsteps in education, qualifying at Alsager College before enjoying a successful career at Woodhouse Junior School and the Adderley Junior School.

Cyril is a devoted Methodist and together with his wife was very closely involved in the successful development of the West End Methodist Church and Community Centre following the acquisition and conversion of a former public house. On the charity front they have also been hugely involved in the Chernobyl Children's Project, travelling to Belarus with supplies and accommodating children from the disaster area in their own home as part of the work of the project.

Cyril's interest in Freemasonry obviously stemmed from his father's Masonic involvement although his own initiation did not ensue until 1967, sixteen years after his father's death. When the majority of us think or talk about Hanliensian Lodge, it is not long before the name of Cyril Williams comes to the fore and when we talk about Cyril Williams, it is likewise not long before Hanliensian Lodge comes to the fore.



Such has been the enormous contribution he has made and continues to make to the lodge. He has served as Master of the lodge for three separate terms and has served a total of

seventeen years as secretary. He has also served the lodge as almoner. As a member of the lodge he is renowned for the welcome and fellowship he extends to all. The Province has recognised his contribution with various appointments and promotions, culminating in his promotion to P.Pr.S.G.W.. In 1970 he joined the Staffordshire Knot Chapter No. 418 and has given similar service to that Chapter and to the Royal Arch Order in which he now holds the rank of P.Pr.G.S.N. Still with a moment to spare he also joined Kidsgrove Lodge of Mark Master Masons No. 1503 and has devoted similar commitment to that lodge and that order. He was Master in 1989 Provincial J.G.W. in 2003 and was appointed to P.A.G.D.C. in the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons in 2006. He has a similar record in Kidsgrove Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners, again aspiring to Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank.

In many ways and many areas he has made his mark and still has much to offer and we congratulate him on reaching this milestone in his Masonic career. We thank him for all he has done and we wish him the best of health so that he can continue to enjoy his life and his Freemasonry and we can continue to enjoy his company for many more years.

With grateful thanks to R.W. Bro. Kevin Chawner, P.Pr.G.M., for a copy of his address about W. Bro. Cyril given at his 50th. anniversary celebration.

With deep regret we must report that W. Bro. Cyril passed away on Saturday, February 10th., We extend our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to his wife, Pamela, and his family. Freemasonry in general and his many lodges and chapter in particular will very much miss his commitment, warmth and enthusiasm.

W. Bro. Peter Taylor, P.Pr.A.G.Sec. – Fifty Years in Masonry

It was hoped that W. Bro. Peter Taylor would be able to attend the Castellum installation meeting on November 13th., but due to health problems this was not possible. To put matters right and to present W. Bro. Peter with a Provincial certificate marking the fiftieth anniversary of his initiation, V. W. Bro. John V. Renaudon, Dep.P.G.M., W. Bro. Wilf Burt, P.Pr.J.G.W., and W. Bro. Mark Sewell, W.M. of Castellum Lodge,



No. 6710, braved the arctic weather on December 8th. to visit W. Bro. Peter Taylor at his home in Shrewsbury. Having arrived at the outskirts of Shrewsbury at 11.50 a.m. it took our intrepid threesome a further 65 minutes to travel the last 2½ miles. The meeting was enjoyed by all and many memories were revisited over the lunch which Peter so kindly put on for his visitors. Peter entertained them with a few of his magic card tricks and beautiful piano-playing, but sadly the weather was deteriorating quite rapidly and they had to leave. Plans are in hand to make a visit again in the near future and maybe talk W. Bro. Peter into visiting Castellum Lodge as soon as circumstances permit.

It was an honour to be part of this momentous occasion of which all will treasure fond memories.

Mark J. Sewell, Secretary, Castellum Lodge, No. 6710

Contributions, ideas or suggestions will be welcomed by the Editor, W. Bro. Paul Ashcroft by e-mail to editor@pglstaffordshire.co.uk or by post to Paul Ashcroft, c/o Provincial Grand Lodge, 211 Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton, WV6 0DD.

W.Bro Harry Boulton - 50 years in Freemasonry



When you've enjoyed fifty years' involvement in something you love, it's only right that the moment should be marked in a special way.

So, on a drizzly Autumn day in October, R.W. Bro John Lockley, Provincial Grand Master for Staffordshire, dropped into W. Bro Harry Boulton's residence in Stafford to present him with a framed fifty years certificate.

As the photo shows, he was joined by more Past Masters than you normally see in one group, all involved in his lodge, or connected to Harry through friendships spanning decades.

In his younger days, Harry owned a sweet emporium next to the main cinema in Stafford town centre. A regular visitor was HRH Princess Margaret who always dropped in when passing to pick up a box of Bentinck's mint chocolates!

Harry joined the Izaak Walton Lodge in 1967 and was installed as Master in 1987. He worked in many roles including A.D.C. and was awarded the Provincial rank of P.Pr.J.G.W. in 1992.

Harry is also an honorary member of the Lodge, recognising the major contribution he made during his life as an active member.

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Masonic
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A series of grants totalling £110,000 have been donated to support ongoing relief efforts on islands across the Caribbean, hit hard by this summer's hurricanes.

The largest grant, of £50,000, will support Plan International UK's work in Haiti and the Dominican Republic

More than a million people in these countries are still badly affected by the hurricane and are in urgent need of help.

Despite major coverage of the recent hurricanes, the crisis in Haiti and the Dominican Republic has been largely ignored by the media. Haiti in particular has tens of thousands of people still living in makeshift shelters following the devastating earthquake of 2010, the cholera outbreak which followed, and the widespread destruction caused by Hurricane Matthew last year.

The grant to Plan International UK will provide food and kitchen kits, clean water supplies, mattresses and bedding and hygiene kits specifically aimed at women and children. There will also be aid to help farmers restore their livelihoods and replacement school items to help children resume their education as soon as possible.

Tanya Barron, Chief Executive of Plan International UK said:

"The media may have moved on but rebuilding takes time. People are struggling to piece their lives back together after the latest in a series of disasters which have devastated these countries. We are hugely grateful to the Masonic Charitable Foundation for their generous grant, which will make a big difference to thousands of people across Haiti and the Dominican Republic"



Caribbean Masonic Districts receive £60,000

Three further grants totalling £60,000 have been awarded to the Masonic Districts of Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Bahamas & Turks as well as Trinidad and Tobago, to help people in these areas following Hurricanes Irma and Maria. The emergency relief grants will help those living without access to safe shelter, food, drinking water and sanitation.

David Innes, Chief Executive of the Masonic Charitable Foundation, said:

"The recent hurricanes in the Caribbean have left many thousands of people at risk of malnutrition and disease, some of whom have been largely forgotten. I am very pleased we are able to help with Plan International UK's long-term, life-saving work as well as working directly with the overseas Masonic Districts to assist those in need."

**Casters wanted to assist at
Masonic Fishing Charity Events**

For more info or to register interest please contact

David Watt einhorrido@sky.com 01889 562298



Tercentenary Celebrations complement MCF Community Awards

If one regards the spectacular festival at the Royal Albert Hall and MFest300 as in-house celebrations of Grand Lodge's tercentenary, then what better way could there be of sharing the celebrations with the public in general than through the wide range of disbursements which will have contributed so much to the invaluable work of so many charities throughout the country? Staffordshire itself has seen a plethora of charities strengthened by significant donations both from the MCF and the SMCA, not to mention the considerable number of disbursements from lodges and individual brethren, all of which have merited the acclaim of those associated with Freemasonry in this Province.

Back at the start of November as the year of celebration was approaching its conclusion, it was fitting that the biggest collective presentation of charitable awards should take place at Wolverhampton. As a result of funding from the MCF Community Awards scheme and the voting of the wider community throughout Staffordshire, four charities were selected to receive awards totalling £50,000: Midland Freewheelers, Katharine House Hospice, The MS Therapy Centre and Staffordshire Women's Aid.

For the first time a public vote had been held to decide how these charities should benefit from this initiative. Thus it was that the Midland Freewheelers (Blood Bikes) were awarded £25,000; Katherine House Hospice was to receive £15,000; the MS Therapy Centre was awarded £6,000, and Staffordshire Women's Aid received £4,000.

The proceedings were opened with words of welcome from the Provincial Grand Charity Steward, W. Bro.

John Skellern, who described the structure of Freemasonry in the Province of Staffordshire and its relation to the United Grand Lodge of England. His introduction was followed by the Provincial Grand Master, R.W. Bro. John Lockley, who went on to say how proud the Province was to be able to link with the community in this way in appreciation and admiration of the work done by these charities. The P.G.M. added that, in celebration of this tercentenary, Freemasonry has during 2017 donated more than £3,000,000 over and above its normal annual disbursements. He cited the Province's donation of £10,000 to the Manchester Bombing Appeal which had been the third donation received by the newly formed trust in response to the Manchester Arena atrocity last year. He added that within twenty four hours Freemasons nationwide had donated some £150,000 to that appeal, emphasising that, as a force for good, Freemasonry is constantly striving to meet its philanthropic aims whenever and wherever it can.

Following each individual presentation, representatives of the four charities gave a brief description of the nature and scope of their work. Representing the Blood Bikes, Lorraine Gough, explained that, as one of 43 such groups nationwide, the Midland Freewheelers deliver emergency medical essentials such as blood and tissue samples across the region, pre-empting the need for taxis and carriers. The service is purely voluntary and this award of £25,000 has been the largest donation received by the charity since its inception.

On behalf of Katherine House Hospice the £15,000 award was received by Richard Soulsby, Chief Executive, and Kelly Day, Trust Fundraiser, who informed those present that the hospice needs to raise between £100,000 and £150,000 per year to remain viable and is reliant on volunteer assistance and patient contributions together with charity donations. The number of cancer and stroke victims is rising year by year which in turn is adding to the responsibilities of the hospice's support network as well as therapy services.



Masonic
Charitable Foundation

On behalf of the MS Therapy Centre Susan Husband responded to the award by illustrating the work of the charity and the facilities at its disposal which can support fifteen out-patients and one in-patient as well as offering care in the home support to MS sufferers.

In 2016 the centre offered counselling support and therapy to some 1,000 patients while also providing an end of life support service.

Receiving a cheque for £4,000 on behalf of Staffordshire Women's Aid, Dickie Jones described the nature and scope of the work undertaken by the charity in providing on-going support for women and children who have been victims of domestic and sexual abuse.



The support can include refuge accommodation, counselling, children's support, a 24-hour help line, training, group work and educational work in schools and other youth settings. In the last two years the organisation has provided outreach to over 1,000 women and children and accommodated over 40 families in refuge.

All expressed immense gratitude for the awards they had received and a sense of mutual appreciation and esteem marked what proved to be an edifying and moving experience for all who were present.

Katherine House Representatives respond to the M.C.F. Award

Following the recent award of £15,000 to Katharine House by the Masonic Charitable Foundation this article appeared in the subsequent edition of Katharine House's periodic newsletter, The Hub. It was a pleasure to entertain their representatives and those of the other organisations who were recipients of the MCF awards. As Freemasons we gained a deeper insight into the work and dedication of everyone associated with Katharine House, which in turn strengthened in everyone the conviction that our charitable work is a graceful adjunct to all that Freemasonry represents. Their kind response is much appreciated. Below is the text of an e-mail the P.G.M. and Barrie Rouse received from the hospice's charity representative, Kelly Day.

"Firstly, on behalf of Richard Soulsby and myself, can I say how much we enjoyed coming to see you all last week and to be able to thank you all personally for the wonderful donation we received. We both found it really interesting finding out more about the good work that Freemasonry does. I mentioned I would be in touch to return the gesture and to see if any of you would like to come to the hospice for an updated tour, so you can see for yourself, how important and appreciated your support to us is".

Our thanks go to Charlotte Callear of the Wolverhampton Express and Star for the pleasing press coverage of the event.



FREEMASONS HELP TO TRANSFORM YOUNG LIVES

Staffordshire Freemasons have given almost £50,000 to help transform the lives of young wheelchair users across Staffordshire

Young wheelchair users across Staffordshire have been given a helping hand by Staffordshire Freemasons, with a grant of almost £50,000 to disabled young people's charity, Whizz-Kidz, to help fund their team of mobility engineers who travel and work in communities across Staffordshire, delivering and maintaining vital mobility equipment for disabled children and young people.

The certificate of disbursement was formally presented to Whizz-Kidz on January 12th. at the Masonic Centre, Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent. Making the presentation on behalf of the Province, supported by W. Bro. Mike Heenan, the Treasurer of the M.C.F., was V.W. Bro. J.V. Renaudon, Dep.P.G.M., who said, 'We're very pleased to be able to support Whizz-Kidz. Every child has the right to a fun and active childhood, so we were delighted to help fund their team of mobility engineers, who provide this essential service.'



Mike Heenan, M.C.F. Treasurer; John Renaudon, Dep.P.G.M., Libby Tipper and Jonathan Richards at the Masonic Hall, Shelton, for the presentation of the M.C.F. disbursement of £48,000 to 'Whizz-kidz'.

Libby Tipper, 13, from Cannock, is just one of the young disabled people in Staffordshire to receive a wheelchair from Whizz-Kidz. Libby was born with brain damage and the condition, Hemiparesis, which causes weakness in the right hand side of her body. Libby's mother, Andrea, said, 'The difference that Libby's new wheelchair, which is light and easily manoeuvrable, has made to her life is just fantastic. When it arrived, Libby's face said it all. She now has the freedom to do all of the things that she wants to do, so we couldn't be more grateful.' The team of Whizz-Kidz mobility engineers are based around the UK and support the clinical team in choosing the right equipment at the assessment stage, overseeing the ordering and procurement and completing a timely handover of the equipment. This unique service allows Whizz-Kidz to reach the young wheelchair users who need it the most.

The grant from Staffordshire Freemasons comes through the Masonic Charitable Foundation, which is funded by Freemasons, their families and friends from across England and Wales. Jonathan Richards, Whizz-Kidz' mobility engineer for the Midlands and North, said, 'It's incredibly important that disabled children and young people have the right wheelchair. This invaluable support from Staffordshire Freemasons will help us to reach more young wheelchair users across the county, providing them with the equipment, freedom and independence to reach their full potential.'

THE FIRST YEAR

WE HELPED OVER 5,000 FREEMASONS AND THEIR FAMILIES, AND TENS OF THOUSANDS MORE PEOPLE IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

MAKING AN IMPACT

The MCF was established for Freemasons, for their families and for the wider community; for the big issues in society and for the small things in life that make a huge difference.

We are excited to share the Masonic Charitable Foundation's **first Impact Report** and show how our work is making a real difference.

The First Year

Download our interactive Impact Report

WATCH OUR NEW VIDEO SERIES: MAKING MEMORIES

Watch the trailer for our new three-part mini-documentary starring one family and their adventures at the Bendrigg Trust in Cumbria.

Over the next few weeks, we'll be sharing our latest series of videos which follows the Liversidge family's adventures at the Bendrigg Trust in Cumbria.

We have been supporting the family for several years following Jason's diagnosis of motor neurone disease, a progressive and life-limiting condition. Our grants have eased the financial pressure they face now that Jason and his wife Liz can no longer work, and we have paid for family days out to help them build lasting memories.

The Bendrigg Trust, provides adventure activities for disabled and disadvantaged people, and our grant of £40,000 has funded ceiling hoists for their new fully accessible residential block. We invited Jason, Liz and their two girls, Poppy and Lilly to be among the first guests to stay at the new centre and take part in the outdoor activities on offer.

Follow us on [Twitter](#) and like us on [Facebook](#) to make sure you don't miss the new videos.

The Liversidge Family's Story

Watch the trailer now

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

By connecting with us on social media you can easily comment on stories and videos and share them with friends and family, helping us to spread the word about our work.



Meet the Provincial Grand Wardens

W. Bro. Selwyn Burton Provincial Senior Grand Warden for 2018-19

Selwyn was initiated into St. Edwards Lodge No.966, Leek, on April 28th., 1983, and served as the Worshipful Master in 1993. He is currently the lodge secretary, having also been the treasurer and director of ceremonies.

Selwyn was appointed Provincial Communications Officer in May, 2016, and continues to hold that office. He is active in the Royal Arch, Mark Masonry, Royal Ark Mariners and Knights Templar holding Provincial Rank in all these orders. He is also a member of the 30° in Rose Croix.

A retired detective chief inspector who also held temporary rank as a superintendent, he is now a part-time parish clerk. He has a B.Sc. (Hons) in Policing and Police Studies from Portsmouth University and a post graduate certificate in Management from Staffordshire University and is a Fellow of the Institute of Leadership and Management. He is a black belt in Ju-Jitsu and enjoys going to the gym, walking the dog, DIY, computer work and chess.



W. Bro. Phil Baker Prov. Junior Grand Warden for 2018-2019



Initiated into Dieu La Cresse Lodge No. 4169 on November 13th., 1989, Phil became WM in October, 1997. He joined Burslem Chapter No 98 on February 14th., 1991 and became First Principal in 2001 and subsequently in 2006 and 2007. In 1991 Phil joined Memoret Fidelis No. 8686, a London lodge, becoming Master in 1996 and again in 2003 before receiving London Grand Rank in 2008. Membership of the Staffordshire Provincial Grand Stewards Lodge followed in

2003, becoming Master in 2014. For a fifth time in a Craft Chair he is currently Master once more of Dieu La Cresse Lodge.

In Staffordshire he was promoted as an active Provincial Grand Steward in 2003, Past Grand Junior Deacon in 2004, Past Grand Superintendent of Works in 2009, and active Provincial Grand Sword Bearer in 2013.

His hobbies include gardening, travelling the globe and collecting antique Staffordshire blue & white transfer pottery. He is also a member of the Staffordshire Masonic Clay Pigeon Shooting Club.

W. Bro. Stanley C. Loweth, M.B.E., P.J.G.D., P.Pr.S.G.W.. 1914 - 2017 In Memoriam



It was with the greatest sadness that the Province learnt of the death of W. Bro. Stanley C Loweth, M.B.E., P.J.G.D., P.Pr.S.G.W..

W. Bro. Stanley Loweth passed away peacefully at his home on Saturday, August 26th., in his 103rd. year

Although W. Bro. Stanley was initiated into Victoria Lodge, No.2848, in October, 1945, he is possibly better remembered for his membership of the Lodge of Venture, No. 6916, which he joined as a Founder and Steward in March, 1950, becoming its Worshipful Master in 1960, an office which he was to grace once more fifty years later in 2010.

Many of us will remember him as the formidable Provincial Grand Secretary, renowned for his strength of character and powerful intellect and who had all aspects and facets of Staffordshire Freemasonry constantly at his fingertips.

In addition he was to become the Province's first Information Officer, its first Provincial Grand Almoner and the Founding Master in 1994 of the Staffordshire Provincial Grand Stewards' Lodge, No. 9567, when our Provincial Grand Master, R.W. Bro. John Lockley, was its Secretary.

E. Comp. Stanley was a member of Chapter of Honour amongst others, being First Principal in 1973. He was later promoted to P.A.G.Soj. in Supreme Grand Chapter. As a Knight Templar he rose to the rank of P.Gt. Chamb. in Great Priory and was a holder of the 32° in the Ancient and Accepted Rite. W.Bro. Stanley also held senior membership in other Craft lodges, other Orders and in other Provinces.

... to shine as the stars for ever and ever.

Mercia 3995 RA Companions present £150 to Blood Bikes

On November 19th Companions of the Mercia Chapter No. 3995 gathered at the Freemasons' Hall, Burton-on-Trent, for the presentation of a cheque for £150 to Blood Bikes. Pictured at the presentation are E. Comps, Eddie Ford, O.S.M., P.G.St.B., 3rd.P.G.P.; Martin Bridge, Charity Steward; Denis St. Clair, 1st. Principal who handed the cheque to Paul Goldsmith, the Blood Bikes representative. On his left is E.Comp. David Toon, Scribe E.. By making the presentation outside the Masonic Hall, the companions were afforded an excellent opportunity to examine Paul's superb motorcycle, which no doubt brought back thoughts of frustrated ambitions from younger days.



Provincial visit to Shropshire

On September 20th., 2017, our Grand Superintendent, John Winter, led the provincial team over to Wellington Masonic Hall to visit Eyton Chapter of St. John No. 601 in the Province of Shropshire, following the kind invitation of Shropshire's Grand Superintendent, Peter Taylor.

A very warm welcome to Shropshire was extended to all 14 active officers from Staffordshire, hosted by their Shropshire counterparts after which those assembled witnessed a fine Exaltation ceremony for Bro. Bromley, conducted by the members of Eyton Chapter who dealt splendidly with the pressure of a large provincial audience.

Of particular interest to the Staffordshire visitors was the use within the ceremony of an extended 'Setting the Scene' script which was presented to those within the chapter each time the sojourners adjourned.

An excellent festive board was held at The Hadley Park Hotel where our Grand Superintendent was presented with cufflinks and a large pork pie with the top crust adorned with a pastry square and compasses. Sadly there was insufficient time for him to share it with his team and it was transported home untested. It was later reported as being 'outstanding in every particular'!



Metropolitan Grand Chapter delivers 'Talking Heads' in Staffordshire.

On November 1st. at Staffordshire First Principals' Chapter, members and visitors were treated to a demonstration of 'Talking Heads – The Next Step'. Led by the Assistant Metropolitan Grand Superintendent, Ian Currans, with a team

consisting of E. Comps. Chris Stewart, Ian Clark and Don McGarr, those assembled enjoyed an interesting and amusing playlet which depicted an encounter between an experienced Past Master, who is also a Royal Arch companion, and a relatively new Master Mason eager to learn more.

The opening scene of 'Talking Heads' began with two Freemasons chatting in the anteroom as they donned their regalia, after which they started to engage with the brethren present. The playlet covered the history of the Order and explained a little about the regalia, especially the jewel, as well as discussing some of the links with the Craft.

'Talking Heads' went on to describe the way the journey of personal discovery continues beyond the Craft experience, as well as the likely time and financial commitments needed to reach completion of pure Antient Freemasonry. The performance was delivered with a great deal of humour between the players, while occasional off-script asides made the event both highly enjoyable and educational.

Following the demonstration and with the approval of the Provincial Grand Master, the Grand Superintendent, John Winter, confirmed that a team of Royal Arch companions would be set up to deliver 'Talking Heads' to lodges across the Province.

Newly Exalted Companions Lunch

On November 19th. companions, acting Provincial officers and their partners attended a lunch for newly exalted companions, held at Chase Golf Club. A superb meal in wonderful surroundings and, of course, in fine company, was enjoyed by all 82 who attended. This was the third such luncheon, very well-organised as ever by E. Comp. Eddie Ford. So well enjoyed was the event, that next year's luncheon has already been reserved for November 4th., 2018. Put the date in your diaries, companions!



St Edwards Chapter No 966 meeting in Leek Staffordshire.

E Comp Paul Crutchley, E Comp Selwyn Burton, and E Comp Rob Barker were installed as Principals. The three Principals, the Chapter's stalwart Companions Mike and Paul Ashcroft, and with the largest contingent, the Principals were joined by E Comp Norman Joughin, Past Deputy Grand Superintendent; E Comp David Hampson, Past Grand Superintendent; E Comp Mike Ashcroft; and E Comp Mike Santopietro and the Past Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, Mike Santopietro, handed over a wand to the newly appointed Provincial Grand Standard Bearer, E.Comp. Mike Cresswell, for his use whilst in office.

Congratulations on achieving 175 Years to St. Peter's Chapter No. 419

A group of eight Supreme Grand Chapter Officers joined a nearly full team of Provincial Officers and many other visitors to attend the 175-year celebrations of St Peter's Chapter No 419, the oldest surviving Chapter in the Province and one of the oldest in the Country. Founded in 1842, it counts no fewer than 16 Grand Superintendents amongst its numbers.

The celebrations of its past were complemented by expectations of a healthy future with the exaltation of Comp. David Purdy. After a full meeting those in attendance enjoyed a fine meal and drinks to round off a memorable evening, with the Grand Superintendent reminding all present to ensure they enjoy their Royal Arch Masonry.

Pictured are the Three Provincial Grand Principals, the Chapter Principals, and the Candidate.



Joining the Royal Arch



The Royal Arch is an integral part of 'Pure, Antient Masonry' and is therefore considered by Grand Lodge to be the essential and natural progression for a Master Mason after he has undertaken the three Craft degrees.

All Craft Masons have the right to join the Royal Arch and do not have to wait to be invited.

You may become a member of any Royal Arch Chapter provided that you satisfy the requirements of being a 'Master Mason of four weeks and upwards' and are acceptable to the members.

To complete your masonic journey ask the Royal Arch Rep in your Lodge or browse the Staffordshire Provincial Grand Chapter website at:
www.pglstaffordshire.co.uk/ra

All you ever wanted to know about the Royal Arch but were afraid to ask

In early December following expressions of interest from several Masons, E. Comp Andy Mapperson arranged a Royal Arch introductory meeting at Shelton intended to help explain further what the Royal Arch had to offer. A total of 20 people attended, which included 9 who were not members of the Royal Arch but were keen to learn more. The group also included the Grand Superintendent, John Winter, and the Deputy Grand Superintendent, Robin Stubbs.

The programme included a brief introduction by the Deputy Grand Superintendent as to the history and development of the Royal Arch. Those attending were then divided into groups to discuss two separate topics, 'What is the Royal Arch?' and secondly, 'Why I want to know more about the Royal Arch?'.

In the first session the 4 groups were asked to determine 5 facts about the Royal Arch that they considered important. Some very interesting debating took place with input from experienced and inexperienced Royal Arch members and then each presented their findings to the rest of the participants in the form of a single phrase or paragraph. The results were extremely interesting and gave a valuable insight into the Royal Arch. One of the paragraphs read:

'The Royal Arch is the completion of Masonic knowledge in a less pressurised, less intense, traditional and colourful ritual, with fewer meetings but facilitating wider Masonic connections'.

The other groups came up with similar phrases and the 5 facts each group came up with also showed an interesting cross-section of opinion but overall a similar result.

The second topic proved equally as interesting and once again provided a broad cross-section of opinion which each group again shared with everyone present.

During the evening the group were also asked to provide questions on post-it notes regarding 'Anything you wanted to know about the Royal Arch but were afraid to ask'. As you would imagine the questions were many and varied, but E Comp Andy assisted by other Royal Arch Companions facilitated the exercise and managed to find answers to the majority, if not all, the questions raised.

At the conclusion of the meeting the Grand Superintendent thanked everyone for their participation in the evening which he said he had found most interesting and was extremely interested to see how things progressed. Initial feedback has been extremely positive and of the 9 potential members present we already have 3 new members who have signed up to join the Royal Arch and a further 2/3 who are very keen. The remainder are also interested but are likely to be more long-term prospects.

The conclusion from people present was that it had been an extremely enjoyable and worthwhile opportunity to learn a little more about the Royal Arch and something they would support again. If you think that something of this nature could help your Chapter or Masonic Centre to attract more members then please contact the Provincial Communications Officer Mike Santopietro or the Provincial GSN Andy Mapperson for more details.

Website and Social Media

A reminder that the website for the Provincial Grand Chapter of Staffordshire can be found at www.pglstaffordshire.co.uk/ra

If your Chapter has notable news items that you wish to share on the website, please send an email (and any photographs) to m_santopietro@hotmail.com

Provincial Grand Chapter also has a presence on Facebook.



Several Celebrations on one Evening at Castellum Night to remember



Castellum's November installation meeting was an occasion for celebration on many accounts as it coincided with the birthday celebrations of three of its senior members, W. Bro. Ivan Deeth and W. Bro. Wilf Burt, both of whom had reached the landmark age of ninety, and W. Bro. Tony Finnigan who is now 74. Prior to these celebrations W. Bro. Mark Sewell had been installed as W.M., making the transition from wheelchair to Master's Chair with a flourish. Unfortunately celebrations on an additional account, the presentation of a fifty-year certificate to W. Bro. Peter Taylor, could not take place as health problems precluded his attendance. Matters were redressed on December 8th. when a trio of Freemasons visited W. Bro. Peter at his home in Shrewsbury to effect the presentation. See the article on page 7.

Izaak Walton Ladies Evening raises £1,510 for Katharine House Hospice and the British Heart Foundation

Brethren of Izaak Walton Lodge, No. 4281 were delighted to learn that their successful ladies night raised £1510, thanks to the support of all the people who attended the occasion. £1000 was given to Katherine House Hospice and £510.00 given to the British Heart Foundation. The two pictures show Hirendra Raval, W.M. in 2016, presenting cheques to Warren Appleby, Fundraising Manager for the British Heart Foundation *,left*, and Dr. Richard Soulsby, Chief Executive of Katharine House Hospice.



Cyclists' Presentation to the Midland Air Ambulance

The end of November heralded another visit to the Midland Air Ambulance base at Tatenhill Aerodrome near Burton, this time to allow W. Bro. Nick Columbello and Bro. Andy Sawyer to complete their presentation of monies raised as a result of their cycle marathon from Freemasons' Hall in London to the MFest300 celebrations at Weston Park last June. Nick and Andy, who were accompanied by the P.G.M., R.W. Bro. John Lockley, and a retinue of Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodge officers, added a further £1,409 making their final total of £2,155.75 with an extra £400 already transferred to the M.A.A. by way of "Just Give".

Receiving the cheque on behalf of the M.A.A. was Miss Kate West, the organisation's charity representative, who explained that each emergency call-out could cost in the region of £3000. On one day immediately prior to our visit the air ambulance had been called out to five emergencies. The arithmetic speaks for itself. Miss West also informed the gathering that the M.A.A. would shortly be taking delivery of a new, bigger and faster H145 helicopter which would considerably enhance the organisation's emergency services.

True to form, when the group arrived for the presentation, the air ambulance was nowhere to be seen, having been called out less than an hour before.



The photographic record of the presentation took place, therefore, in front of the M.A.A.'s newly acquired BMW rapid-response road ambulance, which was a vast improvement on the tongue-in-cheek photograph taken in May for the last edition of WYP showing R.W. Bro. Lockley presenting the Province's £4,000 cheque on behalf of the Masonic Charitable Foundation in front of the next best prop, the helicopter's refuelling bowser.

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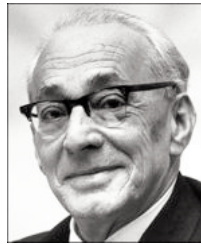
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Interesting Artificer A Freemason's Part in the Rebuilding of Lidice

"Sir Barnett Stross, M.P., Baronet, was a doctor in Stoke-on-Trent and was very instrumental in setting up the National Health Service. My mother knew him very well as he was, in fact, our family doctor and I remember being treated by him as a child."



Barnett Stross had a reputation for caring deeply about people and the human condition, and was appalled by man's capacity for inhumanity towards his fellow man. In 1942, on the orders of Adolf Hitler, the townsfolk of Lidice in the then Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, more recently part of Czechoslovakia, were massacred as a reprisal for the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, the Reich's Protector for that region. Heydrich, a fanatical anti-Semite, had been a leading force in the *Kristallnacht* attacks on synagogues and Jewish properties in 1938, responsible for the drafting of the Final Solution Jewish extermination policy known as *die Endlösung* and for the formation of the *Einsatzgruppen* who murdered over 2,000,000 people as they followed behind the front lines of German forces advancing in the East.

Stross was deeply affected by the razing of Lidice and the massacre in which 192 men, 60 women and 88 children perished on the orders of Hitler and Himmler. His response was to propose the reconstruction of the village of Lidice to commemorate this crime against humanity forever. On September 6th., 1942, in the Victoria Hall in Stoke, he set in motion the "Lidice Shall Live" campaign in defiant response to Adolf Hitler's proclamation that "Lidice shall die". Addressing what was a meeting of local miners and their leaders, Barnett Stross vehemently declared, "Lidice Shall Live!" This became the name and rallying cry of the movement.

"The miners of Stoke-on-Trent decided to work for one day each week for no pay, donating their wages to fund the rebuilding of Lidice. Together with other fund raisers including my mother they raised over £30,000 for the cause."

In 1947 the rebuilding of Lidice began with the construction of 150 new houses.

In 1955, to commemorate forever the atrocities committed on Hitler's orders, Barnett Stross instigated the creation in Lidice of the world's largest rose garden. At its opening ceremony two of only seven children to have survived the massacre held the ribbon which Sir Barnett Stross formally cut. Stross was decorated by the Czech government with the Order of the 'White Lion of Czechoslovakia' in recognition for his support of and contribution towards the rebuilding of Lidice.



The memorial at Lidice in memory of the children who lost their lives.

To this day he and the people of Stoke-on-Trent are revered by the people of Lidice for all they did for the cause and for helping turn a Nazi crime against humanity into a weapon for peace.

The brethren of Smith Child Lodge are rightly proud of Sir Barnett Stross, as are all who are associated with the Masonic Hall, Shelton. Besides being M.P. for Stoke-on-Trent, Barnett Stross was also a member of Smith Child Lodge No. 2064. The house in which he had lived later became part of the Masonic Hall at Shelton.

With thanks to W. Bro. Chris Barker, P.Pr.J.G.W., Smith Child Lodge No. 2064, for sharing his memories, hence the quotation marks.

Burton man is awarded MBE at Buckingham Palace for 29 years of Voluntary Service with Staffordshire Police

Gerald Peck says he feels honoured and humbled after receiving this top honour. Gerald, a stalwart volunteer who has worked alongside the police for a marathon 29 years, received his MBE from Her Majesty the Queen at Buckingham Palace in October for services to policing and local communities.

Mr Peck, from Newborough, is no stranger to being recognised for his hard work after he was awarded the Police and Crime Commissioner Award for Volunteer of the Year at the Staffordshire Police Force Awards in 2015.

As reported in WYP issue 39, it was announced last year that Bro. Gerry Peck, P.Pr.A.G.D.C., had been awarded the M.B.E.



Gerald is seen here receiving his medal from the Queen during the presentation ceremony at Buckingham Palace in October. He is adamant that his years of voluntary service are far from over.

Mark Caribbean Aid Efforts reach £67,850

Mark Master Masons are once more in the limelight following the recent announcement by the Mark Benevolent Fund that a grant of £35,000 is to be given to the charity, Shelterbox. The overwhelming support of eighteen Provinces who wanted to help in the relief effort added £32,850, bringing the combined total to a staggering figure of £67,850.

The money has funded the purchase of 1,938 shelter kits which have been distributed to those affected by the devastating storms and hurricanes in the Caribbean region. Mark Masons can be assured that the full amount will have been spent on bringing relief and shelter to victims of the disaster. Having marked well thus far, Mark Masons are sure to keep up this magnificent aid work.

Contributions, ideas or suggestions for this publication will be welcomed by the Editor, W. Bro. Paul Ashcroft by e-mail to editor@pglstaffordshire.co.uk or by post to Paul Ashcroft, c/o Provincial Grand Lodge, 211 Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton, WV6 0DD.

WITHIN YOUR MARK PROVINCE

Mark & RAM Masonry
in
Staffordshire and Shropshire



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2018



PrGM - R.W Bro Michael Richard Heenan RAMGR
Dep PrGM - V.W Bro Ian Christopher Marshall Smith, PGJO., RAMGR
APrGM - W. Bro. Kevin Spencer PPrGSW., Pr.RAMGR

CHRISTMAS PARTY DECEMBER 2017

The Annual Children's Christmas party was held on December 8th at The Red House, Albrighton.

Despite the snow, the event was attended by 60 children who were accompanied by approximately 100 adults. Those assembled were entertained by Cosford Voluntary Band who treated them to a variety of seasonal tunes, before refreshments were served.

There then followed entertainment in the forms of a magician and then a Christmas story, very ably presented by W Bro Jeremy Lund. Finally, after he had completed his many tasks of the day, Santa (W Bro John Murray) arrived to give out presents to the delighted children.

We were very fortunate to have been able to put on such a popular event because of the assistance of a great many people. That list is too long to mention here; however, in addition to those already mentioned above, special thanks must go to Mandy at the Red House; Sarah Cox at 'A Bit of a Do';



Santa putting a smile on the children's faces with Joseph Horrobin on the left and Thomas Horrobin on the right

the PPrGM RW Bro David Edwards for being the Master of Ceremonies and also for obtaining the majority of the presents; W Bro Richard Webster and his wife Sally for sorting out the presents for the younger children and for their support throughout the organising of the event; W Bro R Lansley for his support throughout; and also to W Bro Tony Marshall and his wife for looking after the selection boxes which were given to all the children.

Finally, to all those who donated funds and time to the event, thank you very much – without your support, the party could not have taken place.

W Bro Robert F Osbourne, PAGDC, RAMGR and PPrGM RW Bro David Edwards

WILSON KEYS COURT



The Mark Province of Staffordshire and Shropshire has recently provided a donation of £2,000 to replace the conservatory blinds at Wilson Keys Court, Rugeley. In the picture can be seen W.Bro. Len Birch, Wilson Keys staff are left to right Tracy Slater, Scheme Manager, Jean Brown and Sara

Walmsley-Lycette together with W.Bro. Kevin Spencer, Asst. PGM who visited Wilson Keys to formally hand over the blinds.

Alan Walker, MBE. Chairman of Wilson Keys House Committee stated. "The Mark Degree has been highly professional and very kind in their sponsorship of providing roof blinds for our new conservatory which has always been known as the "Mark Conservatory". I am so grateful on behalf of our House Committee and Residents for the kindness and generosity shown. The local support shown is very much appreciated. "

MOBILE PHONES

Just a polite reminder to all Brethren. Please make sure your mobile phones are turned off or set to silent before entering the Lodge Room. It is so off putting to the Master or his Officers when they ring out during a ceremony. Thank you

"MARK MASON" joins the fleet



Less than a year ago in January, four volunteers from the charity, Shropshire and Staffordshire Blood Bikes, were invited to a very special dinner, following the investiture of Worshipful Brother Mike Heenan as

Provincial Grand Master of the Mark Master Masons of Staffordshire and Shropshire. Mike announced that for two years his chosen charity would be Shropshire and Staffordshire Blood Bikes (SSBB) and even more exciting that it was his firm intention to fund two new blood bikes for the charity. True to his word and just 9 months later, a new bike was unveiled at the annual meeting of the Mark Master Masons, in the presence of Staffordshire and Shropshire brethren as well as visitors from other Provinces. The bike, a BMW F800, is fully liveried and equipped with blood trays and sat nav. It is customary to name the blood bikes and this one proudly bears the name 'Mark Mason'.

Mike Heenan addressed the meeting "It has been a marvellous experience teaming up with Shropshire & Staffordshire Blood Bikes. They provide such an excellent and much needed service free of charge to the NHS, 24/7. All members are also voluntary which underlines their commitment. We look forward to seeing 'Mark Mason' out and about in our two counties.

For us, it has been a great ride so far, and fundraising for the second bike is underway" Chair of SSBB, Jeremy Cartwright expressed his thanks "We are delighted and very grateful for the continued support of the Mark Master Masons. Our new bike "Mark Mason" will be a great asset to our fleet and will shortly commence service making urgent deliveries to and between hospitals across Staffordshire and Shropshire. SSBB is one of over 30 blood bike groups in the UK. They deliver urgent medical samples, free of charge, for the NHS. 100% volunteers, the riders, controllers and fundraisers work together to save thousands of pounds for the NHS. The samples could be blood, platelets, fecal samples, spinal fluid, bone marrow and frozen donated breast milk for poorly babies in our local neo-natal units.



Pictured: Mike Heenan seated on the new bike, Left to Right Nigel Howells (SSBB), Helen Bundy (SSBB), Ian Smith (MMM), Mike Heenan (MMM), Lynne Stone (SSBB), Jeremy Cartwright (SSBB) Kevin Spencer (MMM)

PROVINCIAL GRAND SENIOR WARDEN 2017/2018

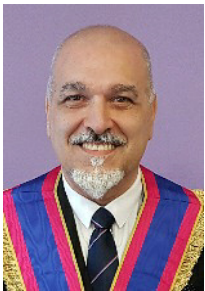


John Graham Harrison was born in Leeds in 1946. He graduated with an Honours Degree in Chemical Physics from Reading University and went on to graduate in Teacher Training at Southampton University. John taught physics up to A level at various grammar and comprehensive schools. Upon taking the position as Head of Science at King Edward VI School, Stafford, John and his wife moved, in 1979, to nearby Gnosall. He later became Assistant Head at that school. Now retired, the pair spend time renovating their 18th

century holiday home in France and enjoying the company of their two daughters and three grandsons.

John was Initiated into the Eccleshall Lodge 5396 in 1983 and joined Manor Stockwell Lodge, London. He holds the ranks of PPrGSupWks (Staffs) and Senior LGR. He is a member of Royal Chartley Chapter, 726, Jubilee Lodge of MMM, 1485, Joseph Whittall Lodge of IMMM, 1392 (current Secretary in both) and Hantune Lodge of MMM, 1085. He is also a member of Peace Lodge of RAM, 541, and Kenneth Shenton Lodge of IC's, 1392. His Masonic career doesn't end here as he is also an active member in Rose Croix, Secret Monitor, Royal Order of Scotland and the Worshipful Society of Operative Free Masons. He is also a PM of Richard Coeur de Lion Lodge and Chapter under the GLNF.

PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER OVERSEER 2017/2018



Mike Santopietro was born in Telford in 1964. His work career commenced in 1981 with NatWest Bank rising to become Assistant Manager. From there he joined Stoke City Council becoming head of Housing and Support Services. In 2008 he moved to become Business and Operations Manager at Blythe Bridge High School until setting up his own Company in Business Consultancy. He gained a Master's Degree with merit in Local Economic Regeneration. Mike is married to Elizabeth and they have 3 children.

He was Initiation in 2001 and rose very quickly through the ranks (AGDC., DGDC) to become the current Prov. Senior Grand Warden for Staffordshire Craft. He is a past Prov. GDC for Staffs Royal Arch. Advanced into St. Edwards Lodge of MMM 1182 he is a Royal Ark Mariner and member of KT and Rose Croix.

MESSAGE FROM THE PGM - THE YEAR AHEAD

I have been asked to write a few words about my aspirations for the forthcoming year. May I start with three important topics – namely membership, communication and fellowship.

Our membership is holding up well in parts of the Province, but there remain areas where the number of Mark masons in relation to their craft counterparts remain low. White Table evenings and social events provide opportunity to grow the membership and I will be talking shortly to a number of Worshipful Masters to offer assistance. Good communication is vital. During 2018 we will be launching direct mailing to individual members from the Province and Kevin Spencer is leading a task force to get this in place.

We are fortunate in having a happy Province with good ceremonial and fellowship at our meetings, but we must be continually vigilant when members stop coming that we have proper arrangements to follow this up and encourage a return.

Specific events to watch out for during the year are :

- Provincial Ball, 30th June at Lilleshall in aid of the Blood Bikes Appeal
- MBF 150 th Anniversary Festival at Lincoln – 6th to 8th July
- Royal Ark Mariner Assembly, 28th September at Shrewsbury
- Mark Week-end at The Queen Hotel, Chester – 12th to 14th October
- Provincial Grand Lodge, 18th October at County Showground, Stafford

Let's all have a happy 2018.

Mike Heenan

Provincial Grand Master

PROVINCIAL GRAND JUNIOR WARDEN 2017/2018



Tom Foulton was born in the Central Lowlands of Scotland. Turning down an offer to study a BSc Degree at Strathclyde University he decided to join the Overseas Civil Service and the Royal Hong Kong Police Force in particular where he served with distinction for a number of years.

Tom is a Lewis but, sadly, his father died when Tom was young and they never had discussed Freemasonry. Whilst in Hong Kong Tom was initiation in 1992 into an English Lodge, United Service No. 1341, somewhat to the disappointment to his Scottish pals in the then Hong Kong British Dependant Territory. He went on to be Advanced into United Mark Lodge 419, United Chapter, 1341 and Elevated into Ararat Lodge of RAM's 264. He also became active in a number of Chivalric Orders. His Scottish pals in Hong Kong decided he should also pass through the degrees of the Scottish Constitution and did so in Cosmopolitan Lodge 428 and although Tom paid he says he was never presented with his Scottish GL certificate.

On return to the UK he joined Shropshire Lodge of MMM and the attached RAM Lodge No. 444 and Severn Lodge of MMM, 1617. He is also active in a number of other Orders including Royal Arch, Royal Order of Scotland (past Substitute PGM) , KT., KTP., St. Thomas of Acon and the Worshipful Society of Operative Free Masons.

PROVINCIAL GRAND SENIOR OVERSEER 2017/2018



Richard Hughes was born in Pontesbury, Shropshire, in 1951. His education was at Kingsland Grange, Shrewsbury and Wrekin College, Telford. He gained a MSc in instrumental analysis and worked in the Pathology Dept., at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital from 1971 until 2011 when he retired from his position as Operational Manager in biochemistry. Richard has been married to Pauline for 41 years and they have one son who is a Phlebotomy Manager.

Richard was Initiated in 1992 into Cae Glas Lodge, 8572. Exalted into Fitzalan Royal Arch Chapter in 1996 and Advanced into St. Oswald Lodge of MMM, 982, in 2000. A member of North Shropshire RAM and is currently Commander. He is also MWS of Pengwern Chapter Rose Croix No. 141.

PROVINCIAL GRAND JUNIOR OVERSEER 2017/2018



Narinder Sharma was born in India in 1960 and emigrated to England in 1984. Whilst working for Goodyear Tyres he establishing his own Company manufacturing Indian savoury snacks. Narinder went on to study at Wolverhampton University where he gained a Masters Degree in Business Administration in 1997. Following the sale of his successful business he studied further and gained a PhD in Alternative Medicine. Narinder is married to Nimmy and they have two children and two grandchildren.

He was Initiated in Lodge of Universal Brotherhood, 9329, in 2002. He is also a member of Wulfrun Lodge 4602 (W-ton) Kitchener Lodge, 2998, (Delhi) and a founder of Universities Lodge 9907.

Advanced into TLRV, MMM, No. 290 he is also a member of Joseph Whittall 1392. Elevated into Hantune Lodge of RAM, 1085, and a member of Kenneth Shenton 1392. Narinder is also a keen member of many other Orders including Rose Croix, Secret Monitor, Scarlet Cord, Allied Degrees, Athelstan and Operatives.

INFORMATION OFFICER

James Montero

Tel: 07888 699708 Email: jamesmontero1925@gmail.com

Proceeds of £6726 from MFest300 presented to Midland Air Ambulance

On September 27th. at the Midlands Air Ambulance Base at Strensham in Worcestershire, members of the MFest300 committee, John Treanor, Ralph Howarth, Andrew Tomblin (Staffordshire) Peter Manning, and Trevor Sturt (Warwickshire), John Norman and John Hollick (Shropshire) and Ian Sharratt (Worcestershire) were joined by their respective Provincial Grand Masters, John Lockley, David Macey, Peter Taylor and Robert Vaughan, to present a cheque for £6726 to the Midlands Air Ambulance Service. Also present were two Provincial Communications Officers, Ian Slesser and Jonathan Swift.



The money donated was the surplus accrued from the Weston Park MFest300 celebrations. The Midland Air Ambulance Trust was represented by their fund-raising officer, Katie, and their executive officer, Roger Pemberton, better known to Shropshire Freemasons as their Deputy Prov. Grand Master. Responding on behalf of the Midland Air Ambulance Trust, their fund-raising officer, Katie, said, "We are always grateful for the support given by Freemasons and we were proud to support MFest300 at Weston Park. It was a great weekend, and to receive this cheque from the MFest300 committee is fantastic."

Staffordshire Provincial Golf Successes – A clean Sweep.

There were 24 winners in the draw made on the day of the P.G.M.'s Trophy competition, each winner receiving a bottle of scotch. The 24 winners and their lodge secretaries have been informed.

Other winners on the day who are pictured below were Mike Smith, Mark Ashton, Trevor Eccleston and Peter White. The photo also shows the team's rich spoils from a clean sweep of victories in all of the six inter-Provincial matches played this year – a proud achievement for Staffordshire.



Fixtures for the forthcoming season are as follows:-

Tues. May 22nd.	Spring & Prov. Wardens Comps	Aston Wood G.C.
Thurs. May 31st.	Warwickshire & Worcestershire	Bloxwich G.C.
Fri. July 6th.	Derbyshire & Lincolnshire	Holme Hall G.C.
Thurs. July 19th.	Cheshire & Shropshire	Old Padeswood G.C.
Thurs. July 26th.	Six Counties	Sand Moor G.C.
Wed. Aug 15th.	Valon Cup & Denne Shield	Stafford Castle G.C.
Thurs. Sept. 6th.	P.G.M.'s Trophy	The Chase G.C.

If you're a golfer and not currently a member of this friendly society, please get in touch with our secretary, W. Bro. Mark Ashton, on: msg.ashton@gmail.com or 07889 580000 for further information. A warm welcome awaits, irrespective of whatever handicap you play off. To paraphrase the late, great, Arnold Palmer – "What some may find in poetry or an art gallery, I find in the flight of a well struck drive". Come and join us, enjoy your golf and make new friends.



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Registered Charity 1054889

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Holders of the **QUEENS AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE**

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Bro. A J G Berry (Tony) MBE SBSSt.J
continues as a voluntary manager of the fund

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Provincial Grand Charity Steward's Corner

Miracles do happen!

Do you believe in miracles? You may not, but I know a young mum who does.



In 2009 Sue Bennett, a young married mother with three small children, was diagnosed after lengthy investigations with primary biliary cholangitis, a progressive and incurable autoimmune disease of the liver. There is currently only one drug that can slow the disease down and prolong life. Unfortunately Sue's luck really ran out when she discovered she was one of the few who did not respond to this treatment, meaning a total liver transplant was her only hope. She was placed on the transplant list in 2015 along with 6500 others who were also waiting for a miracle. Naturally she was devastated when a potential donor proved not to be compatible. Sue had already written goodbye letters to her young children and even bought her daughter a wedding present when even more bad news arrived. Her condition had suddenly deteriorated and she was on the super-urgent list.

Then, against all the odds, a suitable donor liver became available and Sue was rushed from the London Free hospital where she was receiving treatment to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham where she received her new liver the next day. Her miracle had occurred. She soon realised just how lucky she had been and felt she had a huge debt to pay back to society. The only way she felt she could achieve this was to raise the awareness of organ donation by attempting to compete in the British Transplant Games in Liverpool the following year. Twelve months later after much effort, heartache and often despair she won two gold and two silver medals. This heroic effort resulted in Sue being asked to represent Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the World Transplant Games which were held in Malaga this year.

Things didn't start too well as she had had a flare-up of her auto-immune system which resulted in her collapsing after one of the swimming events. Waking up in an ambulance she was advised not to carry on. Sue, however, is made of sterner stuff and defying medical advice she decided to compete in the 800 metres event, not only to avoid letting the team down, but she had also made a promise that, if she won gold, she would present the medal to the mother of her donor, a young girl who had died following an epileptic fit.

To this day Sue doesn't know where her strength to finish came from, divine intervention perhaps, but she can remember as they wheeled her off the track she had won gold. This medal has now been presented as Sue promised to the donor's mother in memory of Amy.

Sue now is training for the European Games next year when she hopes she will be able to say, "I have won gold medals at World, European and the British Games". Currently she is helping to promote the use of organ donation cards and gives talks to anyone who will listen.

Although Sue is now in remission, she understands that her condition may deteriorate at any time and she may need another liver transplant. Do miracles occur twice? She is one of the most positive people I have ever met and friends say she never moans when she is going through a bad patch. Suddenly this makes me feel guilty when my three-score-and-ten body starts aching and I complain to my wife.



Sue Bennett, showing her several gold and silver medals to the R.W.P.G.M., John Lockley, during her training session on September 14th..

The Liverpool brethren supported her through the British Games in Liverpool and we in Staffordshire are proud to have supported a Staffordshire lass in the World Championships. We all wish Sue and her family all the best for the future and hope that more people will sign up to join the organ donation register using the organ donation cards. After all, from tragedy, we all can make miracles happen.

John Skellern Prov G.Ch. Stwd (Staffs). 2017.

To all Festival & Lodge Charity Stewards

As you are all no doubt aware, the Provincial Grand Master, R.W. Bro. John Lockley, will be officially launching the Staffordshire Provincial 2024 Festival in support of the Masonic Charitable Foundation at the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, May 15th., 2018 at the Staffs. County Showground.

The Provincial Grand Master is very anxious that every brother in the Province understands why and for what reason the 2024 Festival is being launched.

Accordingly, and in order that this launch goes off with a bang, I am arranging for a series of seminars in the form of a power point presentation to explain to Festival & Lodge Charity Stewards what needs to be done to make the 2024 Festival a success.

These seminars will cover various topics including: Why we need a festival? Where does the money go to? How much can we raise? What can the lodge do for the Festival? What can the Province do to help you? It will also cover Festival steward qualification levels, lodge honorifics, jewels/bars etc.

Packs will be available for all Festival Stewards containing the new Charity Steward's Guide, the new 2024 Festival Brochure of which every brother will receive a copy, details of how to donate to the Festival, direct debit forms, standing order forms and GA envelopes.

I, therefore, ask Festival & Charity Stewards to spare just a couple of hours to attend one of these seminars in order that they can pass this information to their respective lodges. If neither is able to attend, please ensure that at least one of your other members attends in their stead so that each and every lodge is represented.

- Wolverhampton** on February 24th., 2018,
- Aldridge** on March 3rd., 2018
- Shelton** on March 10th., 2018.

Each meeting is from 10.30 to 12 noon approx. and there will be tea/coffee/biscuits provided.

I look forward to seeing you at one of the seminars. Should you have any questions please do let me know.

Yours Sincerely and Fraternally,

JOHN SKELLERN, Provincial Grand Charity Steward

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR SUPPORTING THE ST. JOHN AMBULANCE



In 2014 I was delighted the Province of Staffordshire & Shropshire Knights Templar were able to send two cadets from the St. John Ambulance to the St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital for two weeks work experience. At that time my Body Guard cycled the Coast to Coast Trail using the St. John Ambulance bikes to help raise those funds and for the Province to purchase more specialised mountain bikes for use by the St. John Ambulance group. The life-long lessons learned by those cadets has stood them in good stead and both are now key members of the senior organisation and have blossoming careers in the National Health Service.

I am, therefore, particularly delighted that in 2017 we were selected by the Eye Hospital from all the other Knights Templar Provinces once again to send members of the St. John Ambulance out to experience the work of the Eye Hospital and its out-reach centres.

My Body Guard have once again stepped up to become the vanguard of the fund raising developing a number of products that are still actively for sale across the Province in the form of my Provincial Prior's wine; the new Provincial umbrellas and new leather gauntlets bearing the Provincial crest that we wear during our ceremonies.

In addition, they have developed 'Challenge 2018' to walk the best part of 100 miles in just two days starting in Ironbridge, completing the walk in Burton-on-Trent between April 14th. and 15th., and taking in parts of the Shropshire Way, Millennium Way and Staffordshire Way. Throughout the weekend there will be opportunities to join them on the walk and more particularly at the Burton Masonic Centre in the early evening of the Sunday where they will be organising a welcome home party in the form of a garden fête open to all Freemasons of Staffordshire and Shropshire, their family and friends. Full details including timings and locations over the route will be circulated across Staffordshire and Shropshire before the end of February, so that you can register with the Body Guard for those sections of the walk and the event at Burton. Details will also be posted on the Knights Templar Provincial website <http://www.sskt.co.uk>
The Body Guard is looking to raise some £8,000 to fund the cadets' work experience at the Eye Hospital.

Can you and your lodge, chapter, preceptory or any other side Order offer your financial support for this valiant effort? If you believe you can, then please contact my Provincial Vice Chancellor, E. Kt. John Francis who can direct that financial support to the team and ensure this Challenge is as successful as that in 2014.

R. E. Kt. D. Gary Read, K.C.T..

Godefroi de Bouillon Preceptory Cheque Presentation



On November 9th. the Tri Services & Veterans Support Centre based in Newcastle-under-Lyme were the recipients of a donation from the Knights Templar of Godefroi de Bouillon Preceptory No. 42 at a recent presentation attended by their new Eminent Preceptor, E. Kt. Paul Molley, PPr Capt of Grds.. Set up in 2015 as a drop-in centre for members of the Army, Navy and Royal Air Force, the centre is managed by a team of ex-Service personnel. For more information on the Tri Services and Veterans Support Centre go to: <http://www.tsandvsc.co.uk>. E. K.t Robert Haysom PGtA-de-C and PPr1st Const, himself a former officer of a Territorial Army Royal Signals Unit based in Newcastle-under-Lyme, and almoner of the preceptory, proposed a donation to the centre after discussions with the new Eminent Preceptor, also a former member of the Territorial Army, who selected the charity as his nominated recipient. After the presentation, E.Kt. Molley was given a tour of the premises, informed of the centre's work and met with several members, volunteers and other first-time visitors.



Pictured left to right are: E Kt Paul Molley, Geoff Harriman, Chairman of the Centre, and E. Kt. Robert Haysom.

BODY GUARD VISIT SIR ROBERT MAVESYN PRECEPTORY

Attending in support of the Provincial Prior at one of his own Preceptories, the members of the Body Guard were delighted to assist Sir Robert Mavesyn Preceptory No. 457 stationed at Tamworth at the installation of Companion Richard Kingstone to our wonderful Order on 2nd November.

During the muster, the Knights of Sir Robert Mavesyn Preceptory raised a further £52 towards the Body Guard Challenge 2018 in April. Enjoying a wonderful meal after the muster, the members of the Preceptory were also delighted to try tasters of the Provincial Prior's wine from which orders for that wine were received.



**BODY GUARD CHALLENGE 2018
(14th & 15th April 2018)**

The Provincial Prior has selected the St John Ambulance as the recipient for the Body Guard Challenge 2018. The members of the team are proposing to walk along a route that combines part of the Staffordshire

Way, with the Shropshire Way and Millennium Way covering a distance close to 100 miles in 48 hours starting in Ironbridge and finishing in Burton-upon-Trent at the Masonic Hall where there will be entertainment laid on, an afternoon tea, and demonstrations of their equipment by the St John Ambulance. This will be open to all family and friends of all Masons throughout both Provinces of Staffordshire and Shropshire. Please put the date in your diary to attend.

There will be opportunities for members of the Knights Templar Province to join the team and walk sections with them.

To mark the Challenge, the Body Guard will once again be selling a lapel badge which will be available throughout the year and is wholly supported and endorsed by the Provincial Prior. In addition, the team will be seeking the support of Preceptories within the Province by way of sponsorship for this event. The aim is collect around £ 8,000 to cover the costs of sending two members from the St John Ambulance to the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital in May 2018.

Further details will be published about the Challenge to your Preceptory Registrar including details of how members of the Province can join the team and take part in this Challenge.

THIRD FORMER BODY GUARD MEMBER TO EMINENT PRECEPTOR



Members of the Body Guard were delighted to attend Robert de Stafford No. 411 stationed at Shelton, to witness the Installation of Bro Kt Mark Roberts, a former Body Guard member, to the Rank of Eminent Preceptor on 13 November.

During the meal that followed the Muster, the members of the Preceptory were delighted to support the upcoming Body Guard Challenge to walk 100 miles in two days, and presented the Commander of the Body Guard, E Kt Ralph Ritchey, with a cheque and donations amounting to £100.

This was gratefully received, with interest from a number who were attending the muster in how they too can take part in the Challenge which will ultimately see two members of the St John Ambulance heading out to the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital on work experience in May 2018.

St JOHN AMBULANCE AWARDS

One of the legacies of the original Challenge to his Body Guard, in the form of the Coast2Coast bike ride to raise funds to purchase mountain bikes for St John Ambulance, is the annual awards ceremony for the Staffordshire Branch.

At the end of October, our Provincial Prior was delighted to attend and once again present an award to the top Cadet for 2017 reinforcing our relationship with the organisation and cementing our long-term friendship.

Visit to the National Memorial Arboretum

The residents of our Wilson Keys Court residential home were treated to a day out at the National Memorial Arboretum courtesy of the combined efforts of the Staffordshire lodges from Burton-on-Trent, Abbey, St Modwen's and Andresey Lodge whose representatives organised the transport for the residents from Rugeley to the N.M.A.

There they were treated to light refreshments before receiving a welcome talk, explaining the origins of the N.M.A.. and its aspirations for the future. Following a visit to the souvenir shop and a chance to visit the Masonic Memorial Garden and the Combined Services Memorial, the residents were then taken by land train around most of the 150 acre site. The tour was accompanied by a running commentary which gave brief details of many of the 300 + major memorials now on site.



After the train tour the residents were ready for an excellent tea of sandwiches, scones, cakes and fresh fruit. A final visit to the souvenir shop and then it was time for taxis back to Wilson Keys Court. Many thanks to the brethren of Abbey, St Modwen's and Andresey lodges were expressed by the residents for a really wonderful and interesting day.



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Royal Wolverhampton School Lodge No. 8170 Fiftieth Anniversary of Consecration

With the P.G.M., R.W. Bro. John Lockley in attendance the Royal Wolverhampton School Lodge celebrated its fiftieth anniversary on October 27th., 2017. Best placed in every sense to lead the celebrations was W. Bro. Peter Hill, P.Pr.S.G.D., the current W.M. of the lodge and Chairman of the Governors at the school.

W. Bro. Hill called off before giving a splendid overview of the lodge's history, followed by a detailed history of the school, outlining the dreadful social circumstances which in 1850 brought about the school's foundation as an orphanage for 'destitute but respectable orphans', many of whose parents had fallen victim to the ravages of a cholera epidemic in Wolverhampton in 1849. Central to the whole initiative was the drive to counter widespread immorality, drunkenness, vice and squalor. The driving force in its foundation was John Leese, a prominent local merchant. Widely supported by several wealthy friends, local Masonic lodges and the 5th. Earl of Dartmouth, it was Leese who financed the orphanage. The establishment's long connection with and support from the subsequent lodges, notably St. Peter's No.419, were further outlined by W. Bro. Simon Hill, I.P.M..

A first attempt to form a Masonic lodge for those associated with the school was made in 1946 but proved unsuccessful. Further attempts led by W. Bro. Frederick John Skidmore in the mid-sixties, known to many as Inspector General for the Ancient and Accepted Rite between 1990 and 2000, resulted in the newly formed lodge's consecration at Tettenhall Road on September 18th., 1967, at which R.W. Bro. Major H. Wilson Keys, M.C., T.D., presided. Amongst its membership over the intervening fifty years the lodge can boast two Provincial Grand Masters and one Grand Superintendent of the Royal Arch, while



nine of the school's nineteen Chairmen of Governors have been Freemasons. While the principal theme over recent years has been one of survival, the lodge is now looking forward to a number of initiation ceremonies which will add to a recent boost in the number of joining members.

Speaking on behalf of the Province, R.W. Bro. John Lockley congratulated the lodge on its fiftieth anniversary, declaring it very much alive. Prior to presenting the lodge with a fifty-year certificate, he thanked all who had devoted so much time and effort to the research which had produced such interesting historical findings. The celebrations were continued at the festive board.

How better to mark the Lodge's 50th. Anniversary than with a First-Day Cover ?

Thanks to a splendid initiative managed by W. Bro. David J. Evans, Prov.G.Supt.Wks., S.W., the lodge decided to mark the occasion of its 50th. Anniversary by commissioning first-day cover stamps to commemorate the event.



David's was the idea to produce a first-day cover for the lodge's 50th. anniversary. He duly contacted his friend, John Chapman, who had produced the Tercentenary stamps. Pictured above is what they drew up.. The stamps will go on sale for around £12 and all profits after preliminary costs will go to the orphan foundation. As soon as David has the complete sales information, all necessary details will be published..

The Ladies Gift Fund Christmas Fayre

The Ladies Gift Fund Christmas Fayre was held at Linden House, Tettenhall Road on November 25th., 2017, and opened by the R.W.P.G.M., John Lockley.

The stalls included jewellery, gifts, cakes and home-made produce and plants. There was a bottle tombola, a toy tombola and a jigsaw stall together with a variety of games for both adults and children.

The raffle provided a large number of prizes and added to the entertainment. Visitors also took advantage of the refreshments provided in a happy, relaxed atmosphere.

The Fayre raised approximately £3,500 and very grateful thanks go to all the ladies of the Gift Fund, their families and friends for all their help in making the Fayre a success. Also grateful thanks are due to all the visitors for their support on the day.

The next event is the Spring Lunch which will be held on April 8th., 2018, at Kings Heath Masonic Hall. Tickets will be available in a few weeks.

The 2018 Christmas Fayre is pencilled in for December 1st., 2018, at Linden House, Tettenhall Road. The date is yet to be confirmed.

On behalf of the Ladies Gift Fund Committee I thank everyone for their support over the years in helping us to raise funds for the three Provinces of Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire.

Many thanks
Sandra Rouse - Chair

Freemasons Hall, Burton - Where it all happens - A Surprise Visitor

Tuesday, October 31st., 2017, seems like another normal Tuesday. Daddy, Nathan, has left for work and my brother, Oscar, age 4, and my sister, Layla, age 5, have gone to school.

Mummy, Rebecca, seems a little anxious, but I don't know why, both Oscar and Layla did not arrive in this world until later than expected and I am only a day late.

However, there may be more than one surprise in store for me today. Oowah ! I have not noticed that before. Did mummy grimace with pain ? Oowah ! and again. Perhaps things are about to happen. Mummy rings the hospital and they tell her to wait 30 minutes and then ring again. I don't think she should leave it that long and neither does mummy. She rings again after 20 minutes.

Okay it's now 9-05a.m. and time to get a move on. My Auntie Lydia is on hand to drive us to Burton Hospital. We should be there in 15 minutes. That's plenty of time.

We join the main road, the car stops. Why are we not moving? Stop, start, stop again and again, this is not going to plan. All these vehicles trying to get into Burton with only one bridge open, it's gridlock. We have only travelled a mile and it's now 9-40am. I really don't think we are going to make it and neither does mummy.

Auntie Lydia makes a decision and turns off the road into a car park. Here we are spotted by Karen who opens the door of this big building, it's Freemasons Hall.

"You're having a baby ? Okay, let's get you inside." Sheets, blankets and table cloths, make a temporary bed on the floor of the dining room. A call for an ambulance seems sensible but there are none available at Burton, so one is being sent from Lichfield.

I don't think I can wait that long!

Karen sounds positive and re-assuring and I now know that Freemasons Hall is going to be my place of birth, for this is definitely going to be my Birth Day. No pain relief for Mummy, I think I had better get moving. 10-25am and my wish is granted ...LIGHT.

The paramedics arrive late but everyone seems pleased to see them. My daddy arrives too. Daddy wants to cut my link to mummy but the paramedics will not allow it. He seems disappointed. Mummy tells me my name is Phoebe Grace and that I weigh in at a healthy 7lb. 7ozs..Apparently we still have to complete our journey to Burton Hospital, but it will only be for a short stay and then we can go home the same day to meet my brother and sister.

What an exciting first day ! I'm part of a lovely family.

We think so too, Phoebe, and as you have made our day special, the St. Modwen's Lodge of Instruction, Abbey Lodge, Andreysey Lodge and Freemasons Hall, Burton, have collected £373 to help you and your family have a very happy Christmas.

Welcome to this wonderful world.The photograph is of me. I am now 8 days old and Karen holds me in the exact spot I was born. Mummy and Daddy have brought a bouquet of flowers for Karen as a small thank-you present.



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Norah Mitchell Trust Fund (Minerva Lodge) annual Disbursements

Minerva Lodge's eighteenth annual presentation of awards to local charities was held at Shelton on November 10th.. The proceedings were opened by W. Bro. Howard Alcock, lodge secretary, who welcomed the representatives of the recipient charities, guests and fellow Freemasons, having first introduced fellow trustees, Tony Berry and Bob Haysom.

W. Bro. Rod Mitchell, Past Treasurer of the Freemasons' Grand Charity, then gave a brief account of the rôle of the newly established Masonic Charitable Foundation and its responsibilities for the central administration of its work on behalf of the United Grand Lodge of England. This was then complemented by W. Bro. Alcock's explanation of the origins of the Norah Mitchell Trust Fund and its aim to promote the work of Freemasonry in the local community. He also went on to explain how the recipient charities are chosen by the lodge and then ratified by the Staffordshire Masonic Charitable Association. In conclusion Howard, now in his rôle as lodge charity steward, invited the secretary of the S.M.C.A., W. Bro. Barrie Rouse, to receive a donation from the lodge for the S.M.C.A. 'B' Fund. This was received with grateful thanks by W. Bro. Rouse who in his response introduced colleagues and guests from Provincial Grand Lodge before outlining the work and responsibilities annexed to the rôle of the S.M.C.A..

The preliminaries having been completed, attention turned to the local charity presentations which this year were to be awarded to six organisations. The first presentation was to 'Back2Back', a support group focusing on the needs of sufferers of scoliosis. Receiving the donation from Tony Berry on behalf of 'Back2Back' was Stephanie Brown, who gave a brief outline of the charity's work in supporting those who suffer from curvature of the spine. The second beneficiary was the Tri Services and Veterans Support Centre represented by Geoff Harrison, chairman and trustee of the charity who spoke about the support offered by the centre to past and current members of the armed services. The award was presented to him by Bob Haysom.

Third on the list was the Ikon Bodyz Car Club which seeks to raise funds for the Neo-Natal Unit at the University Hospital of North Staffordshire. The presentation was made by Jeff Warren to Nicola Wainwright, the charity's event organiser, who gave a brief account of how the car club pursues its fund-raising schemes.

National Eye Research Centre

The National Eye Research Centre at Keele has been awarded £60,000 to help fund research into revolutionary eye treatment for diabetes patients.

This research offers hope to the hundreds of thousands of diabetes patients who endure the discomfort of monthly injections into the eye to protect them from the risk of blindness.

Professor David Bates in the University's School of Medicine said: "We are extremely grateful for the grant we have received from the Freemasons and National Eye Research Centre. Without their support, this project would not have been possible and we would not be able to find out whether drugs that are already being developed for other eye diseases could be also be used in diabetic retinopathy.

"Diabetes is the leading cause of preventable sight loss in the working population in the UK. The impact of this research means that in the future diabetic patients could be offered a better, more effective way of preventing them from losing their sight."

The current treatment for diabetic retinopathy is very unpleasant for the patient but also costly and time-consuming because the injection can only be performed at eye clinics by specialist doctors and nurses.



Recipients of awards from the Norah Mitchell Trust Fund are pictured in the large Temple at Shelton with the Minerva Lodge members who made the presentations

Howard Alcock made the next presentation to Christine Pointon, senior officer of the Children and Families Staffordshire charity which offers support and counselling for children and young people in the locality. Hudson's Care was the next charity to be presented with a donation from the Norah Mitchell Trust. The organisation which functions as the Local Young at Heart Group offers help, support and advice to older people. Matt Ford, their project manager, received the donation from Tony Berry. The final charity to receive a disbursement was North Staffs Mind – Younger Mind North Staffs. On hand to receive their cheque was Lisa Dowthwaite, the counselling team manager, who spoke of the work done by the charity in offering counselling to children and young people with a range of mental health issues and whose difficulties have increased with the decline in public spending.

Following the presentations everyone present was invited to pose for photographs in the temples upstairs and to put questions to the brethren present about the aims, objectives and activities of Freemasonry in general. Coupled with tea, coffee and biscuits, discussions were wide-ranging and not exclusively of a Masonic nature, but all those associated with the day's beneficiaries thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about our ancient institution.

Eye drops that patients could administer themselves would reduce both their discomfort and the financial burden which the current treatment places on the NHS."

Around 1.2 million people are believed to suffer from diabetic retinopathy in the UK; around 750,000 of those currently experience some form of visual impairment. The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) estimates that the total economic cost of sight loss including healthcare, social care and loss of employment, could be as high as £28bn per year. Globally, the condition affects in the region of 93 million people.



New Deputy Provincial Grand Master

David Thomas was born in 1973 to a Welsh father and Yorkshire mother. As a forces child he moved with the postings, including a 3 year posting to Berlin, finally settling in Derby in 1981. Schools in and around Derby were followed by three years at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, gaining a degree in Economics and Accounting and Finance.

He qualified as a chartered accountant but quickly opted for various finance roles in the motor trade, pharmaceutical wholesale, hotels and now as the financial controller for a group of recruitment and temporary labour supply companies based in Walsall. He met his wife, Sara, at school and they now live in Burton on Trent, having married in 1999. They have two children, Megan, aged 9, and Matthew, aged 4. Following a career as micro-biologist in pharmaceutical production, Sara retrained as an infant school teacher to balance work with child care and all three now attend the school literally at the end of the road. They enjoy family holidays and days out when they can fit them in between school work, work, Masonic commitments and the children's busy social calendars. Having been active in many sports in his youth such as squash, hockey, football and swimming, the nearest he gets to active sport these days are cold Sunday mornings and Monday evenings spent watching his daughter play in the Burton Hockey Club's junior team.

With his professional background he has ended up with a few treasurer positions over the years, including the S.M.C.A. for 6 years, Burton masonic Hall, First Principals' Chapter, Wilson Keys Court and now

also a founder and treasurer of Universities Lodge of Staffordshire. For 13 years he worked as a volunteer with Derby Kids' Camp, a charity giving camping holidays for disadvantaged children. He then became deputy camp leader and fund-raising officer overseeing the raising of nearly £310,000 over six years before becoming treasurer. He is looking forward to making his first visits to lodges particularly in the south of the Province, having previously visited many lodges in London, the Home Counties and Scotland.



Since his year as Prov.J.G.W., a year in which he distinguished himself by his energetic, enthusiastic and cheerful acceptance of far more responsibilities than were at first anticipated, he has joined the Staffordshire 2024 Festival Steering Committee, where he was looking forward to taking office as treasurer, a rôle which he will have to forgo following the announcement of his pending appointment as Dep.P.G.M. and V.W. Bro. J.V. Renaudon's successor. We wish him every success in this high office to which he will be appointed at the A.G.M. in May.

Membership Matters

Those members who attended the PGL and PGC in 2017 will recall that both the PGM and MEGS informed the gathered masses of the new and exciting role of Provincial Membership Officer.



As the initial incumbent of the role, and having been a Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies in both the Craft and the Royal Arch, I have an awareness of the needs of the Province. This role is all encompassing as it sits across both the Craft and Royal Arch and the intended emphasis will be to work together in addressing the recruitment and retention of our members.

Following a period of reflection and development by the UGLE during the last year, the initiative is nearing its "roll out" date and will provide resources and background material to each Lodge and Chapter Membership Officer.

Consequently I am recruiting volunteers from Lodges and Chapters to become active participants in the delivery of this varied and important initiative.

We need to deliver a service that focuses on redressing our declining membership.

Do you feel that you can rise to the occasion and offer your knowledge and commitment in support of your Lodge or Chapter, your Masonic Hall and the Province of Staffordshire? If so please get in touch with me, preferably using the form that has already been sent out to all Secretaries and Scribe E's within the Province. Alternatively contact me directly using email ralphritchey@me.com or telephoning 01782 535722 or Mobile 07960 483510.

As a Province we cannot stand idly by whilst our numbers continue to diminish.

We all need to work together to reverse the current trend before it becomes a greater concern.

Ralph Ritchey

Rôle of Prov. Grand Superintendent of Works redefined as new Grand Lodge Initiative seeks to enhance Masonic Centres



This new role for the Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works will be to support our Masonic Centres in the use of the new framework from Grand Lodge –

W Bro Paul Molley

Provincial Grand Lodge recognises that maintaining the properties and operating the Masonic Centres across the Province is not always easy and acknowledges the hard work of those committees who undertake that work. There is a great deal of ever-changing legislation and regulation to contend with. To this end we believe the recently released strategy from Grand Lodge will be of great assistance.

In May I shall be appointing W Bro Paul Molley to the position of Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works. He has over thirty years' experience as a chartered surveyor dealing in many matters concerning property. His new role will be to identify how your committees can work with the new documentation to enable you to participate actively in this Grand Lodge initiative.

I have asked him to commence that process in advance of our Provincial Meeting by circulating a simple questionnaire to each of the Masonic centres. I very much hope that you will assist and take the time to participate in that process. The aim is not to centralise the management of our Masonic centres, but to ensure you have the tools to manage effectively and thereby attract new members and retain our existing membership in line with our on-going Membership initiative.

Contact with the new Superintendent of Works will initially be via email using: supt.works@pglstaffordshire.co.uk

Seagrim Charity - Leo Bailey, aged 8

Next door to W. Bro. Philip Thompson, now Seagrim's I.P.M., lives Leo Bailey with his mother, Emma. Leo is 8 years old and his mother is single. Leo, who suffers from cerebral palsy, has very little mobility. He was born ten weeks early with water and a clot on the brain. After having the water drained and the blood clot cleared, he developed meningitis but after a lengthy stay in hospital he miraculously recovered.

He then had an operation on his spine in an attempt to address his palsy. Unfortunately this operation brought little success. A new procedure, however, has been proposed which will entail having his hips and knees realigned, his ankles straightened and his tendons stretched.

After the operation, which will be carried out at the Alderhay Hospital in Liverpool, Leo will remain in plaster for eight weeks and will then receive several months of intensive physiotherapy which will cost up to £35,000. The NHS will cover the costs of his operation but will not fund the extensive physiotherapy required. Leo's mother, Emma, is trying to raise funds to cover these costs.

Learning of the situation, the brethren of Seagrim Lodge have donated an initial £500 to support the cause, but clearly much more money is required. If any lodge is in a position to offer further financial support, Emma and Leo will be most grateful. In the meantime Seagrim Lodge will strive to maintain its support for Leo in the hope that the full sum can ultimately be reached. For further details please contact our charity steward, Lionel Cawley, on 01785 211866 or lionel.cawley@btinternet.com

On November 4th W. Bro. Phil Thompson, W.M. of Seagrim Lodge No.8161, presented a cheque for £500 to Leo Bailey which will go towards the £35,000 costs for his intensive physiotherapy in his battle against cerebral palsy.





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Exciting Development brings about Formation of new 'Universities Lodge'

"Joining members are needed who want to roll up their sleeves and get involved. Their Masonic rank is not relevant. It is their commitment and enthusiasm which are paramount and, if the ULS experience is mirrored, those joining will have a lot of fun and make some real friends in the new lodge as well."

Quite an amount of water has passed under the bridge since the P.G.M. first signalled his approval in principle for the creation of a new 'Universities Lodge' for South Staffordshire, which would meet at Tettenhall Road. It had been the clear intention to consecrate a new lodge but fate intervened to present the opportunity to take over a lodge in Middlesex, Concordia Lodge, No. 5131, which was to hand back its warrant.

Thus it was that on Tuesday, January 22nd., our new team went down to Southgate and a Wolverhampton team was installed. It is quite likely that, despite nearly 80 lodges now belonging to the Universities scheme, this is the first time a 'universities lodge' has been created by dint of such an arrangement. The Met. Grand Sec. and A.P.G.M. of Middlesex attended to say farewell and wish us well. Concordia 5131 is now de facto both a Wolverhampton lodge and a new 'universities lodge'. It will next meet on Saturday, March 28th. and we already have a student candidate for that, but we really do desperately need half a dozen more young members to bolster the basic strength. This refreshed lodge is now fully equipped and there will be no founders' fees to pay. Fees are currently estimated to be as little as £140 p.a., plus dining, subject to confirmation.

This will be the first new lodge in fifty years at Wolverhampton and interest from students has already been registered. The prospects for repeating the success of ULS are high.

With thanks to W. Bro. Peter Hughes, P.Pr.J.G.W., secretary of the Universities Lodge of Staffordshire No. 9907, for outlining the prospects and challenges facing the new lodge.

Special Valentine's Day for one in a Million

Sam Proctor came to Freemasonry via the universities scheme, joining the Universities Lodge of Staffordshire No.9907 nearly a year ago. Having completed his undergraduate LL.B., Sam embarked on a Master of Human Resource Management and Employment Law course at Staffordshire University. As Sam was attending the freshers' fair in September, 2017, his attention was drawn to people talking about a new stand at the fair. He heard that the stand appeared to be about Freemasonry for students. Together with his guide dog, Royce, Sam managed to ease his way through the crowd until he arrived at what he believed to be the centre of all the attention. The freshers' stand was staffed by Andy Mapperson and Josh Holford, and Sam spoke to them about Freemasonry. Sam had heard of the charitable good works done by the brotherhood and its ethos of comradeship. Sam decided that the Masonic route was worth more research and some listening on YouTube and after chatting with lodge secretary, Peter Hughes, he decided that he wanted to join 9907.

Sam reflects the diverse nature of the membership of ULS, as he has a very rare genetic condition called Bardet Biedl Syndrome that affects one in a million people. Sam is blind and has Royce as his companion. He has other disabilities but his visual impairment is the most obvious. This has not been a barrier to his Masonic career and on Wednesday, February 14th., Sam was raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason. Sam commented afterwards, 'I love Freemasonry. Everyone has been so kind and helpful. I cannot thank the team at ULS enough for the friendship and guidance they have given me.

It has been a fantastic experience. I would recommend other people with disabilities to look to see what Freemasonry can bring to their lives'. After the festive board Sam was off to prepare his delivery of the working tools for a forthcoming initiation.



Bro. Sam seen front centre following his Raising ceremony. surrounded by officers of the lodge and flanked by W. Bro. Dr. N. Sharma, W.M., on his left and W. Bro. D.J. Firth, I.P.M., on his right.

Lodge secretary, Peter Hughes, commented that Sam is amazing and a fantastic ambassador for the ULS, adding that he has thrown himself into Freemasonry and is one of the lodge's real characters. He recently attended the initiates' Provincial brunch and is keen to get more involved now he has been raised.' A busy and happy Masonic career lies ahead of him.

Peter Hughes.



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Travels with a Teddy Bear ... ? Sorry, Mr. Stevenson !

Although his Masonic roots are firmly bedded in the Province of Worcestershire, Ted Mason is already known to many Masons across the length and breadth of Staffordshire. Thanks to the brotherly assistance afforded him by W. Bros. David Evans, David Watt and Kevin Parkes, Ted has already visited a number of Masonic halls in Staffordshire for social events as well as Masonic meetings. He even attended the Provincial A.G.M. at the County Show Ground in May.

Ted's mother lodge is Hallas Abbey Lodge in Worcestershire where W. Bro. David Evans is currently W.M.. His aim is to help raise funds for that Province's 2022 Festival. Along with 134 of his fellows, Ted is helping to raise what is hoped will amount to £125,000, which is no mean amount in anyone's language. At the centre of the whole venture is Worcestershire Entered Apprentice teddy bear, six-foot tall 'Festival Ted' Mason, whose 135 'Little Teds' have been charged with covering 25,000 miles before the 2022 Festival reaches its conclusion.

This is how W. Bro. Evans explains the workings of this fund-raising venture:

"The teddies are part of the fund-raising efforts for the Worcestershire 2022 Festival appeal. Each Worcestershire Lodge has been given a 'Ted' and the object is detailed below. 'Big Ted' is a six feet tall Teddy and he's an Entered Apprentice, and he's lost his 135 little 'Teds'. Assuming each ted achieves his allotted mileage to complete the collective 25,000 miles target, we hope to reunite him with all the little 'Teds' at the conclusion of the Festival Appeal in 2022. If you google the Worcestershire PGL site and follow the Festival news, there is all the info about 'Ted', where they have been and loads of pictures. There's even a picture of me with 'Ted' in prison!"

How does Festival Ted Mason collect his little teddies?

"By a single circumnavigation of the globe on a pre-determined route to collect them wherever they may be, the 25,000 mile trip is financed by what is hoped will be £5 sponsorship for every mile travelled. For each Ted's 185 miles of this trip one of the little teddies is recovered.

If we can raise £125,000 through sponsorship in the next 5 years all the little teddies will be with 'Festival Ted' Mason at PGL in June 2022."

As regards W. Bro. David Evans' little Ted Mason, reliable sources have informed WYP that he has a girlfriend named Edwina who is the mascot for the Midland Blood Bikes which is the chosen charity of Mike Heenan, the Mark P.G.M. for Staffordshire and Shropshire. Sources close to the couple say that Edwina "... makes a lovely curry, Chicken Tarka, same as Chicken Tikka but a little 'otter."



Having travelled over the Spring and early Summer months around the Midlands, Staffordshire in particular, Ted set off for a tour of South East Asia with W. Bros. Kevin Parkes and David Watt.

His travels have been recorded by our special correspondent.

Preparations, Travels and Experiences

"A chance comment by W. Bro. Kevin Parkes, S.G.D., Asst.Prov.G.M., that we had not visited any lodges in Singapore for a while and that he would be free to travel for a week during August, sent me running for the Grand Lodge Directory of Lodges and Chapters, to see what lodge(s) might be meeting at that time. Sir Stamford Raffles Lodge No 7444, English Constitution, named after the founder of the colony of Singapore, happened to be meeting during the first week in August. Having ascertained that week to be convenient for Kevin, tickets were booked and using the power of Facebook, I managed to contact the Secretary of Sir Stamford Raffles Lodge, Bro. Joseph Darren, who advised that Kevin and I would be most welcome to visit. Once Kevin had sought and received the blessing of Grand Lodge for our visit, all was settled.



Accompanying us on our travels was a young member from Worcestershire, Ted Mason. The aim is to photograph the Worcestershire Teds outside or inside a Masonic hall anywhere in the world, with a prize going to the lodge which can take its Ted farthest from Worcestershire. We hope that Ted's travels with us in Thailand and Singapore help Hallas Abbey Lodge to win the prize! Ted also made some social visits in Thailand before and after our time in Singapore and has been photographed as evidential proof at Lodge St. John Temple in Bangkok, Erewan Temple of the Three Headed Elephant, Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, The Death Railway, Hellfire Pass, several museums and the Bridge over the River Kwai.

It was pure coincidence that I had noticed on the Facebook page of the International Masonic Fellowship that Lion of Erin Lodge No. 934, Irish Constitution, was holding its annual charity "Irish Pub Day" on August 12th.. Having enjoyed the Irish pubs of Singapore on many previous occasions, I opined that I was sorry to miss the event, as I would be leaving Singapore on August 4th..

An almost immediate response from the secretary of Lion of Erin Lodge, W. Bro. Sivakumar Murugaiyan, P.M., P.P.A.G.M., advised that Lion of Erin Lodge was meeting on Monday, July 31st., and that Kevin and I would be most welcome to attend accompanied by young Ted. Although only arriving in Singapore that afternoon, the opportunity was too good to miss and we quickly accepted same. Kevin met me at the airport. We rushed to the hotel to get ready and arrived at the Masonic Temple at 23A Coleman Street. The Temple had changed greatly and very much for the better since my first visit there, when I had visited St. Patrick's Lodge back in 1989. It is now a very fine facility.

Along with Ted Mason we received a truly wonderful welcome from the W.M. and brethren of Lion of Erin Lodge and were treated to a very fine Passing ceremony. The next item on the agenda was to receive an educational paper presented by one of the P.M.s of the Lodge, W. Bro Nithia Devan Sahadevan. In this paper it was mentioned that unselfish and unconditional giving should be present in a Freemason's heart at all times. Fine words indeed, but they were words we would all remember.



Selfless Giving

A further item of business was to ballot on a proposition made by W. Bro. Ivan Lee Chin Seon, Prov. Junior Grand Chaplain, that emeritus membership be conferred on W. Bro. Shan Theivanthiran, a Founder Member of Lion of Erin Lodge. The reason for the honour was not that he was a Founder Member, but that he had freely and gladly exercised one of the overriding virtues of a Freemason's heart. When W. Bro. Sivakumar Murugaiyan had become seriously ill and required a liver transplant at the earliest opportunity, none of his family were found to be suitable donors and things were looking a wee bit bleak for W. Bro. Siva.

That was until W. Bro. Theivanthiran stepped in and offered to be tested. He was found to be a suitable donor and on being advised thereof, W. Bro. Theivanthiran unselfishly and unconditionally donated part of his liver to save his Masonic brother. The transplant was successfully carried out in 2014. How better to describe that wonderful gift from one brother to another! Before the operation to restore R.W. Bro. Siva's health, both Siva and Shan had to prove to the Singapore Government that the transplant was motivated by their long and close friendship and not by any pecuniary motive. This done, the operation was performed and R.W. Bro. Siva restored to health, allowing him to continue to work for the lodge in the office of secretary, and to remain the happy and cheerful brother that he always was. On hearing V. W. Bro. Lee's proposition, Kevin turned to me and we mouthed the words simultaneously, "Selfless giving", a theme Kevin referred to in his response to the Visitors' Toast. There was hardly a dry eye in the room as the festive board drew to its close. It had been a wonderful evening of Masonic fellowship. Both Kevin and I are proud to have met such a dedicated brother in R.W. Bro. Siva, whose company on the occasion of our visit could not have been bettered. Our only regret is that we were unable to meet in person that caring Brother, W. Bro. Shan."

D.M.G. Watt, P.Pr.J.G.W.

The Annual Provincial Charity Clay Shoot 2017

The weather favoured us again and the sun shone as the 2017 Annual Provincial Charity Clay Shoot got underway at Doveridge Sporting Clay Ground on Sunday, September 24th., 2017. This was the tenth Provincial Charity Shoot and judging by the record turnout of participants, the event has lost none of its attraction over the period it has been running. Seventy five shooters turned out to take part in the event, the highest number so far. The Shoot was also supported financially by some who could not attend on the day and some who were just too busy in administration rôles to shoot!

The Gentleman High Gun Trophy was won again by Mr. Andrew Tomlinson, who turned in a 45/50 score. Congratulations, Andrew, and thank you for your continued support.

The Lady High Gun Trophy winner, Mrs. Sarah Lawton, was attending for the first time and had never shot before. Sarah turned in a very respectable 17/50, excellent for someone shooting for the first time.

The Under Eighteen Trophy was won by fourteen year old Louie Aylward, with a score of 24/50. Louie attended in the company of Mr. Roger Ellis, who travelled from Doncaster to take part. Roger is a long-time friend and supporter of the Annual Shoot.



Louie receives her trophy from W. Bro. David Watt

The St. Giles Shield, the trophy for the highest Mason Gun, came back to Staffordshire, after a one-year holiday in West Lancashire, won by Brother Glenn Roberts, of Churnet Valley Lodge No. 8092. Congratulations, Brother Glenn.

A huge vote of thanks must go to Bro. Chris Miles, of St. Giles Lodge, the Chairman of the Staffordshire Masonic Clay Shooting Association.

Bro. Chris is the secretary of the Association of Professional Shooting Instructors and he, along with his team of professional shooting instructors and coaches, ensured the safety of all taking part on the day and made sure everyone managed to hit at least some clays! Thank you, W. Bro. M. Woods, Cuerden Lodge No. 6018, W. Bro. Phil Speechley, Whittington St. Giles Lodge No. 8826, Mr. Rob Ockwell, Mr. Bill Christie and Mr. Ian Baker, all of whom had travelled a considerable distance to support the event. Your assistance is invaluable. Thank you so much! Thank you also to our Provincial Grand Master, R.W. Bro. John Lockley, who attended with members of his family, and to R.W. Bro. Sandy Stewart, Past Provincial Grand Master, who also attended with his family, and to each and every one of you, who gave the event your support.

I had a special surprise that day, for ten former shooting and beating pals from the old Hoar Cross Shoot came along. I hadn't seen some of them in ages. It was great to see you all. Do come back next year! The Shoot raised the magnificent sum of £1221.00 of which £1194.00 was gift aided. A cheque for this amount has been sent to The 2024 Festival Chest and the Provincial Charity Steward, W. Bro. John Skellern, informed.

The Staffordshire Masonic Clay Shooting Association meets on the first Sunday of the month, at Doveridge. This is an informal and fun meeting, where we shoot around fifty clays after coffee and bacon rolls. If you are interested, contact David Watt on einhorrido@sky.com 07866 571180 or Chris Miles on chris@executivedays.co.uk 07850 547990 You don't need to own a gun or have previous shooting experience

Christmas Tree Festival

On a casual visit to Worcester Cathedral last year W.Bro. David Bowyer, a member of Izaak Walton Lodge 4281, saw the magnificent 'Christmas Tree Festival' staged there every year and noticed in particular a tree sponsored by Worcester Freemasons publicising the charitable donations made by Freemasonry in that area.

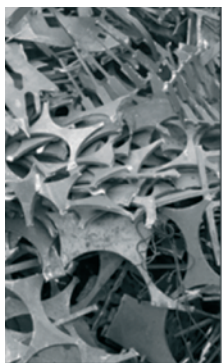
Feeling that this was a superb way of promoting the work carried out by Freemasonry and knowing that St. Mary's church in Stafford held a similar festival, he suggested to the Stafford Masonic Club that perhaps Stafford Masons could produce a similar exhibit for 2017 and they readily agreed.

The trees are supplied by the church and a £30 fee is charged. Various local companies and organisations then decorate their tree ready for inclusion in the festival with around thirty taking part this year.

The £30 fee was paid to the church and the Christmas tree collected. W.Bro Bowyer had produced, on brightly coloured card, 'baubles' to hang on the tree depicting the charitable donations which had been made by Stafford lodges throughout the year. These, along with the other decorations and coloured lights, gave the tree a truly festive feel.

A laminated sheet giving a brief resume of the work of Freemasonry and pointing visitors in the direction of the Provincial website was placed at the foot of the tree for information along with a part box of 'Within Your Province' magazines for visitors to take away with them.

We believe there was a footfall of around 6,500 visitors during the festival, held from Wednesday, November 29th. to Sunday December 3rd. 2017 and good comments were received from many of them. When the Festival finished, the tree was very kindly recovered by Becky Emery and placed on show in the reception area at the Masonic Hall in Stafford.



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Staffordshire Masonic Choir perform at the Masonic Carol Service

The approach to Christmas was a busy time for the Staffordshire Masonic Choir but the highlight of their Advent period had to be the Provincial Carol Service at St. Michael's Church in Stone.

The service was attended by the P.G.M., the Dep. P.G.M., the two Asst. P.G.M.s, civic dignitaries including the Mayor of Stone together with brethren, their wives, families and friends.



The singing was led by the choir under the direction of W. Bro. Dudley Ray, Prov.G.Stwd., and the organist was W. Bro. David Stott, L.G.R.. They are pictured here with the P.G.M. capturing the spirit of Christmas despite the absence of mince pies on this occasion.



Pictured here is the choir during its rehearsal prior to the service. Photo by W. Bro. Ralph Howarth.

2017 Remembrance Service - Variations on a Theme

Little more than seven months after its dedication ceremony at the National Memorial Arboretum the Masonic Memorial Garden was once more the focus of attention for the annual Remembrance Service on November 11th.. Emphasising growing national awareness of this unique memorial to those who lost their lives in conflict, the gathering of Freemasons included several from neighbouring provinces and others from provinces further afield who had made the journey to be part of this year's ceremony.

The service was led by the Provincial Grand Chaplain, W. Bro. Bernard Buttery, P.A.G.D.C., and the Act of Remembrance was conducted by our new Provincial Grand Master, R.W. Bro. John Lockley. The service was made up of prayers and readings with a notable absence of hymns, brought about at the insistence of the BBC who were anxious that their televised broadcast of the main Remembrance Service should not be affected by extraneous noise. As it was, the departure of over one hundred walkers accompanied at walking pace by some twenty five motor cyclists on high-powered, high-revving machines along the main access road adjacent to the Masonic Memorial Garden must have been a far more intrusive threat to the solemnity of what was being broadcast, although it proved to be but a minor distraction to our Masonic event.

To avoid the disappointment brought about by this year's noise embargo imposed on the Masonic Remembrance Service taking place at the same time as the BBC live broadcast from the N.M.A., it has been decided to hold the 2018 Masonic Service of Remembrance on Saturday, November 10th.. The Act of Remembrance will take place at 11 a.m. with hymns, 'The Last Post' and the National Anthem as traditionally included. Arrangements have been confirmed with the N.M.A..



The Act of Remembrance was performed by the R.W. Provincial Grand Master, John Lockley.

David Bowyer

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Drive a Steam Locomotive for the 2024 Festival

Come and enjoy the remarkable sensation of opening the regulator and experiencing the amazing power of steam !

Steam Experiences now on your Doorstep

'Billy May' has now moved to the Woodseaves Miniature Railway near Market Drayton, far more convenient than before - 30 Minutes from the Potteries, Wolverhampton and Stafford.



"That sudden surge of steam power !

You have to experience it to believe it !"

Proceeds from all steam experiences will go towards the 2024 Festival.

The railway shares the same location as the Woodseaves Plant Nursery, so there is ample opportunity to view the nursery and buy plants for the garden while enjoying what the railway has to offer. A grand day out for couples as well as individuals. Minimum age of 18 for the steam experience should pose few problems

The railway itself offers a continual run which can take over fifteen minutes to complete and you will be pulling passenger stock which will be available for family, friends and partners to share your delight.

The day starts with greasing round, oiling and firing up the locomotive. Following an introductory ride around the system for familiarisation purposes, you take over on the footplate for the rest of the day with full supervision and instruction there behind you.



Tea, coffee and cakes are readily available but there will be an opportunity to do a fry-up on the shovel which adds to the fun but is not obligatory. We've been known to do jacket potatoes in the smoke box as well.

You will be sent detailed introductory notes with illustrations well in advance so that you can familiarize yourself with all aspects of the locomotive's operation and the topography of the system.

Cost for the whole experience will be £100.

For further details and to arrange a booking please contact Paul Ashcroft on

01630 673814

or e-mail ashcroftjpaul@yahoo.co.uk



It's becoming difficult to get W. Bro. David Stott off the footplate.



This is where you will be sitting on your steam experience day.