



# MERRY CHRISTMAS



# CONTENTS

1	EDITORIAL	02
2	MESSAGE FROM PGM	03
3	ROYAL ARCH	04
4	THRIVE	05
5	A TALE OF TWO BROTHERS	06
6	UGLE PRINCIPLES CHANGE	07
7	GOING PINK!	08
8	THREE HEADS ARE UP	09
9	FAMOUS FREEMASONS	10
10	NEW WARDENS	12
11	A&E DEPT / CLAY PIGEON LODGE	15
12	THE FIRST TOAST / MIKES MARK	16
13	CHASING THE SUN	17
14	MENTOR / MEMBERSHIP	19
15	PROVINCIAL PEOPLE	21
16	THE TREASURER	23
17	BE KIND ONLINE	25
18	REMEMBRANCE DAY	26
19	CUBIT CLUB	27
20	TLC	29
21	50 YEARS / KNIGHTS TEMPLAR EVENT	31
22	AROUND THE LODGES	32
23	DATES FOR DIARY	34
24	CONTACTS	35



## EDITORIAL

As Christmas draws near, our current edition reflects upon the numerous events of the past few months. We delve into updates from both Craft and Royal Arch, who are now amalgamating. Highlights include the first outing of our new DC's, commemorations of 50-year milestones, Freemasons embracing "pink" and "green" initiatives, a successful Prostate screening event, and heartwarming TLC bear deliveries, among other noteworthy occurrences. Not to be forgotten are the Remembrance Day parades, where Freemasons proudly adorned Regalia while marching through the Province.

The Provincial Carol Service has already taken place, and as we embrace the festive season, many Christmas meals are undoubtedly underway at various lodge celebrations!

Look out for our next edition in February 2024. If you have any Christmas pictures you'd like to showcase or wish to advertise a forthcoming lodge activity, remember, we are here for you!

In closing, on behalf of the Editorial team, I extend warm wishes to you and your families for a joyful Christmas and a healthy, prosperous 2024.

Now, set the sprouts to boil, take a seat, unwind, and enjoy reading all about it.

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## FROM THE PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER

Brethren, this is an exciting time for Freemasonry generally and for Worcestershire in particular. The seven year Strategic Roadmap for Freemasonry, launched by the Pro Grand Master in December last year, emphasises the necessity of the Craft and the Royal Arch working seamlessly together for the benefit of our members and society at large - and my forthcoming appointment as Head of the Royal Arch in the Province reinforces this. The Craft and Royal Arch teams will be working very hard over the next few years, to ensure that Freemasonry continues to be a thriving organisation which people aspire to join.

There is no doubt that we face a membership challenge, but I am confident that, with your help and support, we can overcome it. Initial signs, in terms of new initiates and exaltations, are encouraging and we must continue not only to attract, but to retain good people by making their experience of our Order enjoyable and worthwhile. I have been very encouraged by the response to my presentations on the Strategy and Worcestershire's response to, it which were held around the Province recently. There was clearly an enthusiasm to grasp the nettle and plan for the future, and a great exchange of ideas in the discussions which followed my presentations. If you or your Lodge need help from our Membership team in implementing the Members' pathway, then please do not hesitate to ask. It really is key to the future success of any Lodge. Shortly the Archway initiative will be launched which aims to provide similar advice and support for the Royal Arch.

My task over the next 12-18 months will be to fully integrate the Craft and Royal Arch teams and to take us all forward as One Organisation on One Journey. With your help I am confident that we will succeed.

Helen and I were delighted to see many of you at the Carol Service on 10th December and we join all the Provincial Rulers in extending best wishes to you and your families for a happy, peaceful and joyous Christmas.

**RW Bro Stephen John Wyer**  
**Provincial Grand Master**



## Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch Province of Worcestershire

The meeting of Supreme Grand Chapter took place on the 8th November 2023, at which there was a presentation of "Archway", the new initiative to engage members and grow Chapters.

It is based upon a catenary arch with four arch-stones - Shape, Grow, Involve and Enjoy. It starts with a review of the Chapter and asks three questions; what do we want; how do we get there and what do we use. The Royal Arch Executive are looking at this closely, alongside the ideas expressed at the Grand Sanhedrin on the 30th September ...more news and initiatives will follow shortly.

Following on from the news that the MEGS, E Comp John Phenix, intends to step down in April 2024, we have now been informed by SGC that our RW PGM, Stephen Wyer, will be our next MEGS. This will no doubt strengthen the indissoluble link between Craft and Royal Arch Masonry.

Further, at Worcestershire Installed First Principals Chapter on the 11th November, the MEGS designate announced his Principals for 2024 - E Comp Patrick Firminger will be the Third Provincial Grand Principal; E Comp John Crowther will be the Second Provincial Grand Principal and E Comp Tim Jones will be the Deputy Grand Superintendent.



At this meeting, the Companions received a wonderful presentation from Metropolitan Grand Chapter, entitled "In Camera"

Royal Arch Masonry remains in good heart, and the MEGS and his Principals offer season's greetings to you and your families, and wish you a healthy and prosperous 2024.

Tim Jones  
Second Provincial Grand Principal





## WORCESTERSHIRE FREEMASONS GREEN FINGERS HELP CHARITY THRIVE TO BLOOM!

The Gardening for Health Charity Thrive ([thrive.org.uk](http://thrive.org.uk)) uses gardening to change lives.

Thrive Birmingham operates in what was the old BBC Gardeners' World Garden in Kings Heath Park. They use Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH) to bring about positive changes in the lives of people living with disabilities, or ill health, or who are isolated, disadvantaged or vulnerable. Many famous gardeners such as Monty Don, Mark Lane, David Domoney and Alan Titchmarsh, praise their work and the benefits it offers to so many people.

Thrive looked to the local community to help revive and upgrade one of their gardens in Kings Heath Park. Hospitality Lodge No. 8325 answered that call. This led a combined Worcestershire Freemasons team, organised by Mark Barber, on a 'Ground Force' weekend of work.

It was a serious commitment that involved a clear schedule of gardening and landscaping. The team achieved the activities that needed to be completed, making the existing overgrown garden fully wheelchair accessible and operational. Put simply, the garden now blooms along with the people who benefit from it. It has also enabled Thrive to expand its fantastic work as it now supports even more people for whom STH is an intrinsic and positive part of their lifestyle.

Who would have thought that the same garden that Cyril Fletcher and Bob Prince once used for ATV's 'Gardening Today' programme, would still be offering such wonderful results? It highlights the outstanding work and positive contribution made by Thrive Birmingham, from using a historic TV landscape to derive true enjoyment for the community of Kings Heath.





# *A Tale of Two Brothers...*

## Prostate Screening... Provincial Success Story

Are you wondering why the Prostate Screening at Rainbow Hill on Saturday 25th November was being so heavily pushed?

The simple answer is... 1 in 8 Men Will Get Prostate Cancer... So Don't Wait for Symptoms.

Unbelievably, that statistic is only the start of the story. South Birmingham is unfortunately one of the UK's hot spots for Prostate Cancer. The occurrence is higher than the 1 in 8 statistic.

It's why Provincial Grand Master, Stephen Wyer, and Provincial Almoner, Bill Tucker, were keen for this event to happen - it is that important to the Province.

In all things Masonic, a case story is the best way to illustrate the effect it can have. In Worcestershire we highlight two cases, in WBro Mike King and WBro Emerson Holder. They are healthy and fit men who take care of their diet and regularly exercise, but were still at risk.

Mike and Emerson have survived Prostate Cancer due to early screening and taking action. Both are in the 55 – 75 year old age group, the most vulnerable to Prostate Cancer.

Mike is currently well on the road to recovering from recent key hole Prostrate surgery. Which, as he explained in a recent interview; "...my daughters encouraged me to get tested which enabled the cancer to be caught and treated early". Mike is a real advocate of testing as he says; "...without it I wouldn't be speaking to you today". Mike's message is simple; "...get screened whenever you can, as it could save your life".

Emerson has successfully completed his treatment and is back to full health. This is due to him taking the screening test on the recommendation of his GP. Emerson related; "...when I got the phone call to tell me I had Cancer, the world stopped for me and my family". I elected to have surgery and thanks to the work of the NHS, I have returned to a full and normal life.

Mike and Emerson are both grateful for the work of the wonderful NHS. They prove that the process, procedure and care plan for Prostate Cancer works. They are also very grateful for the Masonic support that they received from all the Brethren of the Province during this difficult time. They publicly thank all of those who were there for them.

The last word should go to the Provincial Almoner WBro Bill Tucker who has himself been tested as part of this campaign. Bill states; "...the test is quick, it's just a few minutes, it's easy, painless and puts your mind fully at rest. He goes on to importantly say that "...you owe it to your family, friends but more importantly yourself to act". So "...Remember Get Tested!"







# UGLE PRINCIPLES CHANGE

## An update from UGLE

We would like to inform you that UGLE's core principles have been revised to include Integrity, Respect, Friendship, **and Service.**

Whether participating in events, fundraising for a charitable cause or volunteering for public or community organisations, service is at the very heart of Freemasonry. Our members make valuable contributions by donating time, resources and skills.



Integrity



Friendship



Respect



Service

This modification is part of a larger review of UGLE's existing narrative as presented in the Pro Grand Master's address to September QC, Below is the relevant extract from the Pro Grand Master's speech:

***'One conclusion the Rulers and members of the Strategy Working Party have reached is that the current, modern explanation of our principles in the terms of, "Integrity, Respect, Friendship and Charity", does not quite do justice to the breadth of your engagement in your communities. We believe it would be more appropriate to articulate the principles in terms of "Integrity, Respect, Friendship, and Service". Charity is one of the fundamentals of being a Freemason but is now often seen in monetary terms, rather than the broader terms of the past, which is true up to a point. Time, skills, and the willingness to do, however, are every bit as valuable to the communities in which we live, if not more so. I think Service captures more fully our engagement in our communities. I hope you will agree with this amendment to the modern statement of what are our principles.'***



# GOING *"Pink"*!

Worcestershire's Freemasons were 'Wearing it Pink' to support the nationwide campaign by Breast Cancer Now to raise money to support research during Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

On Friday 20th October, the Head of Worcestershire Freemasons, Stephen Wyer, along with Provincial Charity Steward, David Dey and Provincial Almoner, Bill Tucker, swapped their Masonic aprons to proudly 'wear it pink' and make a donation of £500.

Every 10 minutes someone hears the words, "You have breast cancer." That's why Breast Cancer Now exists to work with the brightest minds in the research labs across the UK and Ireland, making life saving research happen. They are on a mission to make sure that by 2050 everyone diagnosed with breast cancer lives, and is supported to live well. By wearing it pink you help everyone get there.

In the UK, breast cancer is the most common cancer for females (30% of all new female cancer cases). In males in the UK, it is not among the 20 most common cancers (less than 1% of all new male cancer cases). Resulting in 99% of breast cancer case being female and only 1% are in males.

Worcestershire Freemasons have been impacted by breast cancer on many fronts and in many forms. They have seen and continue to support wives, partners, family and friends who have been diagnosed with breast cancer - hence its importance to Freemasons.





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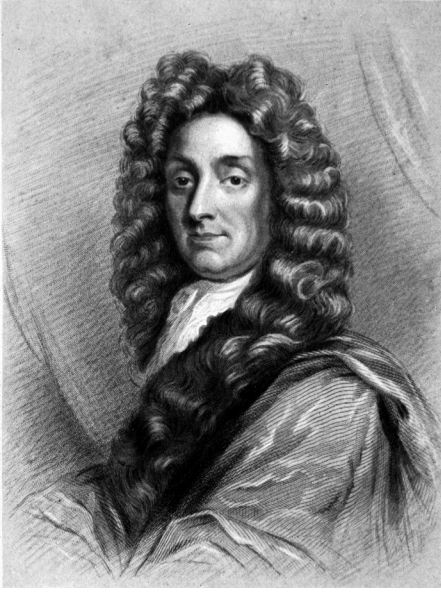
## THREE HEADS SEE 50!

The PGM of the Craft, RW Bro Stephen John Wyer, Royal Arch MEGS E Comp John Phenix, and PGM of the Mark, RW Bro Eric Rymer in a rare event are pictured together at St Kenelm Lodge this month. At the meeting, the heads of the Craft, Royal Arch and Mark in Worcestershire, witnessed a Second Degree ceremony - before Stephen presented a certificate to WBro Graham Perkins, to mark his 50 years service to Freemasonry. Many congratulations, Graham!

Photos kindly supplied by Pete Broughton



# FAMOUS FREEMASONS!



## Sir Christopher Wren

On the 20<sup>th</sup> October 1632, a visionary mind was born – Sir Christopher Wren. Wren was not just an architect; he was a designer, astronomer, geometrician, and arguably the greatest English architect of his time.

Wren's legacy reaches all over London with his remarkable designs, including the iconic St. Paul's Cathedral, 53 stunning London churches and numerous secular buildings.

Throughout the years, Wren held the esteemed position of chief architect for St. Paul's Cathedral and the City churches. He was also the head of the King's Works, further solidifying his reputation as a master builder.

While no concrete evidence confirms Wren's membership as a Freemason, his son, Christopher Wren the Younger, was the ruler of the Lodge of Antiquity No. 2 in 1729.

Through this connection, the Lodge of Antiquity is now home to several of Wren's personal belongings, including the famed Wren Maul (pictured), believed to have been used in laying the foundation stone of St. Paul's Cathedral.

The Wren Maul and other unique artefacts from 18th century England are currently on display in the '1723: Inventing the Future' exhibition at the Museum of Freemasonry!



## Bram Stoker

140 years ago, Bram Stoker (1847 - 1912) was initiated into Buckingham and Chandos Lodge No. 1150.

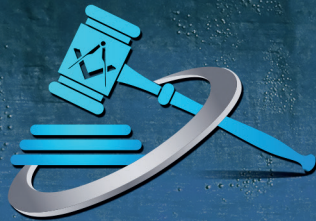
Stoker was born on 8 November 1847 in Clontarf, on the northside of Dublin.

In his early years, Stoker worked as a theatre critic for an Irish newspaper, and wrote stories as well as commentaries. He also enjoyed travelling, particularly to Cruden Bay in Scotland where he set two of his novels. Following another visit to the coastal town of Whitby, Stoker drew inspiration for writing "Dracula" which he started writing in 1895 while in residence at the Kilmarnock Arms Hotel. The guest book with his signatures from 1894 and 1895 still survives. He died on 20 April 1912 due to "locomotor ataxia" and was cremated in north London. Since his death, his magnum opus Dracula has become one of the best-known works in English literature.





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## THE MEN BEHIND THIS YEARS' WARDENS.....



**ROB JOHNSON**



**DEREK OWEN**

Our Provincial Grand Wardens are settling into their job, as they approach the half-way mark in their tenure. Many of us have seen them at work and been impressed: but who are they? What's their background?

Both Derek Owen, (SGW), and Rob Johnson, (JGW), were excited about receiving the call that led to the pinnacle to date, of their Masonic careers. Derek is a retired Chartered Surveyor and 'dedicated granddad', while Rob is a Microsoft Azure specialist. Derek is a Welshman – brought up in Bethesda, where his first language was Welsh, (some say he still hasn't mastered English!). Rob however, was born in Birmingham, but spent time in Cornwall. Their families are very supportive of their Masonic activity – Rob's son, Tobias, has only just celebrated his 7th birthday. Derek too has young children in his life – grandchildren; and three grown-up children.

A Warden's lot is ... a happy one!

In the beginning...

Becoming a Freemason was a little different for our Wardens: while Rob Johnson is a Lewis, he was initiated by his father, WBro Cliff Johnson, at the Lodge of Bon Accord No. 4935, in 2008, Derek Owen was introduced by a couple of close friends who were Masons. Says Derek: "My friends told me how much they enjoyed it and I became intrigued, so needless to say I was soon facing my initiation! That was in January 1996." He was initiated into Lodge of Futurity No. 6455 which, sadly, handed in its Warrant in January 2016, almost 20 years to the day since he joined it.

Rob, on the other hand, had attended many Masonic functions with his family, so it seemed natural that he should follow in his father's footsteps. Of his Initiation, he says: "When the blindfold came off, there was my Dad in front of me and our past PGM, Robert Vaughan, sitting to his right. I knew a lot of people there of course; and it was a good night – but I hadn't a clue what was going on!"

Adds Derek: "I was initiated in the spectacular Lodge Room 1 at Kings Heath. I hadn't seen the inside of a Lodge room so it was quite breath-taking. There were some 80 Masons present, many very senior, and it was followed by a Burns Night organised by the then senior Past Master, the late John Bold. It was pretty raucous, to be honest: quite a start to my Masonic career!"

It took Derek just seven years to reach the chair of Lodge of Futurity in 2003, serving in all the key offices on the way including Secretary, which was a progressive Office ahead of Junior Warden. "It was pretty special," he recalls. "Many of my friends were there to support me, it was a wonderful and proud moment. But that feeling changed, when I realised how much learning I had to put in for the extended workings to install my successor!"

Rob however, having gone into the Chair in 2016, then found himself as Most Wise Sovereign of St Nicolas Rose Croix, in May that year. "Then in June, my son Tobias was born, so it was a pretty busy time!"

Rob found himself again in the Chair of Bon Accord, in January 2020 – immediately before Covid lockdowns, so he remained Master until January 2023. "That was quite a challenge," he recalls. "Like many Lodges we undertook our Freemasonry via Zoom. We'd have a quiz and a catch-up, and I think I got to know the Brethren perhaps better in that time, than in any other."

Derek, having been 'on the Square' somewhat longer than Rob, has also been through the Chair at Frankley Beeches Lodge No. 5846, in 2018, and as a founder member of Aedificandum Lodge No. 9937, became its Worshipful Master in April this year.

Royal Arch beckons.

Both Wardens are Royal Arch companions also, but it took a while before Derek was exalted. He says, "As I had a young family, I didn't want to commit too much time by joining other Orders straight away. Instead I, and the friends who introduced me to Freemasonry, used to spend a lot of time visiting other Lodges. I'd strongly recommend visiting as often as possible, especially if you are a new Mason. Not only do you forge new friendships, but get to see the variations between Lodges – it's amazing to see so many differences when, in theory at least, we are doing the same thing!"

But, in 2002 Derek was exalted in to Merston Curley Chapter No. 6879, which then met at Stetchford Masonic Hall. "I chose that Chapter because I knew a couple of members who were not in my Craft Lodge, and secondly, I wanted to expand my circle of masonic friends, by joining a Chapter that met at a different place," he explains.

On the other hand, Rob joined Wigornia Chapter in 2010: "It was always going to Wigornia," he says. "Most members of Bon Accord belonged to it. It's a small Chapter but regularly attended, and with a recent candidate, maybe more will come!"

Given the very frequent appearance of the Wardens at Lodges all over the Province, both have become quite good ritualists. But like most Masons, they concur they have to work at it. Rob admits he has had some good and some bad meetings. "One of my best, was when I installed Robert Vaughan into the Most Wise Sovereign's Chair of St Nicolas chapter. It was our centenary meeting and the room was packed and it went very well. But on the other hand, I once stood before the room at a Royal Arch meeting and could I remember my words?"

First Provincial honours.

The road to becoming Warden can be a winding one and full of surprises. For Derek the first occasion was when a letter came out of the blue asking (telling?) him that he was to be a Provincial Steward, back in 2006. "To say I was pleased was an understatement!" he exclaims. Then he progressed to become Provincial Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies, just two years later: "this was a challenge, but great fun – and it served me well for my present role! Mind, the current DC's are only too ready to tease that a Warden is just a DC with his brain removed...!"

In 2015, Derek became Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works which involves assisting the Province and the Masonic Halls with the management of buildings, and that he continued to do ... until now.

For Rob, it was something of a shock to be appointed Provincial Junior Warden as his first Provincial appointment. "I must have done something right – or wrong!" he jokes. We were on holiday when the letter arrived so didn't see it for a couple of weeks – I think the Provincial Secretary was beginning to think I didn't want the promotion!

The Great Hall at Birmingham University is a quite remarkable place, when prepared for the Provincial Grand Lodge meeting. Says Rob, "I have to say, I did have mixed emotions about being there, because I have suffered a lot of three-hour exams in that very hall, so there was an air of dread about sitting in the JW's Chair. I did feel a bit exposed!"

Derek, however, was used to being there. "A phone call from the Deputy PGM, Keith Evans, told me that I was 'sacked' from my role as Superintendent of Works. While that sank in, thinking I had dropped a massive clanger, he swiftly asked if I would be Provincial Senior Warden instead. After a millisecond of thought, I said yes! I was of course surprised and excited in equal measure. The splendour of the Great Hall just made it an awesome occasion, that will always remain with me."



Our Wardens are nearing half way through their appointment. Both admit that the first couple of meetings were nerve wracking and as Derek says, "I defy anyone not to be nervous!". The support they have received from the rest of the provincial team, the PGM, and other rulers has been second to none. Rob agrees, but adds that making sure the days that they are fulfilling the role, needs to be well planned to fit around family commitments: "I say my lines every day so that I'm word-perfect, and try to leave work early so that I don't have to worry about being late, taking the pressure off and be able to enjoy the evening."

Warden-Life balance.

In terms of advice to their successors, both agree on one thing: learn the lines now! Adds Derek: "The year as Warden will go by in a flash – but it is important to make sure you have time for your family too."

Both are leading extremely busy lives, and it's hard to imagine that they can squeeze any other interests in. But Rob is working on an MBA and is also learning to fly. Derek however, finds much of his spare time involved with other Masonic orders – but he and his wife Carol enjoy travelling when they can, fitting it all around their two grandchildren. "This year is our 50th Anniversary of meeting each other and we've been married for 43 years. In 1990 we were blessed with three children: yes, triplets, two boys and a girl! Maybe that goes some way to explaining my grey hair...but I must say, our grandchildren bring a lot of joy."

What about the future of Freemasonry?

As Rob points out, Freemasonry is an ancient Fraternal organisation and has faced many challenges over the years, and perhaps the biggest is the decline in membership. "We can attribute that decline to many factors, not least because people are less likely to join clubs and fraternal organisations, as other social networking has developed. But Freemasonry is adapting and UGLE is working on a robust strategy to grow its membership, and strengthen its relevance to society."

Both agree however, that there is room for optimism and, as Derek says: "I have been enormously heartened by the number of initiations we are seeing. Visiting so many Lodges anew, has given me an insight into how well many have coped during Covid and afterwards, growing membership which is helping to secure the future of the movement. The Cubit Club and Members Pathway – both wonderful initiatives – are both bringing benefit to the Province."

Our Provincial Grand Wardens are delightful and interesting people as hopefully, this interview demonstrates. When they visit your Lodge, be sure to introduce yourself and have a chat as they are keen to meet as many Masons as they can.

Something about me that no-one knows:

Derek: I am interested in the Napoleonic period and enjoy painting Napoleonic military figures – I have quite a small Napoleonic period Allied Army (British, Dutch, Belgian) of mixed infantry, cavalry and artillery figures – all hand painted by me.

Rob: I am 30 hours of flight time into my Pilots Licence. I've completed all nine paper exams and I should finish next summer – really, you need nice weather. I fly from Coventry and Wellesbourne.

Interviews by Ian Crowder, who explores the 'men behind the Masons'.

Provincial Lecture Competition, April 2024.

After the success of the 2023 competition, we are looking for 4 lodges to host a leg of the competition. So if your Lodge meets in April 2024, and would like to host some speakers at your meeting, please contact WBro Kerry Parkes by email [kerryjparkes@gmail.com](mailto:kerryjparkes@gmail.com) for further details.

# ***FREEMASONS SUPPORT NEW A&E DEPARTMENT***



In October The Provincial Charity Steward, David Dey, visited the new A&E Department at Worcestershire Royal Hospital.

Worcestershire Freemasons have supported the enhanced decoration, designed to make the patient feel more relaxed, whilst undergoing treatment. Our support can be seen on the "Honours Board" outside the entrance.

Just take a look at the number of power points required to power the equipment for just one patient, staggering!

WBro David Dey



Worcestershire Masonic  
Clay Shooting Society

The Worcestershire Masonic Clay Shooting Society: What You Need to Know About the Newest Group

The Province is soon to have a new arrival, in the form of the Worcestershire Masonic Clay Shooting Society. This has been formed to bring together shooting enthusiasts old and new, who are also Freemasons within the Province.

The group will meet regularly for practice shoots, with a view to taking part in inter Provincial competitions, which are already run regularly across the country.

Members will need to be Masons who already hold valid shotgun licences - but there will be opportunities for those who don't hold the paperwork, to come along and have a go at the sport.

If you are interested in joining in then please visit [www.worcsmcss.com](http://www.worcsmcss.com) where you can read more details on the club, along with the form to fill in for more information on joining. Alternatively you can contact them at [worcsmcss@gmail.com](mailto:worcsmcss@gmail.com)



# IMPORTANT!

## NEWS FROM GRAND LODGE - THE FIRST TOAST

Following a trial in the Province of Berkshire earlier this year, a permitted alternative to the First Toast for use at Lodge and Chapter after-proceedings is now authorised. This alternative form, which emphasises the 'One Organisation' approach can be used on all occasions and by all present, even if not yet members of the Royal Arch. Lodges and Chapters are still permitted to use the previous form of the toast, should they so wish.

The wording of the new toast should be:

"The King, the Craft and Royal Arch Masonry"

The new toast lists are accessible through the following links:

New Toast List - [Lodge](#)



New Toast List - [Chapter](#)



Monday 23rd October 2023 saw our APGM Mike Dykes advanced into the Mark Degree at St Egwin Lodge of MMM 1135, in front of a packed out lodge room, followed by a very enjoyable Mark Festive Board.



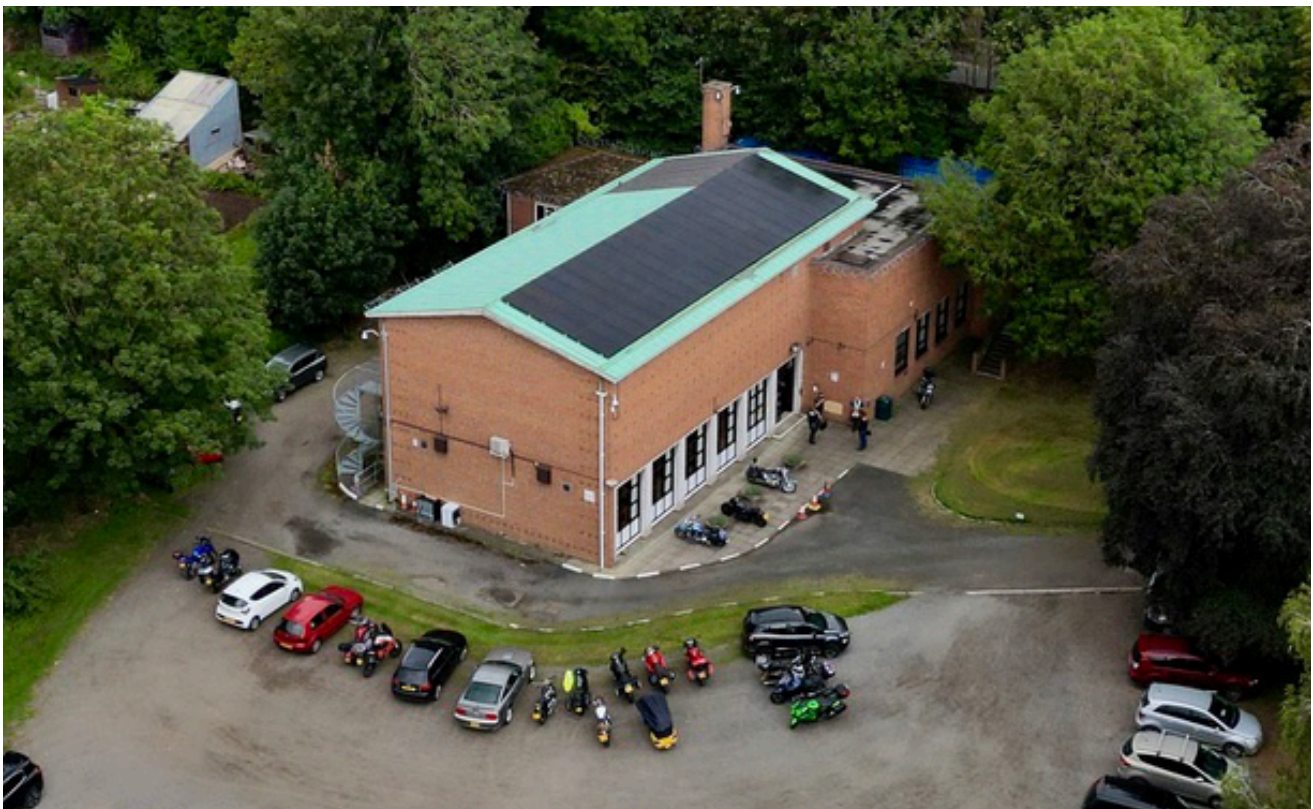
# CHASING THE SUN

On Monday 10th July 2023, installation of a Solar Panel (PV) system commenced at the Masonic Centre, Rainbow Hill, Worcester. After only 3 days, on Thursday 13th July 2023 at 10-30 am the system became self-aware (Ed - or is that another movie!) and started delivering power to the building.

This project was initially investigated in 2015 but at that time technical difficulties prevented continuing with the project. However, matters were brought to a head in 2022, with the rapidly rising cost of electricity. A predicted increase of 250% to 300% was possible for 2024, which made re-considering the project essential.

Due to the unique construction of the building, professional advice was sought to confirm that the scheme was possible. On receiving a positive outcome, a scheme was developed to suit the Electrical usage of the building.

The Annual electricity consumption of the building varied over the previous years, with a cost of between £6,000 to £7,000 per year. This could possibly increase to between £17,500 to £21,000 in 2024 due to the aforementioned cost rises.



After obtaining quotations from various companies and researching the details of each (this was like meeting Double Glazing Sales persons!), a Solar Panel (PV) system was chosen making maximum use of the available south facing roof space, which enabled a PV panel capacity of 21KW to be installed.

Installation was carried out by a local Worcester company – Joule Energy- in a very efficient and competent manner.

An intelligent Tesla Battery system was also installed, giving a total capacity of 48 KWH. As with all calculations involving the British weather and with the amount of sunshine that the scheme can benefit from varying considerably, it is believed that with this battery capacity the system could provide the majority of the electricity for 7 months of the year.

We are fortunate that with Masonic meetings being usually held in the evening (when the sun...☺), the batteries will be charged in daylight, with the stored energy used in the hours of peak use.

Typically, as one would expect, the summer of 2023 did not occur - but despite this, in the period from 13th July 2023 to the end of October 2023 the Solar system generated 6,650 KWH of power. Hopefully in a year with a reasonable summer these figures will improve in our favour.

Consideration is also being given to having a Dual Tariff (old Economy 7) metering/ supply system fitted. In Winter conditions this would enable the batteries to be charged at a cheaper rate overnight. The batteries would then deliver power to the building at times when normally higher rate electricity from the mains would be used, thus reducing costs. In the future, any surplus energy generated by the PV system will be sold to a suitable buyer.

In the event of an electrical mains failure, the batteries also enable various lights and equipment within the building to keep working. This situation actually occurred for a short while on the 14th November 2023!

For those interested in Global Warming and environmental issues, to the 31st October the environmental benefits are the saving of 1,286 Kg of CO<sup>2</sup> going into the atmosphere, which we are informed is the equivalent of planting 78 trees. (No, we are not planting a new forest at Rainbow Hill.)

The contract price for the supply of electricity until early November 2023 was set in 2000, so the cost of the power supplied in the future will increase dramatically. The PV system will therefore be more advantageous from now on.

Unlike domestic users we also get charged a Climate change levy, plus VAT at 20%

The total cost of the scheme is envisaged to be in the region of £50,000 to £55,000. For the period the PV system has been installed, it has provided 53% of the building requirements. Over the year it is believed that this percentage could increase to 75%, however only time will give a true picture. Considering the weather conditions of 2023, the use of dual metering and the increase in the cost of electricity from November onwards, it is estimated that the payback time will only be approximately 5 to 6 years.

**Article by WBro Brian Bradford, Picture by Bro Adam Lewis**



## The Provincial Mentor's Corner

The Members Pathway process has been in place for a while now, and I'm sure most of us are familiar with the principles of how it works. We were first introduced to it as the way to recruit new members - making sure that we attract the right people, giving them the right information before they join and making sure that our lodge is the right lodge for them – these are all essential parts of the Members Pathway.

But the Members Pathway isn't just about interviewing and scrutinising applicants. There are four key elements: Plan, Attract, Engage and Retrieve. As the Provincial Mentor, my priority is 'Engage' – supporting new members and giving them chances to learn more about Freemasonry and helping them to develop. This can be done in many ways (the best way will depend on each individual's needs) but I strongly recommend that new members are encouraged to join the Cubit Club and to participate in its many events. The Cubit Club is designed specifically for the engagement of new Freemasons in Worcestershire.

Various initiatives are in place within Worcestershire to help with recruitment and engagement, but each lodge needs to look at how it is attracting and engaging new members. With recruitment we can use various tools to attract new members; technology can be an easy way to reach a wider audience – such as via a website and/or social media feeds. Unfortunately, the internet does have the potential to reach the people we don't want in our society, so do be careful how you screen the applications! Online applications can also come in to UGLE or to Province and there is a system in place for recommending a suitable lodge to these applicants.

I recently attended an initiation of one such applicant who may not otherwise have found a home in Freemasonry, and is now helping to boost a lodge that was in dire need of members. It is reassuring to know that help is available outside of what your own lodge does.

But whichever channels you use to attract new members, always remember that it's never enough to just get new members. We need to make sure that they want to continue to be a member. Their personal/lodge mentor should engage with them and make them feel valued and included. We will give them roles in the lodge and try to make them feel a valued part of the lodge. New members can also have great ideas to share and, as the Pro Grand Master said recently, when a newer member makes a suggestion, we should be thinking 'Yes, if...' and not 'No, but..'

Again, though, I bring you back to the Members Pathway. We want new members in our lodges, so we try to attract using various methods. We engage with the newer members so that they feel welcomed and a valued member. We look out for members who may not be attending regularly so that we don't lose them; we want to retrieve them. Most importantly, we don't leave any of these elements to chance - so we draw up a plan for the lodge. Next time your lodge has a business meeting, look to raise the subject of 'Lodge Plan'. If you don't have a plan for your lodge, how will you know if you will get to where you want to be?

If your lodge needs help with any elements of the Members Pathway then you can get more information online at <https://b.ugle.org.uk/membership/members-pathway> or please get in touch – I am here to help!



**Simon Rogers**  
Provincial Mentor





# Provincial Membership Officer

As a Membership organisation, one of the most important roles in Freemasonry is the Lodge Membership Officer. They are responsible for attracting new members, and therefore the continued existence of the lodge.

The Membership Officer is a collared office, and the lodge should provide the correct collar and jewel denoting his position within the lodge.

The duties of the Lodge Membership Officer are varied. They should be helping and guiding the lodge on all things membership, from the type of candidates to be attracted, organising white table events, ensuring the right information is put on to lodge social media, helping the members to understand how to talk to non masons about freemasonry, arrange social events where your members can meet your new candidates so they get to know them and ensuring the right questions are asked in the interview.

They will be in charge of tracking prospective members from initial contact right through to initiation.

The Lodge Membership Officer fits into two main segments of the Members Pathway, Attract and Plan.

If you have any questions about the role of Membership Officer, or need any help or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**John Fennell**

[pmo@worcestershirefreemasons.com](mailto:pmo@worcestershirefreemasons.com)





# Provincial People

## PROVINCIAL PRIOR RIGHT EMINENT KNIGHT L. E. BOURNE.

***In this month's edition of Provincial People WBro Mark Keepax is in conversation with the Provincial Prior for Worcestershire R. E. Kt L.E. (Eric) Bourne, JP.***

KT, or Knights Templar, or more formally The United Religious, Military and Masonic Orders of the Temple and of St. John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes and Malta in England and Wales and Provinces Overseas.

The Priory in Worcestershire has flourished since 1857; although it ceased as a separate Province between 1906 and 1924, and celebrated its 150th Anniversary in 2007. There are 16 Preceptories and some 300 Knights. Its colourful and rich history makes it an especially cherished Order by its members.

***Provincial Prior, a warm welcome and can you briefly describe the history and background to the Order?***

"The Templars, an Order created in 1118 to protect pilgrims heading to Jerusalem, were originally known as the 'poor soldiers of Christ' and the 'Temple of Solomon' after Baldwin II granted them quarters on the Temple Mount, above the ruins of Solomon's Temple.

The Ritual of the Order follows the ceremony of the Installation of a Knight, where the candidate takes the part of a Pilgrim symbolically embarking on a Crusade and being elevated to Knighthood.

The Ceremonies and Ritual of both the Templar and Malta Degrees (hence the term 'United Orders'), is especially meaningful and the Regalia spectacular, based upon that worn by the Medieval Knights."

***What it's like being the Prior?***

"As you would expect it is a genuine honour and hugely rewarding experience to hold the office of Provincial Prior of the Order for Worcestershire. I was appointed Provincial Prior in 2017 and follow in the footsteps of many Eminent and highly respected Freemasons of Worcestershire.

The role focuses on leading the Knights, across the 16 Worcestershire Preceptories, whilst ensuring I and my team support the other Provinces across England and Wales - ensuring we maintain positive links with all the other Provincial Priors under the Banner of Great Priory.

It also offers the privilege to maintain all that characterises the Order, and enables me to build on the excellent work carried out by those who have gone before me as Provincial Prior of the Province of Worcestershire."

***What do you think the Knights take from being a member of the Order?***

"Our Ritual is clearly defined. It's a story of discovery based on discipline, action and words reflecting the life of the original Poor Soldiers of Christ: Pilgrimage, Obligation, Investiture, Warfare, Penance and Accolade, with the aim to serve. When completed, a wonderful story with symbolism of the highest order."

***Some say it is an Order of 'Two Degrees' what is meant by this?***

"We are the United Orders, two degrees with different and meaningful Ritual. The first, being admitted a Knight Templar and then subsequently advancing to what is formally called the 'Malta Degree', to that of a Knight of Malta. Every Knight well remembers the time they entered the Malta Degree, which is simply spectacular and a privilege to behold."

***Can you give some insight to the 'Varangian' the Provincial Bodyguard?***

"The Varangians were foremost the personal bodyguard of the Byzantine Emperors, renowned for their loyalty, courage and discipline. The Varangian Preceptory comprises of current and past Members of the Provincial Prior's Bodyguard and play an important and vital role in the Province as the Bodyguard of the Provincial Prior.

They are commanded by E. Kt. R. J. Fernyhough and perform many duties on behalf of all Preceptories of the Province, and epitomise everything that is the very best about KT, particularly the 'bonhomie' that they bring to any meeting."

***Can you explain the role of Warden of Regalia?***

"It's a formal Office within the Province held by E. Kt D. J. Hughes. It facilitates the recycling of Regalia within the Province and ensures that any undue burden as to cost or access to KT items is therefore removed. There is a small charge with any surplus being donated to the Charity the Order supports, The St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital."

***Could you say a few words about your excellent team that support you?***

"I'm supported by a wonderful and committed team of excellent Provincial Knights of the Priory, who include my Deputy E. Kt M. J. Hadden (Sub-Prior) and the Vice-Chancellor (Provincial Secretary!), V. E. Kt. Michael Bartells, who is due to retire shortly after 12 years in Office. It is our hope that all Knights have the maximum enjoyment from the many facets of our workings and that our aim is to keep each meeting sharp on ritual, rich in colour, with friendship at the centre of the Order."

***What does the future hold for the Priory of Worcestershire?***

"It's about helping and seeing as full a return to the Ranks by every Knight as possible post COVID. It also revolves around maintaining the membership and carefully growing in line with the natural advancement made by all the Worcestershire brethren. This is by encouraging the brethren to actively step from Craft to Royal Arch and from Royal Arch to KT. Each Order being in effect an extension of the other and an inherent part of the Masonic journey."

***Do you have any personal KT reflections that you would like to share?***

"The Order is Christian and Military, or Spiritual and Chivalric, the symbolism of the four stages - Pilgrim, Novice Crusader, Knight - being the signposts of one's rite of passage as a Christian Knight and lead to, quoting Chaucer : 'Truth, Honesty, Freedom and Courtesy.'"

***Finally could we close by hearing a little more about your wider Masonic career?***

"I joined Freemasonry in 1978, when I was initiated into Coronation Lodge No.5680, and had the honour of being Master in 1998. I joined Royal Arch in Kings Heath RA Chapter No.3863 in 1984, taking the MEZ Chair on 3 occasions. I have the privilege of being a member of 11 other Companion Orders in Freemasonry."

***Provincial Prior I would like on behalf of The Source and all the Brethren to close with our collective thanks to you Eric, for taking the time to speak to us as part of 'In Conversation with Provincial People Column'.***

**Mark Keepax**



# THE BROTHERS YOU SIMPLY Can't do without

Mark Keepax explores the role of the Treasurer

The careful hand on the purse strings is the key to financial prudence, in both your Lodge and Province. Ever wondered how this happens?

This is down to the work undertaken by this month's "Unsung Heroes" - the Lodge Treasurers. This article aims to shine a light on their often-overlooked work and the outstanding service they do.



**...the Treasurer  
circulating the festive  
board like a hawk in  
search of unpaid dining  
fees...**

The Rulers recognise that the Province of Worcestershire is blessed with dedicated and diligent Treasurers, and are particularly grateful for their financial prudence and hard work.

The role of Lodge Treasurer goes way beyond merely collecting everyone's annual subscriptions. The efficient and smooth running of any lodge, depends entirely on their financial assiduity. It's a considerable responsibility, requiring a particular kind of Masonic dedication. It's pivotal to the success of the lodge. Its importance is never in doubt, but the thanks are often way too few.

More specifically the Treasurer needs to keep a complete record of the Lodge's financial transactions. These are summarised in the many reports he makes at Lodge meetings and are confirmed in the annual accounts, that are produced as per the Lodge By-laws. They are always verified and audited, by specific lodge brethren appointed to the task who are elected annually.

For many brethren, they will well remember the Treasurer circulating the festive board like a hawk in search of unpaid dining fees, annual subs and other associated sums of money. By the end of the evening a weary Treasurer would have a large amass of cash and cheques that needed to be re-counted, tallied up and reconciled, involving a trip to the bank for depositing.

Thankfully this activity is now declining, along with the interruption that it caused to the Treasurers' festive board dining activity. As over the past decade the Lodge Treasurer has been the most important "agent of change" in Freemasonry. They have been forced to embrace the on-line banking revolution and been instrumental in the move towards the cashless society that we now live in.

The Treasurers drive the work we do, and significantly contribute towards the difference that Freemasonry makes to the world at large. Hence the words "unsung heroes" are aptly applied.

**A trio of images, from the first outing for this year's new Assistant Provincial DCs.**

Andy Hyndman - Elgar Lodge No. 9254, Nigel Wainwright - Unity Lodge No. 5812, Richard Leese - Kings Heath Lodge No. 3863



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## #BEKINDONLINE

On Thursday 9th November, our Provincial Grand Master, Stephen Wyr, encouraged all Freemasons to support 'Social Media Kindness Day', by spreading kindness in digital messages and online behaviour.

In an age where social media plays such a significant role in our lives, Worcestershire Freemasons led the way by promoting respect and compassion for everyone engaging on social media and in the online digital world.

It is increasingly through the actions of individuals, organisations, and influencers like Worcestershire Freemasons, by supporting 'Social Media Kindness Day' that the formative steps to tackle the issues of cyberbullying and online negativity can be made.

The event was dedicated to promoting positivity by sharing acts of kindness by using the hashtag #BeKindOnline, to create a more uplifting digital world.



# EQUITY RELEASE? LIFETIME MORTGAGES?

## Are you over 55?

- Do you want to reduce your inheritance tax liability?
- Would you like to give a living inheritance to your children or grandchildren to help them now?
- Would you like to raise some money for renovations or to make retirement more fun?
- Do you have a Lifetime Mortgage and need more money?
- Do you have an interest only mortgage that needs repaying?

Have you been thinking about equity release / lifetime mortgages and want to have a chat to find out the pros and cons? Or need help through the whole process?

**Get your questions answered by a fully qualified expert.**

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## THOROUGHGOOD

ADVISORS





# REMEMBRANCE DAY

*Left We Forget*



On a wet and windy Remembrance day, Sunday 12th November, many services were held around the Province. Following the dispensation that had been issued by our PGM to allow "that the brethren of the Craft should appear with the badges of the Craft, together with the collars and jewels of their respective Offices when persons other than Masons are present in accordance with Rule 178, Book of Constitutions", several of the services and parades saw Freemasons out and about in their regalia. Here is a selection of photos that have been sent in from Evesham, Kidderminster and Redditch.







# Looking back at 2023

What a year 2023 has been for both the Cubit Club and myself. It was my honour to become Cubit Club Chairman in May of this year, when I took over from WBro Brody Swain, who had dramatically moved the club forward under his chairmanship - which was even more impressive coming out of Covid. Myself and the committee concentrated on the behind the scenes development of the club, which I will come back to.

We have had some excellent events this year - including curry clubs, summer and Christmas parties, COIs and lodge visits to name but a few. Those of you that follow the Cubit Club article regularly, will remember that I mentioned about the club changing gear. Well I am happy to say that 2024 sees us moving in to overdrive!

We have a dedicated committee in place, also with the main positions having assistance and ambassadors in nearly every hall. You will have already noticed the improvement in our social media activity, and you will see this following through to the hall ambassadors, who will be upping their profile and presence in the halls.

We are also publishing a full events itinerary for 2024 which will also include a full list of COIs for this year. One of our new features for 2024 will be the C.C.P.T. which stands for the Cubit Club Provincial Tour, which will encompass a visit to each of our neighbouring provinces - along with a visit to PGL and Grand Lodge. Keep an eye out for upcoming details.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the committee and ambassadors for all their hard work over the year, and I look forward to moving the Club forward with their help next year.

If you are not yet a member of the Cubit Club, please use the QR code below. If you have any questions or ideas you wish to share, please contact: [cubitclubsec@gmail.com](mailto:cubitclubsec@gmail.com) and Bro Steve Worton will be happy to help.

Brethren, there is nothing left but for myself and the committee to wish you, your family and loved ones a wonderful Christmas and a truly prosperous New Year.

**John Fennell**  
Cubit Club Chairman



# Forthcoming Cubit Club Events

JANUARY	
CLASS OF INSTRUCTION	SATURDAY 20 <sup>th</sup>
REDDITCH	
QUARTERLY CURRY CLUB	FRIDAY 26 <sup>th</sup>
SOUTH WEST QUARTER	
FEBRUARY	
CLASS OF INSTRUCTION	SATURDAY 17 <sup>th</sup>
HALESOWEN	
PROVINCIAL VISIT (GLOUCESTERSHIRE)	TBC
MARCH	
CLASS OF INSTRUCTION	SATURDAY 16 <sup>th</sup>
KIDDERMINSTER	
INITIATES DINNER	THURSDAY 21 <sup>ST</sup>
RAINBOW	
APRIL	
CLASS OF INSTRUCTION	SATURDAY 13 <sup>th</sup>
KINGS HEATH	
QUARTERLY CURRY CLUB	26 <sup>th</sup>
NORTH EAST QUARTER	PARTNERS AND FRIENDS
MAY	
CLASS OF INSTRUCTION	SATURDAY 18 <sup>th</sup>
MALVERN	
PROVINCIAL VISIT (WARWICKSHIRE)	TBC
CUBIT CLUB AGM	TUESDAY 28 <sup>th</sup>
JUNE	
CLASS OF INSTRUCTION	SATURDAY 22 <sup>ND</sup>
NORTHFIELD	
PGL BIRMINGHAM	29 <sup>th</sup>
JULY	
CLASS OF INSTRUCTION	SATURDAY 20 <sup>th</sup>
EVESHAM	
QUARTERLY CURRY CLUB	FRIDAY 26 <sup>th</sup>
SOUTH EAST QUARTER	
AUGUST	
PROVINCIAL VISIT (HEREFORDSHIRE)	TBC
SUMMER BBQ	3 <sup>RD</sup> TBC
RAINBOW HILL	
SEPTEMBER	
QUARTERLY COMMUNICATIONS	WEDNESDAY 11 <sup>th</sup>
CLASS OF INSTRUCTION	SATURDAY 21 <sup>ST</sup>
STOURBRIDGE	
OCTOBER	
QUARTERLY CURRY CLUB	FRIDAY 11 <sup>th</sup>
NORTH WEST	
CLASS OF INSTRUCTION	SATURDAY 19 <sup>th</sup>
TENBURY	
HALOWEEN PARTY	SATURDAY 29 <sup>th</sup>
NOVEMBER	
CLASS OF INSTRUCTION	SATURDAY 16 <sup>th</sup>
WORCESTER	
PROVINCIAL VISIT (STAFFORDSHIRE)	TBC
DECEMBER	
CHRISTMAS PARTY	TBC
PROVINCIAL CAROL CONCERT	TBC







# BEAR-BREAKING NEWS

Well, the little darlings have made a break for it and have been seen running rampant throughout Worcestershire.

“Many days were spent in fruitless search”. However, our trusty Freemasons quickly came to the rescue and ensured all arrived safely at their intended destinations.

WBro Julian Ridgers, ensured 24 were welcomed at West Mercia Justice Centre Magistrates Court, affectionately known as “Mags”.

WBro John Dunn, of Wernlegh Abbey Lodge No. 6356, came to the rescue, as he has done for some considerable time, and safely herded 144 into Russells Hall Hospital.

A number were found hiding in the Provincial Grand Lodge office. Luckily Christine overheard their plans of escape. They came before WBro James Mulligan “and made a voluntary confession of all they knew, down to the date and time” of their planned getaway.

Thanks to Christine, they were apprehended and 24, as a temporary stop gap, were re-housed at the Princess of Wales Community Hospital, Bromsgrove Minor Injuries Unit.



**Gratefully received by Nurse Arlene and Student Nurse 'Tasha.**

Meanwhile, WBro Mel Broadhurst had caught wind of these runaways, so he continued his personal attention to the safety of teddies in the relevant departments of Worcester Royal Hospital. Mel, has for a long time maintained personal contact with Worcester Royal Hospital for the supply of teddies. Grateful thanks are given for his support of this caring initiative.

A small group of 24 managed to navigate their own way under cover of darkness to Worcester Royal Hospital A&E Paediatrics Dept.



**Gratefully received by Nurse Sheena Madison.**

However, a further 144 escaped but were safely guided to join their fellow teddies at the Princess of Wales Community Hospital, Bromsgrove Minor Injuries Unit.

It is rumoured that a breakaway gang of teddies, numbering 72 in all, are on their way to Kidderminster Hospital, but thus far they have evaded capture. Perhaps they will appear on Midlands Today News! :)

Once again, and in just a few weeks, the Freemasons of Worcestershire Province successfully delivered a total of 432 Tender Loving Care Teddies to comfort children in their time of urgent need.

The search continues for organisations in which TLC or Support Teddies would be a valuable comfort to children suffering from a traumatic event.

**WBro Steve Eagle**

# CELEBRATING 100 years in Service

At the recent meeting of St Kenelm Lodge No. 6082 in Stourbridge, our PGM Stephen Wyer presented WBro Graham Perkins with his 50th year, Long Service Certificate to mark his great and proud achievement in Freemasonry.



In addition, at the Old Edwardian Lodge No. 6141, also meeting in Stourbridge, our Past PGM, Robert Vaughan presented a 50th year Long Service Certificate to his former Brother Warden on the circuit (back in 1986), WBro Peter Cartwright.



## KNIGHTS PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS

The annual Knights Templar meeting in the Province was due to take place on the 29th October 2023 at Worcester Racecourse, but we were flooded out!

Coming to the rescue at short notice (4 days), Kings Heath Masonic Hall stepped in and provided the venue and catering.

It's a story of turning adversity to advantage - and shows the Masonic brotherhood pulling together to resurrect a potentially ruined event into a successful one.

**Emt KT Dr M J Cooper**







## LAPAL LODGE NO. 6031

### *Ladies Night*

Earlier in the year, the Worshipful Master, WBro D A Brenton, and Brethren of Lapal Lodge No. 6031, held a successful Ladies Night at the Masonic Hall, Furnace Lane in Halesowen.

The theme of the evening was "St Georges Day", and entertainment was provided by a 16-piece silver swing band!

The 60 invited guests were treated to a traditional English three course meal followed by a raffle and auction, and the grand sum of £1000 was raised for the "Brain Tumour Trust" which has since been presented to the charity.

A great evening was had by all who attended.

Article and photos by David Brenton, Worshipful Master of Lapal Lodge 6031



# EDWARD FREDERICK HANSON LODGE NO. 9463

## *The first of many Christmas meals!*

Edward Frederick Hanson ("EFH") lodge No. 9463 held their annual (Christmas) lunch meal (Ed - yes I know it was still November!) at Rainbow Hill. Although a summer lodge, it's past WM, Mike King, had to put it off until Christmas due to prostate surgery. The current WM, Pete Broughton commented "Great company excellent food, and another £335 raised. I'm very proud of a small summer lodge, that in less than six months has raised £1,700 for various charities"



## PROSTATE TESTING UPDATE

As reported in previous editions, Rainbow Hill has now held its first prostate testing event on the 25th November. With grateful thanks for the organiser, the Provincial Almoner, Bill Tucker, a sell out event of 60 brethren had their bloods taken by volunteers from the CHAPS organisation who ran the event - and who are doing fantastic work across the provinces, helping to protect our members

If you didn't manage to book in for this one, look out for future events in early 2024!

Pictured is John Phenix, one of the first to kick off the sessions, having his blood taken by CHAPS volunteer, Lindsey Griffin.





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**DATES  
FOR  
YOUR  
DIARY**

**21st March 2024**  
**Initiates Dinner, Rainbow Hill**  
**29th June 2024**  
**PGL Birmingham University**

**Source Dates**

Published	Copy Deadline
28 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024	14 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024
24 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	3 <sup>rd</sup> Apr 2024
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24 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	10 <sup>th</sup> Jul 2024



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