



WYP Monthly Newsletter

Staffordshire Freemasons Digital News



Issue 13

Lest we forget.



Peter Pan Centre, Newcastle

The centre, which receives no government funding costs £250,000 a year to run, it provides life-changing care, education and development support for children with disabilities and special needs. It has for 50 years been giving children from Staffordshire, South Cheshire and Shropshire the best start in life.

The children receive one to one support, which includes stimulating games, specialist care for those with complex needs and teaches various life skills. The staff teach core communication skills to prepare children for the outside world. Also, Physiotherapy is available for those who need such care.



In the Spring of 2020, Within Your Province reported that the PGM John Lockley had visited the centre with other brethren to see for themselves the fantastic work done by the dedicated staff. They were met by Sarah McDowell, the centre's manager and Catherine Cook, the centre's fundraiser and given an opportunity to see the staff working with children.

Staffordshire freemasons had pledged over £4,000 a year for the next three years to the Peter Pan Centre in Newcastle with funding via the Masonic Charitable Foundation.

In August of this year 2022, Catherine Cook wrote a very complimentary and heart-warming letter to the Provincial Grand Charity Steward W. Bro John Skellern thanking the Province and explaining how the money from the MCF was being put to good use.

“Thank you once again to the Masonic Charitable Foundation for working with us to give children with special needs the best start in life, with a very generous donation of £12540 over three years. Thanks to your support, we have been able to make a profound and life-changing difference for children with complex special needs such as Down's syndrome and autism as well as rarer

conditions such as SMA Type 1 and Cystinuria, through our Education, Care and Development sessions.

It's fair to say, that this has been possibly the busiest and most challenging year in our history. We have never experienced demand for our help like it, nor have we seen so many

families struggling to get the support their children are entitled to, due to local funding cuts”.

“What we are seeing however is unprecedented demand, as it is becoming clear that children have been missed by other services or not referred to the correct places, due to services being so stretched.” And she concluded “You have truly made a difference to our children's lives during this challenging time. Thank you once again for your support”.

W. Bro J Skellern ProvGChStwd



Moving to Scotland, in Masonic Terms

Having retired and recently moved to Scotland I thought it sensible to join a Scottish Craft Lodge in order to continue with my masonry. As a Past Master of Izaak Walton and founder and Past Master of Kibblestone Lodge I had spent almost 30 years on the square in Stafford. I had also been Past First Principal in Royal Arch and held 30° rank in Rose Croix, plus a couple of others and of course active Provincial rank in Craft and Royal Arch.

You may think therefore that it would be straight forward to walk in and join a lodge in another jurisdiction, after all we are all the same, perhaps with the odd variation in signs! Not that easy but not impossible.

The craft was easiest, affiliating to a lodge, taking an obligation, learning a few new signs and buying a new apron. The ritual is very similar but not the same and while more relaxed the brethren are no less

accurate. We meet at 7.30pm, so members can go home from work, see the family, have tea, get dressed and meander to the lodge. My adopted lodge, Hopetoun St. John number 1232 should have celebrated it's one hundred year anniversary in 2020, as my mother lodge would have done in 2021. The ancient building we meet in is adjacent to the magnificent Linlithgow Palace, the birthplace of Mary Queen of Scots, who incidentally was incarcerated at Chartley Castle in Staffordshire by the English, it's a small world.

In lodge 1232 and in Scotland in general, Past Masters who may in the past have held active Provincial Rank don't wear Provincial regalia and generally only the Past Masters wear an apron bearing the levels in the lodge. We only dine at installations, often held on Saturday afternoons, otherwise we have sandwiches, pies and 'beverages' for a £2.00 donation. We don't have speeches and toasts and are usually home by 10.30 pm and by the way my annual craft subs, called 'test fees' here are £40.

Charity is high on the Scottish mason's agenda although it's aimed at a more local level, hospices, scouts, old peoples groups, churches and other adopted good causes. Of the local charities that we at 1232 have supported from the day they began are the Childrens Hospice in Kinross Fife along with 'CRY', Cardiac Risk in the Young which has received in excess of £30,000 via the lodge's fundraising efforts over the last 10 years. There are many other charities that we support including donations to pupils of Linlithgow Academy who are embarking on a years overseas charity work at present each student is required to raise a sum of £6,000 in order to finance their overseas trip.

I've not been asked to set up a direct debit for a national or local festival, we all give generously, paper money generally when the collections are taken, both in the lodge, at the door as we retire and at the 'harmony' afterwards. Some lodges expect an apology to be accompanied by your charity contribution, being unable to attend doesn't exclude you from giving. We do have raffles with donated prizes after each meeting and these always

raise a decent amount and over a year it all adds up.

Rose Croix is more complicated, it's governed on a more local or district level than in England, there are of course chapters which perform as in England but there the similarity ends. It is possible to achieve the 30th degree (and above) without having been a Sovereign or held any office. Generally a member could be promoted to 30° after as little as four years membership and again this is undertaken at a district level not as in England in London.

There are also Sovereign Chapters or Councils restricted to 30° and above, again at a local level and it's here that members are promoted in a ceremony nothing like the English version.

As a visitor I was made very welcome at the Sovereign Council but to let you into a masonic secret I didn't know the passwords, again different but that didn't bar me, I was examined by four 33° brethren entrusted and admitted.

With regard to affiliating to a Rose Croix Chapter in Scotland, it's not straight forward but not impossible. I can visit as often as I wish but to join a Scottish Chapter I must resign from English Rose Croix, be proposed etc and join a Scottish Chapter as a new member from the very beginning, although I have been unofficially advised I could be promoted to 30° within months of joining.

Finally Royal Arch or Chapter, in England I'm a Past Provincial Officer and recently I affiliated to Chapter number 5 in Linlithgow where I live. I have to say at the very beginning it was a fabulous ceremony beautifully executed in a chapter of over 250 years existence undertaken in premises adjacent to Linlithgow Palace.

A little known fact, in England at least, that north of the border the Holy Royal Arch holds the pattern for over ten other orders including the degree of Mark Master Mason. There are no Mark lodges in Scotland, masons generally take their Mark degree in a craft lodge, usually in groups at the end of the masonic year. However in order to join a Royal Arch chapter you must also be a Mark Mason and if you are not the degree is performed as a part the Holy Royal Arch ceremony prior to your exaltation.

Furthermore new companions in Scotland take the 'Excellent Master Degree' sometimes referred to in England as 'passing the veils'. Being an English mason and not having completed this part of the ceremony I would have been excluded from parts of the Scottish ceremony without it.

Irrespective of my English rank as a Past First Principal and my being a Mark Master Mason it was deemed necessary for me to take my Mark degree again, followed by the Excellent Master degree and the complete Royal Arch Exaltation. It may be said by some that this latter part was not actually necessary but it was tidier.

It was spectacular, even being conducted via a narrow winding stone staircase into the underground bowels of the ancient chapter building to a room only large enough for four companions there to find the lost secrets of a Master Mason while looking upwards through a hole in the ceiling into the chapter above.

Scottish freemasonry is as warm and welcoming as that in England and having made the effort to join in my life here has been enhanced but don't be fooled, crossing the border isn't as easy as it looks.

W.Bro. Ian Blair Robertson

Past Master Izaak Walton 4281 and Kibblestone 9504

Provincial Almoners Support Information

Coping with the rising cost of living. As we enter a period of financial and economic uncertainty, I thought it prudent to inform you that there are many levels of support to assist us in areas we are struggling with. In particular, the rising cost of living. Millions of people across the UK are struggling to cover their essential household costs nowadays. The 'cost of living crisis' means we're all paying a lot more for energy and food, and things like rent and fuel. Some people are cutting back on how much they spend on food, or eating less, so they can pay for heating. Many people are falling into arrears, or using credit to pay for essentials, making the problem worse. Sadly, the situation isn't going to get easier, even as temporary support measures are announced, further challenges are ahead. Energy bills have increased by an average of £700 a year and council tax payments are on the rise. If you have a job, what you pay in National Insurance contributions has gone up. A lot of people are finding that wages and benefit payment increases aren't keeping track with these price rises. Are you aware there are One-off Government payments to support people with the rising cost of energy bills?

Energy Bill Support Scheme. As part of the Energy Bill Support Scheme, £400 is available for all households to help with rising energy bills, regardless of income or size of house. The discount will be made automatically by your energy supplier. There is no need to apply. Households receive the £400 in 6 instalments: £66 in October and November, £67 a month from December to March 2023

How will I receive the support?

If you pay by direct debit you'll get an automatic deduction on your bill.

If you have a "smart" prepayment meter you'll get a monthly top-up on your account.

If you have a "non-smart" prepayment meter you'll receive a discount voucher. This will be in the first week of each month, via text, email or in the post. The voucher can be redeemed in person at your usual top-up point.

£650 one-off Cost of Living Payment for those on means- tested benefits.

The Department of Work & Pensions will make two lump sum payments in July and later in the autumn to people on a range of benefits.

This tax-free payment will not affect any existing benefits. It applies to households who already get, or have begun a successful claim for, the following benefits by 25 May 2022:

- Universal Credit
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support

- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Pension Credit
- One-off £300 Pensioner Cost of Living Payment.

Households that receive the Winter Fuel Payment will get this on top of any other support they're entitled to. This tax-free payment won't affect any other entitlements. For most people this will be paid by direct debit.

£150 Disability Cost of Living Payment

A one-off, tax-free payment will be made in September to people who receive the following benefits:

- Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- Attendance Allowance
- Scottish Disability Benefits
- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- War Pension Mobility Supplement

It will be paid directly through benefits.

For more information visit Gov.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/6-million-disabled-people-to-get-cost-of-living-payment-from-20-september-2022>

Government help with gas and electricity bills

There are several government schemes, including the Warm Home Discount Scheme, available to help with the rising cost of your gas and electricity bills.

Depending on your situation you may be able to get government help, including:

- **One-off payments to support people with the rising cost of energy bills**
- **Money back on your council tax**

If you have not already, between April 2022 – March 2023, you'll get a £150 payment from your council if you pay council tax and are in council tax bands A – D or get the

Disabled Band Reduction discount and your home is in bands A to E.

Check your council tax band on GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/council-tax-bands>

They must make the payment before 30 September 2022.

If you pay your council tax by direct debit. Your council will pay £150 directly to your bank account.

If you don't pay by direct debit, your council will contact you to ask for bank details. It may take them longer to make the payment.

- **Warm Home Discount Scheme**

You could get £140 off your electricity bill or a £140 voucher for your prepayment meter if you're either:

- **on a low income**
- **getting the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit**

The Warm Home Discount Scheme is available between September and March. Your energy supplier will deduct the discount from your bill.

Find out more about the Warm Home Discount Scheme at GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme>

- **Cold Weather Payment**

Between 1 November and 31 March, you could get a payment of £25 every 7 days if the weather drops to or below zero degrees

Celsius in your area.

You could get Cold Weather Payments if you're getting any of the following benefits:

- **Pension Credit**
- **Income Support**
- **income-based Jobseeker's Allowance**
- **income-related Employment and Support Allowance**
- **Universal Credit**
- **Support for Mortgage Interest**

You don't need to apply for Cold Weather Payments, they're automatically added to the benefits you may already be receiving.

Find out more about Cold Weather Payments at GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment>

- **Winter Fuel Payment**

You may be able to get a Winter Fuel Payment between £100 and £300 towards your winter heating bills. You may be eligible if:

- **you were born on or before 26 September 1955, and**
- **you lived in the UK for at least one day during the week of 20 to 26 September 2021**

If you're entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment, your other benefits won't be affected.

Find out more and how to apply for the Winter Fuel Payment at GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment>

- **Boiler Upgrade Scheme**

If you live in England or Wales and own your property, you may be able to get a government grant of up to £6000 for low carbon heating systems like heat pumps.

The scheme runs from 2022 until 2025.

Find out more and check if you are eligible for the Boiler Upgrade Scheme: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-may-be-eligible-for-the-boiler-upgrade-scheme-from-april-2022>

If you are financially struggling with gas and electricity bills and need help!



Step Change are a Debt Charity and highly recommended by the Masonic Charitable Foundation to assist individuals and families, not just giving confidential debt advice and management, but equally important in signposting individuals and families to other organisations and Government departments for further help, advice and support.

Contacting Step Change is simple: Telephone: 0800 138 1111

Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm and Saturday 8am to 4pm

Website enquiry: <https://www.stepchange.org/setting-expectations.aspx>

Who else can I turn to if I need support?

Support for Freemasons and families.



The Masonic Charitable Foundation is there to support Freemasons and their families when life takes an unexpected turn for the worse.

Please visit their website for further information, or call them direct for any enquiry you may have.

Website: <https://mcf.org.uk/> e-mail: help@mcf.org.uk Telephone: 0800 035 60 90

I hope you have found this article helpful and of benefit, if anything making you aware of what help there is, in support of the current increase cost of living we are currently experiencing.

On an aside note. I strongly urge you, if you are struggling in any aspect of your day to

day life, to engage and liaise with your Lodge Almoner, informing him of any change or likely change to your current situation which may affect you or your family's financial/health situation, such that he, I or the MCF can early identify requisite signposting, support process and pathways of help, to ensure and ease any additional burdens placed on you or your family.

I'm always available either by phone or e-mail should you wish to contact me direct as follows:

e-mail -

almoner@staffordshirefreemasons.org.uk

Mobile: 07825 114058

Take care, best wishes to you and your family.

Tony Coates

Provincial Grand Almoner



What is the Royal Arch? Why Me? When should I join?

The Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch, which is perhaps better known as 'Chapter', is the progression of a journey upon which every Mason starts out at his Initiation.

Long ago, the Royal Arch ceremonies would have been worked in every Craft lodge, like yours, because it was claimed to be the 'completion' of the Third Degree. It is now more often described as a completion of a journey through 'Pure, Antient Masonry', forming a seamless thread which goes back to a brother's first night in Masonry. Another way to think about this is as the fourth regular step in Freemasonry.

Many have found the Royal Arch to be a most rewarding and enlightening step for every Master Mason to take. Why? It is the logical step to take after your Third Degree, perhaps when you have got to grips with the Craft degrees and what they teach. Why? Because, whilst the Craft degrees are compelling and full of valuable life-lessons, it only takes a Mason so far? Again, Why? Do you not think that there are gaps in Craft Masonry after the third degree? Do you ever wonder why the third degree ends in death, with no resolution or hope? What do you think are meant by 'substituted secrets'? Do you want to know more? because there is so much more to know, and the Royal Arch is that step of further discovery.

The Royal Arch takes the Master Mason further into a bigger story which began with King Solomon in the Craft and guides him to continue his Masonic journey in different directions, by the retelling of dynamic stories and all within a drama of deeper meaning. It's a little like an archaeologist digging his way through history to try and join pieces of the story together.

Yes, it has a religious and spiritual dimension, which is very uplifting. Yes, it also has some wonderful ritual to hear and learn which is very inspiring and rewarding (don't panic, we encourage the ritual to be shared). Yes, it is

very different from the Craft degrees, but wonderfully so. It offers a new perspective on what it is to be a Freemason, in which you will meet new friends and fulfil new roles.

You may have seen and wondered where the colourful regalia comes from, whilst in your Masonic Hall. In the Royal Arch ceremonies, a companion experiences a spectacular and special moment, when he emerges from the darkness of the third degree and into a true and great light in Masonry, which is revealed to him for the first time in a new and unexpected way. It is reflected in the layout of the chapter room and in the fine regalia of its members, or the Companions as we are known.

The artefacts, robes, regalia, and ritual of the Royal Arch provide a rich canvas against which the Mason takes another step along the journey of knowledge, wisdom even, and a process of self-reflection with a clear spiritual focus and promise.

When to join? When you feel ready for more! Ask members of your lodge for advice and guidance. There will be a Royal Arch contact nominated to answer such queries and give you the best possible start to what might be the best decision you will ever make in Freemasonry.



After joining you will soon appreciate the close ties between the Royal Arch and the Craft, and, as others have found, it will enrich your understanding and appreciation of the Craft as you gain experience and enjoyment in this delightful and inspiring degree.

Royal Arch Chapters meet fewer times than Craft lodges, usually three or four times a year, which is reflected in the significantly lower fees asked of its members.

You will meet new friends and see people you already know in different roles, which will surely raise your estimation of those brethren and provide you with fine role models.

Give it some careful thought and ask questions of the right people. Each of our Craft Lodges in Staffordshire has a Royal Arch Ambassador. Companions in the Royal Arch can be easily identified by the breast jewel they wear. It can have three different coloured ribbons, but the symbolism of the jewel is the most important part.

So, ask about the Royal Arch and think about joining the 4 in 10 Freemasons in



Staffordshire who are already members. Be prepared for some surprises and to be embraced into a whole new adventure. And who knows, a new world of interest may open up for you! The Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch.

If you wish to register your interest in the Order please click Royal Arch Interest Form

www.pgcstaffordshire.org.uk

2024 Festival Donations Gather Pace

On a recent visit to Ceramic Chapter the Deputy Grand Superintendent accepted cheques from their Charity Steward for £750 towards the 2024 Festival and the Staffordshire Benevolent Fund.

This brings the total donated from this Chapter to more than £100 per member.



The photo shows the DGS receiving the cheques from the Chapter's Charity Steward Ex. Comp. Jim Pick, closely watched by the three recently installed Principals. Ex Comp. Albert Crew as MEZ, Ex Comp. David Truman as H and Ex. Comp. Aniello Ursini as J.

Keep up the good work companions.

St Bartholomew Chapter - 50 years

Our first Full Scale visit of the new masonic year was held at Wednesbury for St Bartholomew Chapter.

been delayed by a couple of years due to the covid lockdown.



Seventeen Acting Provincial Officers together with the Deputy Grand Superintendent were entertained to an excellent night of masonic friendship and ritual, which not only incorporated a summary of the Chapters history but also the installation of it's Principals for the year.

Masonry generally but in particular, the Royal Arch being enjoyed to the fullest by everyone present.

Full scale visits were introduced in 1996 to echo the Provincial Grand Chapter meetings of the past, which were held under the banner of an individual Chapter, until the Province became too large to continue this practice.

Our visit to St Bartholomew Chapter celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Chapters consecration, which unfortunately had



Returning to Pre-Covid Attendances

The Deputy Grand Superintendent is optimistic that Chapters are starting to return to pre-covid attendance levels.

His recent visits, following the summer recess, have recorded Chapter membership attendances of averaging more than 75%.

A great start to a new masonic year and one which we hope will continue.

Can your Chapter achieve similar figures?

Science Fiction and Fantasy Lodge 10016

The morning Saturday 24th September saw over 50 masons descend on the masonic hall in Tettenhall, Wolverhampton to witness the dedication of the banner for the newest lodge under the United Grand Lodge of England, the Science Fiction and Fantasy Lodge number 10,016, only their second meeting ever.



The Worshipful Master of the lodge, Chris Priestley received the banner which was dedicated by the Provincial Grand Master R. W. Bro John Lockley.

The lodge makes use of items used in science fiction and fantasy, such as Gandalf's staff, light sabers and a Klingon bat'leth (sword). Whilst ceremonies are taken seriously as in any lodge, there is much banter and many light-hearted moments in this modern masonic lodge.



MUST



FREEMASONRY AND THE RAILWAYS

On the 24th September 2022 Brethren from the Provincial Lodges of Derbyshire Staffordshire, Leicester & Rutland, Warwickshire and Worcestershire joined together to enjoy a unique masonic Experience.

The Worshipful Master of the Permanent Way Lodge No. 9951(Worcs), aware that in the early days of the railway some companies had such a strong Masonic connection that during the building of the Caledonian Railway, Freemasons employed by the company were authorised to hold and constitute meetings anywhere on Caledonian (latterly LMS) Railway property. Mindful of the important part that tradition plays in our masonry this railway themed lodge decided once again to hold a masonic meeting on LMS property for the first time in over 150 years.

A large number of brethren and guests joined the brethren of the Permanent Way Lodge on the Battlefield Line in rural Leicestershire to celebrate this milestone.



Due to inclement weather the renumbering of W,Bro Kerrion Marsh's Ruston Shunter with the Lodge number of The Permanent Way Lodge and the Square and Compasses was regrettably postponed;

At 17.00hrs the Brethren and Guests embarked on a train ride from Shackerstone Station. At Market Bosworth the Brethren disembarked and proceeded to the Goods Shed where a masonic meeting was opened in the Lodge's own unique style.

The ceremony was conducted with a distinct railway theme. The candle pedestals were replaced with Buffers whilst the three lesser lights were illuminated



by Railway Lanterns. To ensure the ceremony was conducted with aplomb and correct decorum the Deacons' wands were replaced with Shunting hooks, complete with Doves, to marshal the Brethren.

The Train Dispatcher ensured the WM, wearing a Top Hat, similar to that worn by Isambard Kingdom Brunel and indeed made by the very same hat-maker, entered the lodge in accordance with true masonic and railway etiquette.





An explanation of the 'First Degree ceremony' was then given by the brethren of the lodge which was well received by all those present.

In the meantime the partners and non-masonic guests continued on to Shenton station for a demonstration of decorative glass blowing before returning to collect the

brethren and enjoying a Fish and Chip supper on the train complete with mushy peas. We then had a return trip up the line, with ice cream dessert, and a second glass blowing demonstration.

A charity collection and raffle, in support of Worcestershire's Festival, were held on the train and the winners of the raffle won a voucher for an exciting footplate ride.

We are grateful for the small band of railway volunteers, who worked hard throughout the event for our benefit.

The happy throng disembarked on their final return to Shackerstone with the avowed intent of doing it all again next year (maybe!).



Guide Dogs for the Blind

W.Bro Mike Rawle and his partner Christine are volunteers for Guide Dogs, and Chris is registered as a Brood Bitch Holder and Puppy Raiser.

Labrador BB 'Lady' delivered nine labradoodle pups last October, and one, Gracie, has stayed with Mike and Chris for raising, socialisation and basic training. She will, hopefully, follow in the footsteps of the four (including Lady) previous pups and become a working guide dog.



Following the Covid lockdown, which prevented a great deal of the puppy raising, there is a pressing need for guide dogs, both to replace dogs that are retiring and for blind and partially-sighted individuals waiting for their first guide dog.

This, in turn, means that there is a need for more Puppy Raisers, and for boarders (for when raisers are on holiday). If you are interested, and feel that you want to help, you will find further information at <https://www.guidedogs.org>.

[uk/how-you-can-help/volunteering-for-guide-dogs/volunteer-role-descriptions/puppy-raiser](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/how-you-can-help/volunteering-for-guide-dogs/volunteer-role-descriptions/puppy-raiser)

No previous experience with dogs is needed, as training, which follows Guide Dogs positive reinforcement guidelines, is given to all Puppy Raisers, plus there are Guide Dog supervisors (Puppy Development Advisors) who run monthly GD puppy classes and are always available to visit you and to give training and advice.



Greyhound Gap Donation

Pets are part of the family. Our four-legged friends give unconditional love and are sometimes a person's only companion. They don't deserve to suffer through economic and social hardship. They can't help themselves.

Etruscan Lodge recently donated £1000 to Greyhound Gap. W. Bro David Robinson, Lodge Treasurer and his wife, Margaret, went along to present the cheque to Lisa Cartwright.

Greyhound Gap is a small independent charity set up to rescue, rehabilitate and rehome greyhounds and lurchers who find themselves in a 'put to sleep' situation in UK pounds. Funded almost entirely by donations, they rehome around 150 dogs each year. It has 3 centres around the country but their main site is on the edge of Kidsgrove where they house rescued dogs until a new home can be found. The presentation was made in a room 'set up' to be like the kitchen of a normal

house because many of the greyhounds taken in have only ever lived in pens, so they need 'domesticating'.

They also do work with the local food bank to ensure pets are adequately fed as well as humans and do valuable work with local groups dealing with people needing mental care support, either providing short term care for the dogs if owners have to be admitted for treatment or using the dog as a reason for contacting and ensuring people are well.

In a post on Facebook, Lisa said: -

"A huge thank you to David Robinson and his wife who visited us today.

They surprised us with a lovely donation of £1000 on behalf of the Etruscan Lodge Free & Ancient Masons. We are very grateful to have received your support"



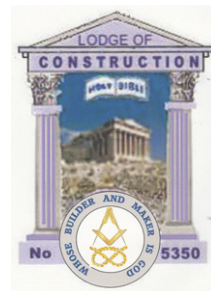
PDSA Wolverhampton Pet Hospital

Construction Lodge No: 5350 meets at Aldridge and their Worshipful Master, W. Bro Eddie Carr is a Veterinary Surgeon, hence one of his chosen charities for his year is the PDSA.



And so, contact was made with the PDSA Wolverhampton Pet Hospital enquiring what equipment was most needed and a request for a Drug Infusion Pump was made. The Lodge duly purchased two such pumps at a cost of over £1200. They were presented to the hospital and were immediately put to good use.

W. Bro Eddie Carr and the Lodge treasurer W. Bro Mervyn Shenton recently attended the Pet Hospital and they were met by Mr James Burbidge, the Client Services Manager who showed them around the facilities and the pumps in action. He was extremely grateful for the donation which he commented had helped and improved the day to day running of the centre.



Volunteer Role Player – Search Dog Training – Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool

Explosive Search Dogs (ESD) are vital in contributing to our security and they are deployed on a daily basis throughout the country in order to keep the travelling public safe. ESD follow a strict programme of training and licensing in order to be deployed operationally. Before a team is able to be put forward for licensing they are required to have completed a set number of training days in people screening, in which the dog needs to detect a scent hidden on a person.



Volunteers are vital in ensuring that the ESD teams are given the highest level of training possible and that it is as realistic as possible. This will positively impact on the standard of ESD teams, significantly increasing their chances of success. The volunteer will be required to carry a training aid at a train station during normal operating hours. This will be for a number of scenarios as directed by the instructor.

The dogs used for people screening are currently either of the Spaniel or Labrador breed. The volunteer will be required to make their own way to the venues as directed. Travel costs will be reimbursed. Those that are allergic to dogs or nervous around dogs should not apply.

There is no specific training required in order to undertake this role. A full briefing will be given to the volunteer before the commencement of each training scenario. Should you wish to assist please contact the Secretary at Sherbrook Lodge No: 6393.

Provincial Charity Clay Shoot

Once again, on the 25th of September, 2022, the weather was kind to the 2022 Provincial Charity Clay Shoot, held as usual, at Doveridge Sporting Clay Ground, near Uttoxeter, the fifteenth year of what was supposed to have been a one off event. Though attendees were fewer in number than in previous years, forty competitors and their friends enjoyed a pleasant day out. In addition to the pleasures of the competition, participants enjoyed the pleasures of the excellent café facilities at the venue.



The High Gentleman Gun trophy and High Mason Gun St. Giles Shield, was won by Brother Neil Johnson, of Dale and Erewash Lodge, in the Province of Derbyshire, with a 47/50 score. His trophy was

presented by Staffordshire Masonic Clay Shooting Association Chairman, W. Bro. Chris Miles, of Sheltonia Lodge. Chris will visit Dale and Erewash Lodge in November, to present the St. Giles Shield in Lodge, no doubt enjoying an evening of Masonic Fellowship in the presenting of.

The High Lady Gun Trophy, was won by Mrs. Beverley Ashton, better half of W. Bro. Mark Ashton, of Foster Gough Lodge, with a score of 17/50. Beverley received her trophy from W. Bro. David Watt.



The Under Eighteen Trophy was won by Mr. Ellis Burrell, with a score of 35/50, an excellent



result. Ellis received his trophy from W. Bro. David Watt.

Despite depleted numbers this year, the Shoot raised a total of £689.02, £611.52 of which was gift aided, making a total of £841.90, for the 2024 Festival for the Masonic Charitable Foundation.

In addition of expressing my grateful thanks to the owners and staff of Doveridge Sporting Clay Ground, I include the following friends and members of the Staffordshire Masonic Clay Shooting Association:

Ash Richardson, St. Giles Lodge

Roger Grimshaw

Glenn Roberts, Churnet Valley Lodge

John Elliott

Matt Wainwright, ST. Werburga Lodge (Derbyshire)

Alex Hansen, Chartley Lodge

Ian Box

Alan Heath

Chris Miles, Sheltonia Lodge

And all the others who made the day a success in one way or another. You are all greatly appreciated.

Falcon Lodge Joining Member

A very young and new Mason, serving in the Royal Air Force, near Thirsk in Yorkshire, became a joining member of the local Lodge, Falcon Lodge No. 1416, in June 1971. The following year (1972) he attended the Centenary Celebrations of the Lodge, held at the premises of Austin Reed, located in the town, near the racecourse.

There was a Lodge Meeting to receive the Centenary certificate with a sumptuous Festive Board after. Fifty years later, no longer serving in the Royal Air Force and no longer young, he attended the 150th Anniversary of Falcon Lodge No. 1416, on Saturday, 15th October 2022. A packed meeting at the Temple in Thirsk, was followed by another sumptuous celebration



dinner, held at Thirsk Racecourse, where the Brethren and guests were joined by wives, partners and friends. A superb day. The Mason in question was the only attendee whom had attended both Centenary and 150th Celebrations, That joining member of course was our very own Provincial Grand Mentor, W. Bro David Watt. Happy days.

Light Blues get Branded!

5 Staffordshire Light Blues

travelled to Duncarron Hill Fort in Scotland to join in with fellow Widows Sons in getting "Branded" - a unique and highly secretive ceremony, even among Masons, which really did involve a Branding Iron - only softened by extreme cold and alcohol. All 5 were very brave throughout and camped for 2 nights just outside the Fort. Bro. Alex Hansen later commented

"An amazing weekend spent with many masons from around the world including the Philippines. Highly recommended and a pleasure to go back and be able to partake in the branding of 4 amazing candidate and fellow Light blues... the Scottish 'scran' wasn't too bad either!"



Unfortunately the 5 attendees chickened out by not continuing the West Midlands Chapter tradition of taking a dip in the Loch!



Universities Scheme Travelling Loving Cup

The Universities Scheme Travelling Loving Cup - the DKW cup - was presented to the scheme by David Kenneth Williamson, Founder President of the Universities Scheme on his retirement as President at the Scheme Conference in November 2015. The aim of the DKW cup is to encourage inter- visiting

Concordia claimed the cup and have proceeded to visit lodges not only around the Province of Staffordshire but around the country. On Friday 16th September the W. Master Giuseppe D'Anna and the IPM, Patrick Dunne were invited to attend the Installation of Sir David Wootton D.G.M as the Master

of DKW Lodge at Great Queen Street and to take with them the DKW Cup they currently hold. A memorable day and a very proud one for the Staffordshire Lodge.



between Universities scheme Lodges and further its goals of

fraternity and togetherness. The cup can be claimed by any visiting scheme Lodge with four or more of its members present at a meeting of the Lodge currently holding the cup.

On Saturday the 30th of April 2022 Brethren from several other lodges, joined the 13 Concordia brothers, making a visiting team of 20 when they visited the esteemed Sir Issac Newton University Lodge No. 859 (Cambridge) founded in 1861.



Concordia Lodge No: 5131 visiting accolades

Concordia Lodge No: 5131 have continued in their visiting accolades and have claimed the Staffordshire Travelling Gavel from St Giles' Lodge No: 1587 in Cheadle on Wednesday 28th September 2022.



The Travelling Gavel was handed to St Giles at the Provincial Grand Lodge meeting earlier this year by the Provincial Grand Master, RW Bro John Lockley, who had commissioned it.

Worshipful Master W. Bro. R. M. Galley handed over the Gavel to Bro Harkesh Ram from Concordia Lodge during the festive board and W. Bro Patrick Dunne thanked the lodge for both their hospitality and excellent ceremony of a double raising.

This is a historic moment for any Staffordshire Lodge as it's the first time the DKW Cup and the Gavel are held by the same Lodge.



Acorns Children's Hospice

Acorns Children's Hospice Trust is a registered charity, offering a network of palliative care and support to life-limited and life-threatened children and their families across the West Midlands region. This support is offered from their three hospices based in Worcester, Birmingham and Walsall.

They provide a homely environment where children can take part in a range of fun and therapeutic activities, from arts and crafts sessions to hydrotherapy. Children visit Acorns for respite, short breaks, end of life and emergency care, whilst providing families with a much-needed break from caring round the clock.

In June 2019 it was reported in the local press that the Acorns Children Hospice in Walsall would be closing due to rising running costs and a drop in donations, this would mean over 70 jobs at risk and over 230 families being affected.

year and is currently out-stripping it's ability to raise all the fund it needs.

It was following a feasibility study that it was decided the Black Country site, which lacked a hydrotherapy pool, should close. This would result in many families travelling a considerable distance to Birmingham and Worcester.

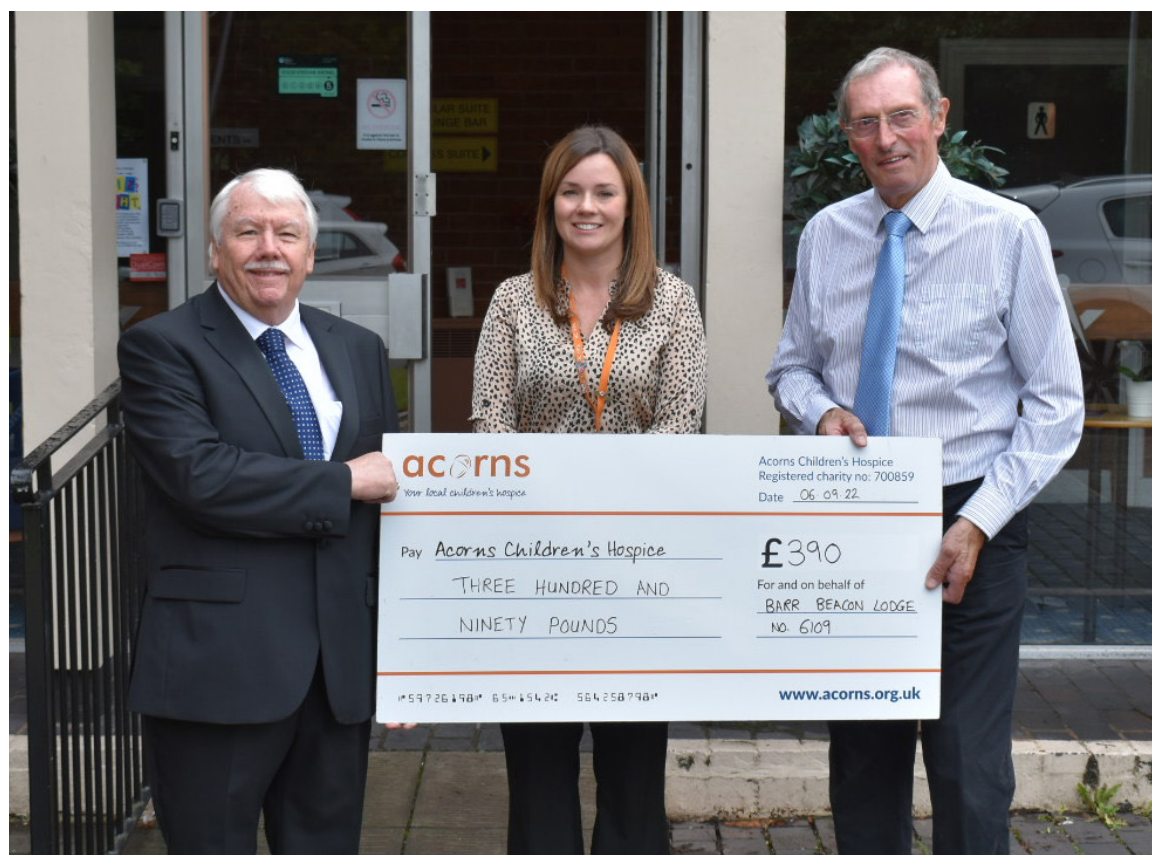
The W. Master of Barr Beacon Lodge No: 6109 W. Bro R. W. Sargent who resides in Aldridge, Walsall heard of this and during his years in the chair of the lodge, before, during and after the Covid lockdown, he decided to make this one of his chosen charities.

He knew the closure of this site would make a dramatic impact on local families, some of whom would be unable to travel, due to the



costs. But, it can now be reported that some three years on following the launch of a huge fund-raising effort, that there has been a massive turn-around and now an extensive much-needed refurbishment is planned.

Barr Beacon are proud that they were able to contribute, having raised over £2,440.55 for the charity



It costs the charity nearly £10 million every year to provide its services and it relies on fundraising for the bulk of this amount. The charity says the cost of providing care at its three hospices is "steadily" rising every

which was presented to Claire Snape, the Area Fundraising Manager. She thanked the lodge for unwavering support during these hard times.