



WYP Monthly Newsletter

Staffordshire Freemasons Digital News



Issue 25

Christmas Greetings from Province

Jane and I send each one of you our love and gratitude this Christmas for all you do, and our very best wishes for a happy, peaceful and above all healthy New Year.

Sincerely and fraternally

John



Wherever you celebrate this year, at home or abroad, may your God bless you and keep you safe. Elizabeth and I wish you a very happy festive season full of joy, celebration and warmth, and a new year filled with good health and new blessings. I look forward to sharing your company again as soon as I possibly can.

Michele Santopietro
Grand Superintendent





Eccleshall Lodge No: 5389

The members of Eccleshall Lodge had a busy summer fundraising, and their first two meetings of this new masonic season have seen them kicking-off each one with significant cheque presentations to very worthy causes.

But before we share that detail, let's go back to June and an early alarm call for all those involved in the Longest Day Golf Challenge. Spearheaded by two of our light blues and their life-long friends, they tackled the challenge at Market Drayton Golf Club.

The boys set off at 5.30am for their first of four rounds of golf around the undulating course which were tackled in warm and breezy conditions.

The challenge took a total of 16 hours and while balls were lost and legs grew tired, the participants never let their spirits drop.



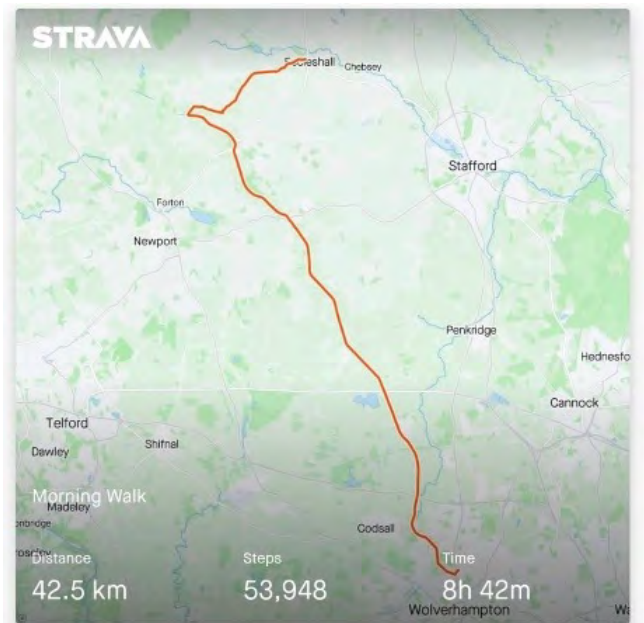
With the support of the Charity Steward who orchestrated the day and ensured the team were fed and watered, the Worshipful Master,

Senior Warden and Director of Ceremonies rallied the troops and acted as vital spotters for way-wood balls (and there was a few!).

At 9.30pm accompanied by friends and loved ones, the foursome walked down the long 18th (72nd to them) and collapsed on the green once the final ball had been putted.

26 miles were walked on the round and donations came from over 100 generous contributors, allowing the lofty £2,000 goal to be surpassed with a degree of comfort.

One challenge down, but another still loomed large. To incentivise the golfing gang the Worshipful Master had thrown-down his own gauntlet! A marathon-walk from the old Provincial Headquarters to the home of the Eccleshall Lodge, the Kings Arms.



The walk started at around 8am and it was estimated that it would take approximately 11 hours to complete, a challenge of endurance



by any standards. The route mainly followed the Shropshire Union canal from Wolverhampton to just north of Norbury Junction.

Everyone was welcome (and encouraged!) to partake in the challenge and give Mike the moral and physical support needed. The route was split into several sections so anyone not wanting to do the full distance could still take part and complete as much or as little as their bodies would allow! The Worshipful Master also welcomed the support and encouragement of those spectators only able to provide vocal and moral encouragement!

Well, with the support and encouragement of all involved the 26.2 miles was completed in just under 9 hours! An amazing experience and a great demonstration of the support within and around the lodge.

So, two challenges completed, both around the 26 miles mark in duration and supported whole heartedly by the members of the lodge, their families and friends. But was it worth it?



You bet it was! The members of Eccleshall Lodge Number 5389, supported by their families and friends, managed to raise in excess of £5000 over the Summer of 2024.

Moving on to September, the first meeting of the Masonic Year was an amazing event, which was kicked off by representatives of Katharine House Hospice, Stafford joining the brethren in the Lodge room to receive a contribution of £2,500 from our Charity Chest.

The amazing work carried out by Katharine House and its staff, relies heavily on donations from the public and it was our pleasure to support such a cause.

Thank you to Helen Deane, Maryann Stringer,

Jane Hawkins all of Katherine House Eccleshall Support Group and Mel Milne of Katherine House shop Eccleshall for attending and marking the special occasion.

Bringing the story bang-up-to-date, the October meeting was preceded by a cheque presentation to Prostate Cancer UK of £1000.

One in eight men will get prostate cancer. Prostate Cancer UK work to give every man the power to navigate it. Whether that's helping you to understand your risk, make the right choice about treatment or get the expertise you need to feel informed and in control.



They make every pound count. They have invested over £75 million into the best researchers in the world to unravel the complexity of prostate cancer, so they can give men precise and personalised care with the right treatments at the right time, for the best chance of living the full life they want.

It was a great experience to hand over the cheque to Alan Fowler from Prostate Cancer UK, knowing that the funds would make a difference. Never one to miss an opportunity to enlighten and inform an audience of men that could be exposed to the perils of this terrible illness, Alan spent time with the members of the lodge and gave them a better understanding of what to look out for and what action to take.

So, two 26-mile challenges complete, but that is not the end of the marathon charity work being taken on by the Eccleshall Lodge.... One challenge remains to be defeated, a 26-mile marathon bike ride! Further detail to follow shortly!

W. Bro Dave Mitchell

Charity Steward



Wilson Keys Court in Staffordshire, Celebrates its 30 year Anniversary and Wins The Best Affordable Housing Enterprise Award for Staffordshire 2024.

On Thursday 15th August residents, staff and guests assembled at Wilson Keys Court, Rugeley when the above two great milestones in the history of the residential home were celebrated. It is part of the Masonic Housing Association (MHA) and is open to anyone with or without Masonic connections. There are still two residents who have been at the home from the beginning. Ivy Meenan and Beryl Whiston. Ivy is 103 years old and always answers the quiz questions before most of the others! Beryl is much younger; both are a solid foundation for any residents to build on.

Wilson Keys is the youngest of 5 houses in the association spread throughout the Country. The other houses are:

Prebendal Close in Aylesbury,
Buckinghamshire.

Hamilton Court in South Woodham Ferrers,
Essex.

Palmer Court Wellingborough.
Northamptonshire.

Reading Court in Stratford, Warwickshire.

The MHA was set up in 1975 to provide

sheltered housing for senior citizens in and for the local community. The aim was to provide specially designed flats to maintain the independence of active retired people who find the presence of a Scheme Manager, support staff and stable housing costs of reassurance and comfort.

In 1974 the then leader of Freemasons in Staffordshire James E.V. Toney inaugurated the Harry Wilson Keys Memorial Fund as a fitting Memorial to his predecessor Major Harry Wilson Keys, MC.

Under the leadership of James Toney's successor Stanley Barrington, a freehold site in Rugeley, where the home now stands. A fund was set up and the Trustees stated that they could contribute £250,000, the Mark Master Masons gave £25,000 and the MHA from their reserve fund together with the then named Grand Charity gave £500,000. An application to the Housing Corporation eventually produced sufficient grants for MHA to proceed with the project.

There was a stone laying ceremony on 25th September 1991 and the building was officially named Wilson Keys Court. To mark the effort

made to bring the project about the residents' lounge was called the Barrington Lounge, the guest room suite the James Toney Suite and the conservatory the Mark Conservatory.

The building was completed at the end of 1992 and consists of 11 double and 23 single flats plus a flat for the then Scheme Manager. Currently due to changes in regulations all of the flats are suitable for double occupation and are self-contained with their own front door there is a communal lounge and quiet areas on each floor. There is also the laundry, and a special assisted bathroom.





One of the stipulations in order to benefit from the housing corporation is that flats must be allocated to the neediest on the waiting list. In fact, most of the residents are from the home's own waiting list or those on the Local Authority waiting list.

There are many organised activities for those who wish to take part, Monday afternoon is normally Knit and Natter. Tuesday is an indoor bowls afternoon, followed by dominoes. Wednesday is bingo afternoon. Thursday is a quiz afternoon. Friday morning is a coffee morning and in the afternoon sometimes a film show. Once a month there is a lunch. Christmas sees other events.



Amongst the many guests helping to celebrate the 30-year Anniversary and The Best Affordable Housing Enterprise Award was the Provincial Grand Master RW Bro John Lockley, the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent Mike Santopietro and the Deputy Grand Master of MMM Dennis Hill. The Rugeley Town Crier Adrian Basford was present in all his splendour. Everyone was welcomed by Alan Walker MBE, Chairman of Wilson Keys Court House Committee.

The PGM RW Bro John Lockley commented "I am so proud that Wilson Keys Court is in our Province and congratulations to everyone involved in achieving the Best Affordable Housing





Provincial DC's Team

Dear Brethren,

The new masonic season has just started. There are a substantial number of meetings in the diary where the Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master, and / or his Deputy or Assistants will be in attendance with a Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies to celebrate Installations as well as Brethren's 50 & 60 Years in Freemasonry. We will be reinforced by the Acting Provincial Grand Lodge Officers of the year, so please make sure they receive a summons from your Lodge Secretary.

I am delighted to welcome 2 new members of the team. They are W. Bro. John Birchall from St Peter's Lodge where he served as Worshipful Master from 2018 for an impressive four-year term. He is also a member of Foster Gough Lodge No. 2706, Provincial Grand Stewards Lodge No. 9567 and a subscribing member of the renowned research lodge Quatuor Coronati lodge No. 2076. His contributions to the Province were acknowledged with his appointment as Provincial Grand Steward in 2022, and his new role as Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies reflects his continued dedication to the Craft. With his wealth of experience and commitment, John's appointment as ProvGDC ensures that he will continue to be a key figure in Staffordshire Freemasonry.

W. Bro. John Cameron has been appointed as a Provincial Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies, adding to his impressive Masonic career. He was initiated into Old Denstonian Lodge No. 5490 in 2014, becoming Worshipful Master in 2022-2023 and he is currently serving as its secretary. He is also a member of Foster Gough Lodge No. 2706, Derbyshire Installed Masters No. 8509 and soon to join Provincial Grand Stewards Lodge No 9567, having previously been invested as Provincial Grand Steward in 2023. John is also a dedicated Royal Arch Mason, currently serving as MEZ of Old Denstonian Chapter until October 2024. But beyond the Craft and Chapter, John is an active member of several appendant bodies, including the Knights Templar / Malta (Derbyshire) and Royal Order of Scotland (Warwickshire).

The DC team continues to be expertly reinforced by W. Bro. Brett Turner-Farmer ProvDGDC, and the ProvAGDC's W. Bro. Kevin L. Gibbons and W. Bro Martyn R. Tighe JP.

The DC team are here to provide a service for the Province. Please feel free to ask your duty DC for help and advice in getting the most out of your meetings and celebrations.

On a house keeping notice, please remember to keep your Lodges tyled at all times, particularly at Installations when the Tylers and Inner Guards are changing.

The Provincial DC team look forward to coming to your Lodge and spending an evening with you. If I can help you, please contact me on dc@staffordshirefreemason.org.uk

W. Bro. Mathew Adderley

Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies.





Barr Beacon Lodge 6109 Installation. Old Friends Reunited

At the recent Installation meeting of Barr Beacon Lodge No.6109, a visitor to the lodge met up with two Lodge members. W.Bro. David Oakenfold P.D.S.G.W. (Nigeria) who in 1977 at 29 years old was W.M. of Kano Lodge No. 4975 in the District Grand Lodge of Nigeria and was the youngest ever WM to preside over a Lodge in Nigeria.

W.Bro. Chris Hill P.Pr.J.G.W., and W.Bro. Jock Planck P.Pr.J.G.W. were both initiated into Kano Lodge by W.Bro. David in 1977 and 1978 respectively. So in the case of Chris who was installed as WM for the third time in Barr Beacon Lodge on 1st October meeting, it was 47yrs, almost to the day that David had initiated him.

At the meeting W.Bro. Oakenfold, who is an accomplished organist, played for the ceremony on the recently refurbished and tuned pipe organ in the temple at Aldridge Masonic rooms, and also proposed the toast to the new W.M. at the Festive Board, and delivered a message from the District Grand Master for Nigeria, R.W.Bro. (Dr.) Onyechi Ikpeazu

The meeting was presided over by the Assistant Provincial Grand Master W.Bro. Jeremy F. Roberts P.A.G.D.C. and the Prov.

Dep.G.D.C. W.Bro. Brett Turner-Farmer. The meeting was also attended by W.Bro. Ian Hart, P.A.G.D.C. and other acting and past Provincial Officers.





A Special Masonic Reunion at Noah's Ark Lodge

On Friday, 18th October 2024, Noah's Ark Lodge No. 347, one of the oldest lodges in the Province of Staffordshire, experienced a unique and heartfelt visit. Worshipful Brother Paul Fitzpatrick, the current Worshipful Master of Dronfield Lodge No. 9570 in the Province of Derbyshire, made a journey of both personal and Masonic significance.

What made this occasion so special was the deep familial connection to the lodge. Paul's grandfather, Worshipful Brother Arthur Fitzpatrick, served as Worshipful Master of Noah's Ark Lodge in 1962. Although Paul began his Masonic journey later in life, he always held a deep desire to honour his grandfather's legacy by visiting the very lodge his grandfather once led, should he himself ascend to the Master's chair.

In a touching moment, Worshipful Brother Paul Cartwright, the current Worshipful Master of Noah's Ark Lodge, graciously allowed Paul

to sit in the same chair his grandfather once occupied. Paul was also presented with the lodge's minute book, which documented the meetings presided over by his grandfather, as well as a photograph of Arthur Fitzpatrick during his time as Master.

Paul's emotional connection to the event deepened further when he responded to the visitors' toast. He shared moving memories of his grandfather's character and recounted how his grandmother had shown him Arthur's Masonic regalia when he was younger—an early spark that eventually led him to join Freemasonry.

The visit was a powerful reminder of the enduring bonds that connect generations, both within families and within the Masonic community, where history, tradition, and personal legacy intertwine.

W. Bro Tom Booth, DC





Lucy's Story - What is myasthenia?

Few of us have ever heard of this condition the meaning of which is 'Muscle Weakness'. It can affect all of the voluntary muscles – those you have to think about to use (not the heart intestines etc) and in particular the eye muscles. It is very debilitating for sufferers leaving them very weak as the day progresses. Myasthenia affects all ages and genders. It is treatable and can be brought under good control with medication, but in some circumstances, it can be fatal.

Richard Whitaker, the WM of Dormston Lodge No 7821 had never heard of Myasthenia until 2002 when his daughter Lucy was diagnosed. This is their story;

"Lucy had muscle weakness in her legs and would fall. Her condition was diagnosed by a test done in the Hospital.

She was then put under the care of the Neurology Department based in Oxford, the Centre for Care of Myasthenia Gravis patients. She was put on several medications and had a Thymectomy (the removable of the Thymus gland, which sits behind the sternum.

At this stage Lucy was in remission whilst still on medication and could work, but regular intravenous infusions of immunoglobulin became necessary, which helped Lucy maintain her strength.

Later, with her partner, she gave birth to my Grandson, Jacob, under close medical supervision. Shortly after this, Lucy's condition again deteriorated and she broke up with her partner arriving on our doorstep with her six-week-old baby, unable to care for him properly. My wife, Sara, had had a knee replacement, so it fell to me, then aged 60, to care for Jacob.

Between us, we looked after Jacob and Lucy and continued to work. Lucy had several setbacks, involving six months in hospital and several spells in Intensive on a respirator via a tracheotomy. There were several close calls during this time.

My son-in-law Andy and my daughter Sophie, who lived in Cannock, suggested we pool our resources and buy a bigger house in the West Midlands. So, we moved to Wolverhampton with a household of 8.

Weekly subcutaneous infusions of immunoglobulin and numerous other

medications control Lucy's condition. She met a new partner, Stephen, and now lives separately with him and Jacob in Wolverhampton and I now have a new granddaughter, Maya, now aged 1, and all are doing well.

Lucy has just continued her University Course in Wolverhampton but still regularly travels to Oxford to be reviewed by the Myasthenia specialists in the Neurology Department.

Myasthenia Gravis caused all this".

Richard and Sara had the opportunity to show their appreciation of the help Lucy received by contributing £2000 from the Lodge Charity fund, following a fund-raising effort at Sara's 'Ladies Festival', to Myaware, a Charity that supports research into the condition and provides guidance to sufferers. It works closely with the Neurology team at Oxford from where Lucy has received so much help.

Richard and Lucy have now received a 'Thank you' letter, acknowledging the donation

W. Bro Mac Jarvis, Charity Steward





Lodge of St John No: 6320

Sadly, on Wednesday 23rd October 2024, after 77 years having been consecrated in November 1946, Lodge of St John No: 6320 handed back their Warrant.



Despite the fact the brethren knew of the imminent closure several functions had been held and there was still a considerable amount of cash in the Charity account that needed to be allocated. The Brethren of the lodge certainly like their food as the functions were predominantly concerning food! Such was the love of eating well, the lodge held Summer BBQ's, Fish & Chip suppers, Smokehouse nights, Asian buffets, Sunday lunches and

Cream Teas. Although there was exercise at the Bowling and Skittle nights.

The lodge committee and brethren discussed a number of beneficiaries and decided on four local charities to support with £1000 each on their closing. Have a Heart Wolverhampton is affiliated with Wolverhampton Coronary Aftercare Support Group. It was established over 35 years ago and provides an integrated service for cardiac rehabilitation and aftercare, following patient discharge from New Cross Hospital heart and lung unit, the staff assist with monitoring, cardio exercises and



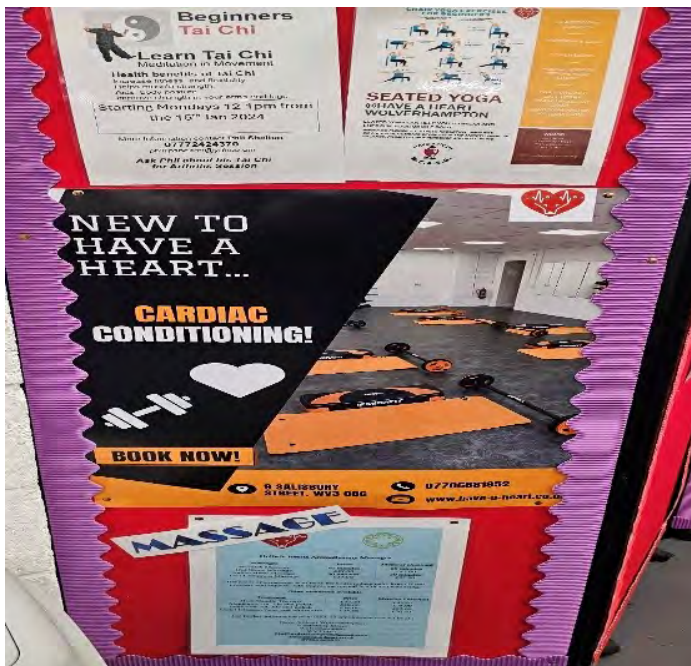
guidance in their specialised cardio gym as well as annual assessments for individuals.

W. Bro. M Davies PPrJGD the former lodge Charity Steward attended a Halloween fund raising event and presented a cheque to the staff.

The lodge having taken their name from the church St John's in the Square, Wolverhampton, it was requested by W. Bro John Wootton PPrJGW that a cheque be presented to the rector Graham Bennet to assist with repairs, this being a special request as his father had been not only a member of the church, but also a founder of the lodge.

W. Bro Davies together with his wife and mother of the former Master, W. Bro. J. Sadler attended the Church to present the cheque.

The final donations of £1000 were made to the National Association of Blood Bikes and the Wolverhampton Army Cadets to assist with equipment and clothing for disadvantaged children in the group.





The Norah Mitchell (Minerva Lodge) Trust Fund.

At Hanley Masonic Hall in Shelton, Minerva Lodge No 1942 held their annual Norah Mitchell Trust Fund charity grant event in November. This year £3,000 was donated to six local charities (£500 each).

The money was left to Minerva Lodge by a Norah Mitchell the sister of a lodge member who had previously left the money to Norah, with charity donations being given at various times from the lump sum.

The charities to benefit at this event were:

Stoke Spitfires Wheelchair Basketball Club. Providing wheelchair basketball for adults and children in Stoke-on-Trent. Presentation to Andrew Flower, Chairman.

Headway, North Staffordshire. Providing rehabilitation to those who have suffered a brain injury. Presentation to Amanda Murphy.

Apedale Heritage Centre. On the site of Apedale Colliery and has a museum, mine tours and café. Presentation to Lee Mason, Trustee/Treasurer.

City Farm, Stoke-on-Trent. In Bucknall and free to enter so that children with parents can learn about farming. Presentation to David Scott, Chairman.

Keele Community First responders. Based at Keele University. The group consists of students, staffs and members of the public, responding to 999 calls in the Keele area. Presentation to Richard Lawton, Chairman.

Staffordshire Sight Loss Association. Based in Hanley and provides services and support for blind and partially sighted people and North Staffordshire. Presentation to Suzanne Roberts, Chief Executive Officer.

Howard Alcock of Minerva Lodge also presented a cheque for £200 to Dr John Skellern the Charity Steward for Staffordshire Freemasons.

All the recipients were most grateful of the donation to the charity they represented and after the presentations were made everyone was invited and shown around one of the Lodge Rooms at the Masonic Hall.

The Staffordshire Masonic Golf Society.

The 2024 golf season officially got under way on Tuesday 21st May with the Spring Competition and Provincial Wardens Trophy which was held at The South Staffordshire Golf Club near Wolverhampton, designed by the legendary Harry Vardon. The course was in top condition, considering the record-breaking rain endured during the long winter and the members enjoyed a warm day with little wind, an ideal day for golfing.



The Provincial Senior Grand Warden, Nick Collumbell, led his team against Mark Ashton, the Provincial Junior Grand Warden and SMGS member. The match showcased skill and sportsmanship, but it was the ProvSGW's team that emerged victorious, with the individual winner being Bro. Jamie Williams, one of the many new members who joined this year. All enjoyed a sumptuous meal at the golf club, with the trophy and prizes being handed out by this year's SMGS Captain, Worshipful Bro. John Carr and a subsequent raffle raised extra funds for the 2024 Festival.

The Staffordshire Masonic Golf Society recently participated in the annual Six Counties Competition 2024, this was hosted by the Leicestershire and Rutland Masonic Golf Association at Glen Gorse Golf Club in Leicestershire. Alongside the hosts, the other participating provinces included Lincolnshire, Warwickshire, Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire.

The Six Counties Shield, with its rich history, is a prestigious award that all teams strive to win, and the event was a resounding success



as the Staffordshire Masonic Golf Society came home with the winner's shield.

Twelve members represented Staffordshire at the competition, with John Carr leading the team as Captain. The team included Mark Ashton, Sean Colley, Andy Hill, Will Jones, Tony Marshall, Reg Sargeant, Martin Sleight, Mike Smith, Kevin Spencer, Paul Walters, and Jamie Williams.

Tony Marshall showcased his exceptional skills on the course and emerged as the winner with the highest Stableford Score overall. Will Jones also delivered a commendable performance, securing the second position in the competition.

On Thursday 22nd August 2024, the SMGS held the Valon Cup and Denne Shield

competition at the beautiful Barlaston Golf Club, Stone. The event was filled with camaraderie, good weather, delicious food, and great conversations among the participants.

The winner of the prestigious Denne Shield was Anthony Dejak, showcasing his exceptional skills on the course. Whilst, the Valon Cup was claimed by Chris Clarke, who displayed remarkable talent and determination throughout the tournament.

Brethren, it's never too late to join in with the fun and camaraderie of the SMGS, so make use of those golfing Christmas presents from the children and grandchildren and get in touch with Bro. Paul Walters at paul_smgs@icloud.com for more information.





The National Freemasons' Service of Remembrance

**On Saturday
2nd November**

the Province of Staffordshire welcomed distinguished representatives from both the Armed Forces, the United Grand Lodge of England and Freemasons from across the country, together with their families to unite in a National Act of Remembrance in the Freemasons Garden at the National Arboretum, Alrewas, Lichfield.



Approximately 300 gathered to pay tribute to those who selflessly served the nation, and the guests included the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire, Brigadier Barry Charles Smith CBE TD DL, the UGLE Assistant Grand Master Steven Varley and many Provincial Grand Masters from across the country.

Staffordshire was honoured to host this inaugural family event and many lodges from across the Province were represented, future services will be led by other Provinces and Districts. The day started at 10am when a considerable number gathered in the garden and at 10.30am music by the Poynton Royal British Legion Concert Band was performed prior to the traditional service of remembrance.





Masonic representation at Ride to the Wall 2024

Saturday October 5th 2024, in a rare turn of events, dawned dry and bright, and heralded the arrival of 100+ motorcycles at Tamworth Masonic Hall. Riders, partners, Wives, friends and families of the Widows Sons (including the associate groups who are encouraged to follow the Pathway into Masonry) all enjoyed a large array of Breakfast Items laid on by Barry and Denise Gwilt, who gave up their Saturday morning to help - including Barry's famous Scotch Eggs, Sausage Rolls - and in true Enid Blyton tradition - "lashings" of Tea and Coffee.



On the stroke of noon, and all wearing our Widows Sons Regalia, the massed group set off with a roar of exhausts, chatter and laughter to the National Memorial Arboretum where we paid our respects in the Masonic Garden, following which we attended the service held by the Ride to the Wall team itself.



Several were asked about our Masonic Symbolism and hopefully interest has been gained for future membership both in the Craft and the Woidows Sons.

The Widows Sons support at the RTTW event has gained popularity over the years - the crowd is now spilling out of the Car Park and into the streets behind the Masonic Rooms!

<https://youtu.be/Oc4G27YQlsg>

<https://youtu.be/syimKK9clsc>

