

CONCORD



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18 Florence Nightingale Hospice

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Cover price: £5

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Editorial Submissions
concord@buckspgl.org

Membership Officer
membership@buckspgl.org

Bucks Provincial Communications Officer
comms@buckspgl.org

Editor
editor@buckspgl.org

Welcome

From the Provincial Grand Master

In March last year I don't think any of us understood the full impact of the pandemic and what would unfold in the coming months. As Freemasons we always think of others and will have been conforming to the government's advice and keeping everyone safe. You must be as frustrated as I am watching the actions of some shown on the TV, meeting in large gatherings and risking making the problem worse. Hopefully some common sense will start to prevail which will help us get back to normality both at home and at our meetings.

At this time of year we would normally be meeting for a Burns supper, toasting the haggis and tasting a wee dram. This is one of the highlights of the Masonic season and it is a great shame that we are unable to partake. I am sure that you are all missing our meetings and these months have shown me just how valuable are the things I used to take for granted.

Last week I was informed of the passing of Terry Vansanten. Terry was one of many wonderful older gentlemen in our province whom I feel privileged to have known as friends. Terry had suffered a debilitating illness for some time and had been fully supported by all his Masonic friends.

The thing I have struggled with the most during this time is not being able to attend funerals of our dear old friends. Looking after our friends and others is second nature to us as Freemasons and we must continue to make sure that the families of those who have passed are looked after.

Our Almoner, Stephen Knight, has done a superb job this year in supporting our own members and their families using funds from our own BMBF charity. I ask you all to keep in touch with elderly members of your Lodge and inform Stephen, via your Lodge Almoner, if any assistance is needed. It is not just older members that need our help. Many younger members have found themselves in difficult circumstances and we are always keen and able to help. I am sure you are all aware of the wonderful works carried out by Freemasons throughout the pandemic

with PPE for hospitals and Care Homes and PC Tablets etc in support of those in need in our local community. This work is still ongoing, and we are currently supporting Slough Outreach Homeless Centre, Slough Recycled Teenagers Scheme (a club for over 55's) & Detached Youth Work Team with deliveries of meals which commenced on the 12th October 2020. This will carry on until the end of February this year, a total of 6,900 meals, all arranged via Slough Borough Council and prepared on behalf of Slough Masonic centre by the catering team at Marlow. The Aylesbury Centre cooked 900 meals for the local Women's Refuge, 250 for Shaftesbury House Aylesbury, 2,700 for Young Carers throughout Bucks and 300 for Prebendal Close so far this year. The Bell Hotel Winslow cooked 1200 meals for residents in Milton Keynes sheltered accommodation, 2,500 for Young Carers families in the Buckingham and Winslow area and 200 for Holmewood School in Milton Keynes.

We have recently supplied large quantities of non-perishable food stuff to a school in Chalfont St. Giles for forty families. We have also continued to support Foodbanks in Buckinghamshire since March 2020.

Most recently our Provincial Director of Ceremonies, Bill Smithson, answered a call from nurses at Stoke Mandeville hospital for fridges and freezers for wards to provide hydrating ice and storage for food taken in by the nursing staff. In the last few weeks, we have also provided many small coffee machines to individual wards to help make the nursing staff's many long hours and hard work a little easier. We are now looking to provide the same for other hospitals in our Province.

I am very proud of the exceptional work that has been undertaken during the last year. We are also in the final year of our 2021 Festival for the Masonic Charitable Foundation and I urge everyone to encourage your Lodges to use their relief chest and transfer as much as possible into this final push to support an



organisation which supports masons in Buckinghamshire in such an outstanding manner when they are in need.

Looking forward, as you know we have had the most successful year in living history for new applicants to join Freemasonry with over 650 additional enquiries created by our new marketing and membership teams of which 130 initiates are now waiting to join Lodges in our province. This success is due to an automated process expedited by some exceptional individuals. In addition to this, in a survey conducted by our provincial secretary, we have another 95 initiates waiting to join by the normal process and a further 25 Joining members from other provinces.

"We now have in excess of 250 new members waiting to join Freemasonry in Buckinghamshire".

Ironically, the biggest problem we face in 2021 is; ***"How on earth do we get 225 initiations done in 12 months"?***

When circumstances permit, we will all need to embrace this opportunity. As an executive we will all be ready and waiting with our 1st Degree rehearsed and ready to go. We will also be looking to the officers of this year, helping those of the next year, to assist in visiting and supporting Lodges to enable them to make the most of this magnificent opportunity. If you are one of the 225 new candidates waiting to join and receiving your copy of Concord for the first time, then please be patient and we will help you to join your Lodge and meet many new friends as soon as circumstances permit.

I am really looking forward to seeing you all again just as soon as we can although I suspect that this will not be for some while yet.

Please keep yourselves and your families safe.

RW Bro John Clark
Provincial Grand Master

Welcome

Provincial Grand Lodge



Left to Right: fProvGSec Barry Sparks, DepProvGM Hugh Douglas-Smith, ProvSGW Tony Martin, PGM John Clark, ProvJGW James Blackhurst, ProvGDC Bill Smithson

It would have been hard to imagine, when we met in London at Freemasons Hall in October 2019, what a different year it was going to be. I remember speaking with great enthusiasm about the wonderful work we were doing and the exciting times ahead. At that moment I could not have envisaged how much the year was about to change. I don't think reality really set in until March.

Sadly, this year, as always, some of our members have passed on to the Grand Lodge above. One of the jewels of Freemasonry is the privilege of meeting wonderful individuals and enjoying their warm and entertaining company. Amongst those who have passed this year was our Past Provincial Grand Master, Eric Deung. Eric was a great man who worked very hard for us over the years and he, and all those who are no longer with us this year, will be sadly missed.

I would like to congratulate all of you receiving appointments and promotions today. I thank you for the hard work you have undertaken over many years to achieve these great honours. It is a cause of great sadness to me that I cannot meet with you in person today to confer the awards and shake your hand.

I would particularly like to thank Andy Collins who is stepping down as Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies for his support and guidance and congratulate Bill Smithson on his appointment to Provincial Grand

Director of Ceremonies. Andy will still be very busy and has already taken on the post of editor of our Concord magazine. Others standing down today are David Durn as Provincial Registrar and Tom Davies as Tyler. I would like to thank both of them for their hard work and support.

Sadly, our outgoing Provincial Grand Wardens have not been able to attend today due to the rule of six restrictions and I thank them and all the outgoing officers for their service this last year. Tonight, after Provincial Grand Lodge, we will be holding a Zoom meeting with the outgoing Provincial Team at 7pm to thank them personally and another with the in-coming team at 8pm.

I would like to thank Barry Sparks, Andy Collins, Bill Smithson and Robert Wharton for their assistance with arrangements for today which have taken many unexpected turns over the last few months. I would particularly like to thank Robert Wharton and Ray Reed for their continued assistance and guidance.

Presentation of Awards

Yesterday the Deputy Provincial Grand Master and I, escorted by our newly appointed Director of Ceremonies, Bill Smithson, visited some very hard-working members of our organisation to present the following special awards in person at their homes, whilst observing very strict social distancing. It was a delight to be able to do this in person.

This year I presented the **Don Varney award** for outstanding contribution to Masonry prior to becoming master of a lodge, to Stephen Barker of Secklow Hundred Lodge No 9569 for his exceptional work on social media assisting with the new Marketing initiative. Steve has also taken a leading role in the North East Corner Club's new **"Zoom into Freemasonry"** initiative to encourage new candidates to come and find out what we do.

I presented the **Freemasonry in the Community Individual award** to Rob Pulford of Claydon Lodge No 9178 for sustaining a constant supply of meals and food parcels to those self-isolating and to the vulnerable in our local community. Rob and his partner Annette have sustained this service throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Freemasonry in the Community Lodge award I presented to St. Peter and St. Paul's Lodge No. 1410 where the members have been very active in the Newport Pagnell area which has resulted in many new joining members. Since moving to their new home, the Lodge has been very busy in the community and for local charities. These included a donation to the Newport Pagnell disabled swimming club for the purchase of a hoist to enable their members to have better access to the pool facilities and a donation to the Newport Pagnell Christmas Lights committee to help towards

"I believe that those that take a leap, as we have done, in difficult times will thrive in the future."

the purchase of new equipment.

There was also a donation to provide Hyperbaric Oxygen for the relief of MS patients and a donation of Christmas presents to disadvantaged children in Milton Keynes. In addition there were donations to local food banks, provision and distribution of meals from the Bell Hotel at Winslow to vulnerable people who were self-isolating, provision and distribution of boxes of fresh fruit and vegetables to local people in sheltered housing.

Lodge members even made time to make a surprise visit to a lone citizen in Olney on his birthday and played and sang happy birthday to him!

They rounded all of this off by winning the Newport Pagnell duck race taking both first and second prizes, both of which were then donated to the Christmas Lights appeal. They were also invited to attend the Remembrance Sunday parade and laid a wreath on behalf of Buckinghamshire Freemasons. It is no surprise to me that this lodge has three new members on the summons for their next meeting and others waiting. My thanks go to all the recipients of these awards for their hard work and I congratulate them on these outstanding achievements.

I would also like to thank all of our wives and partners for their support and particularly the members of our Ladies Clubs for the good work they do.

COVID-19 Charitable Work

As I said earlier, last October no one would have believed what was about to happen with the onset of Covid-19. In March 2020 my Assistant Provincial Grand Master Phil Blacklaw hit the ground running, providing meals and assistance for vulnerable people throughout the Province. A huge number of our members took part in this initiative as you will see from the numerous articles in the media and in our own Concord Magazine.

This work was undertaken by some very brave individuals at some personal risk. We had motorcycles delivering pies, and many members in their own cars delivering food to refuges and



AsstProvGM Gary Brodie guards the door

foodbanks in March. All of my Executive team were very hands on assembling facemasks for care homes and delivering PPE and many other things.

Grand Lodge and the MCF initiated the Covid-19 project and put aside one million pounds to deliver Covid related charitable work across the UK between April and September. In Bucks this enabled us to provide PPE to hospitals and care homes and to deliver care packs and sanitiser to carers. We even managed to replace a doctor's bike which was stolen while he was working on a Covid-19 ward in the hospital. The effect of this effort was magnificent with too many items to cover here. It was a privilege to work with such a determined and dedicated team.

I could not be more proud of the way that our members have risen to the challenge. We have worked much harder in support of others from March to August 2020 than ever before. This work continues now with Grand Lodge and the MCF working on the next part of this work. Phase 2 will deliver two million pounds in three sections with the first supporting the homeless and rough sleepers during the winter this year. This project has developed and ▶



Provincial DC, Bill Smithson, relaxes after the PGL meeting – from wand to trowel in a day!

strengthened our strong friendships with many other organisations. Ironically in March this year, as part of our new strategy, we saw a business style automated membership process put in place by Simon Williams our Provincial Membership Officer and his team. Matt Perkins, who took over as Communications Officer, developed a new business style approach to getting the message out about our outstanding organisation. We have had more membership enquiries between March and April than ever before. This new business style approach has resulted in over 400 enquiries for membership with over 100 candidates already introduced to lodges.

HeliPAD Progress

HeliPAD, our Provincial Information system, now has 1171 subscribers using the system, with a third adding a photo of themselves. This system now has a module which processes enquiries from initial interest to joining a lodge and beyond and automatically replaces and automates a number of the key stages

in the pathway process. This means that we are able to look after everybody from being an interested candidate right through to being master of a lodge.

Membership Group Zoom calls

I have now attended a number of new Membership Group Zoom calls over the last few months and what has become apparent is that these new guys want to get in quickly. We now need a sustained effort to enable these new candidates to become Freemasons, even if only six can attend a meeting. Quality of ceremony is essential. Addington, Acting Officers Lodge and the Provincial Grand Stewards Lodge will be ready to assist with any ceremonial that might be required. I challenge you all, to go forward and help take the pressure off our membership team who continue to get new membership enquiries every day.

We are also hosting a new 'Meet the Freemasons' Zoom on Saturday mornings. These are open to any non-mason who wants to find out more. I am delighted to say that the first two of these were attended by around 40

individuals and many partners and have resulted in a number of membership applications.

We have hundreds of potential new candidates and more enquiring all the time. A number of lodges such as Five Points No 8197 have five or six waiting to join and are putting on emergency meetings to enable them to become Freemasons. Please help us get these new guys in now. We can give them the full masonic social experience later when safety permits.

They will have the rest of their lives to enjoy the social and ceremonial aspects of the excellent organisation they have joined.

RW Bro John Clark
Provincial Grand Master

Companions, welcome to 2021.

This is my first Concord address as officially the new Grand Superintendent of Buckinghamshire and I have lots of news for you.

I am delighted to confirm that I was invested by the Second Grand Principal ME Comp Russell Race at 9.30am on September 14th in the Grand Temple at Great Queen St.

The meeting had been rearranged to accommodate the new rule of 6, which came into effect that day at noon. A total of 16 people were present, including our own Provincial Grand Master RW Bro John Clark, along with the full Royal Arch Executive and the Grand Scribe Ezra, E Comp David Staples and the Grand DC, E Comp Charles Hopkinson-Woolley. I could not have hoped for a better team to support the Provincial Royal Arch Executive. It was a strange but memorable and enjoyable meeting lasting only 35 minutes, but creating memories that will last forever. The opportunity for my 2nd and 3rd Principals to assist in conducting the meeting from the chairs in the Grand Temple is something I know was a highlight of the day.

At the meeting, I was delighted to appoint and invest the following.

- **E Comp Michael Stephens**
Deputy Grand Superintendent
- **E Comp John Stribling**
2nd Provincial Grand Principal
- **E Comp Stan Green**
3rd Provincial Grand Principal

It was not the way any of us wanted to be invested, sharing this with our usual 350 Companions would have been preferred. However, this could not be, and I can assure you that we intend to ensure next year's Provincial Convocation will be an event not to miss. It is very important to note our Provincial meeting will now be later in the year, allowing us to return to some form of normality and to ensure companions are comfortable attending. As soon as date is fixed, I will

let you know. Companions, one thing we know is that nothing is certain, but we must have a plan, albeit it keeps changing.

New Scribe Nehemiah

The appointments and promotions letters for 2021-2022 were all delivered in 2020 and acceptances received. Therefore, I can now share the name of the companion who will be appointed as Scribe Nehemiah for the year 2021-2022 along with any other senior roles changing. The new Provincial Grand Scribe Nehemiah for 2021-2022 will be E Comp Bryan Harfield, a well-respected member of this Province. Bryan has served the Royal Arch with distinction over many years, and I look forward to investing him and working with him during his year of office. Bryan will be taking over from E Comp Stephen Knight, who due to the effects of COVID on our meetings, has been working very much behind the scenes. Stephen has carried out his duties in an exemplary fashion and continues to be a great source of help to the Province.

Another senior change is E Comp Mike Phillips coming to the end of his tenure as an APGP (Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals). Mike will have served



this office with distinction for three years being one of the first APGPs appointed in the Province. The Province will still use his counsel and enthusiasm, and he will continue to support our great Province. Mike's replacement will be Joseph Le Roi Smith. Joseph is known to everyone as a dedicated and a respected Royal Arch Mason. I know he is relishing the opportunity of continuing the high standard that Mike has set in this significant office. Joseph's appointment is for two years to allow him time to work with our other APGP who will be staying in office, that of E Comp Richard Lewis who still has another year to run of his tenure. The Executive of the Province will remain the same with no changes in 2021. ▶



L to R John Stribling, Second Provincial Grand Principal, Graham Dearing, ME Grand Superintendent, Mike Stephens, Deputy Grand Superintendent, Stan Green, Third provincial Grand Principal.

◀ We are in the process of publishing all the A's and P's for 2021 on our website. Please visit www.buckspgc.org to receive the full list. Please, do not be shy in passing on your congratulations to those who received preferment this year.

Keeping you informed

During the past few months, the Provincial team have been working hard to keep you and your Chapters informed and engaged. My special thanks go to my Scribe Ezra Mel Shah who works so tirelessly for the Province. His Scribe E's Zoom meetings are well attended and very informative. If you are a Scribe E and do not get along to these, it is well worth logging on. Our Provincial Almoner/Mentor E Comp Nick Wilson informs and educates us on the RAVC Facebook page. His work and conversations on the twelve tribes have engaged many companions. If you are not yet a member of the Royal Arch Vision Club, I will urge you to go into Facebook, search for RAVC and be part of something special. Please encourage all members of your Chapter to join this group; if we all learn together we will understand so much more.

2020 was undoubtedly an extraordinary year; no one could have predicted the devastation that COVID has brought to our lives. We have lost several members to the effects of this dreadful virus, and I know many companion's families have been adversely affected by illnesses and the financial worries about work and businesses. We as Royal Arch Masons can only be there for our companions when they need support, comfort and at times just someone to pick up the phone and say hello. Whilst we cannot fix the crisis, we certainly can help others in coping with the fallout. Companions let's all continue to do just that. Being a Freemason does not preclude us from either getting this

dreadful virus or being affected by it. Companions, the start of mass vaccination brings us all hope that in the first half of 2021, we can be back together at our meetings. There is no doubting that during 2020 Zoom has been invaluable, but it is no substitute for being together. I do not doubt that there are members, due to age or health issues, who will be reluctant to return to their Chapters unless they can feel 100% safe and secure. There will equally be some who think that they wish to return to meetings sooner. Both viewpoints are valid, and both should be respected, we must be mindful of individual choice. No one should ever feel pressurised to either return too quickly or not hold meetings if there is a desire to do so.

My message for the start of 2021 is simple; let's say goodbye to a tough year and look forward to our future. I am sometimes accused of always being optimistic and seeing things through rose-tinted glasses. Companions, I can assure you my glasses are clear, and I know it will not be long before we can return to our labours and enjoy the companionship of the Holy Royal Arch. With this in mind, I want to leave you with a quotation which should be our mantra for next year.

"The best way to predict your future is to create it"

Abraham Lincoln



Graham Dearing and Russell Race, ME Second Grand Principal

Companions, let's continue to create the best Holy Royal Arch Province in the country. In the new year, I will soon be setting out some goals, based around recruitment and retention. It goes back to Einstein's theory of madness, "if you keep doing the same thing, please don't expect a different result". There has never been a better time for the Royal Arch Province to create its own future.

Let us continue to obey the rules of the land and the guidance from Supreme Grand Chapter, and may the true and living God most High keep you and your families ever in his care, now and forevermore.

JOIN US IN CELEBRATION

Saturday 10th July 2021

**STEPHENS CHAPTER 3089
100 YEARS**

Celebrate 100 years with Stephens Chapter on Saturday the 10th of July 2021, at the Beaconsfield Masonic Centre. The Stephens Chapter was consecrated by the Very Revd J Studholme Brownrigg, ME Grand Superintendent of Buckinghamshire at Pagani Restaurant, Great Portland Street, London on the 6th April 1921. Our Most Excellent Grand Superintendent, Graham Peter Dearing, is to lead a Provincial team consisting of Executive members and Acting Officers of the year.

All who attend will receive a hard back copy of the Chapter's outstanding history, there will be entertainment at the Festive Board as there was at the consecration in 1921. The Festive Board dining will reflect the six courses served in 1921. It has been six years since the last Chapter in our Province held a Centenary Celebration and it will be a few years to the next. Don't miss out on a superb Masonic Occasion!

To book your place at the Convocation: **John Stribling:** interface.p@talk21.com



Buckinghamshire Royal Arch Provincial Convocation 2020



L to R Mel Shah, Provincial Grand Scribe Ezra, Mike Stephens, Deputy Grand Superintendent, John Stribling, Second Provincial Grand Principal, Graham Dearing, ME Grand Superintendent, Stan Green, Third Provincial Grand Principal, Alan Clarke, Provincial Grand Treasurer.

The Buckinghamshire Provincial Convocation was held on Thursday 22nd October 2020 at the Beaconsfield Masonic Centre, attended by six members of the Executive Team.

The meeting was held adhering to all the government rules and Supreme Grand Chapter guidance. It was certainly not the meeting we would have all hoped for and to not have the acting officers with us was disappointing for all. I am sure that at our Annual Convocation in 2021 we will be able to celebrate in our usual manner.

At the meeting, the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2019 and the Provincial Accounts to 31 December 2019 were approved. E Comp Alan Clark was re-elected as Treasurer along with our scrutineer E Comp Neville Bird. Both continue to give excellent service in ensuring the finances of our Provincial Grand Chapter are in good stead.

Whilst we did not have the full attendance or atmosphere of our normal Provincial meeting, we all enjoyed the companionship of the meeting and it was good getting back to limited ritual and indeed some Masonic normality.

Graham Dearing

Grand Superintendent Buckinghamshire.



INITIATION TO EXALTATION
COMPLETE YOUR JOURNEY IN
PURE ANTIENT FREEMASONRY

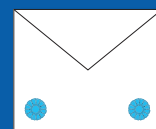
IT IS YOUR RIGHT AS A MASON



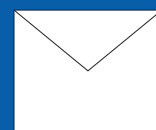
THE FOURTH AND FINAL STEP:
THE HOLY ROYAL ARCH (CHAPTER)



THE THIRD STEP: THE MASTER MASON



THE SECOND STEP: THE FELLOWCRAFT



THE FIRST STEP: THE ENTERED APPRENTICE

ARE YOU ONLY THREE QUARTERS OF THE
WAY THROUGH YOUR JOURNEY?



TO FIND OUT MORE SPEAK TO YOUR
ROYAL ARCH REPRESENTATIVE OR GO TO:

WWW.BUCKSPGC.ORG

It was February 2018 when I had the privilege of being promoted from ProvGSec to AsstProvGM and took on the overview of many of the facets of Buckinghamshire Freemasonry including Freemasonry In the Community, Training and Development, Masonic Centres, our sports groups and gardens.

However more recently, especially in these particularly troubled times, it is important to establish that FIC has become an overarching commitment. Whilst the 'Chains' still have their defined areas of responsibility, we have become extremely flexible in what we do and we have a great deal of cross-over within FIC. We have all been out supporting the community by making deliveries such as food and meals to the needy, pamper packs for carers, face masks, face shields and tablet PCs to hospitals. There isn't a member of the Executive, or indeed any member of the Province, who hasn't made an invaluable contribution in one way or another to supporting the community and I thank you all for this.

Whilst we are mostly focused on reports from the Covid wards in our hospitals, we should not forget that there are other wards, especially the children's wards. Even during this pandemic Lou Amey has managed the provision of and, with the help of others, the delivery of the teddies, up to 4,000 annually, from Teddies for Loving Care to children who have other illnesses and life threatening conditions and, more recently, to children living in women's refuges.

If this dreadful pandemic can be said to have a 'silver lining', it may be that never before have Buckinghamshire Freemasons been so active and so prominent in our community. I needn't list our efforts here as they have been well reported across the media and especially in a recent national e-communication, "1st Risings". UGLE clearly recognised our achievements in Buckinghamshire

Chains Letter

*by Tony Robinson
AsstProvGM*

and recorded the gratitude of the community.

I work closely with our ProvGSuptWks, Stuart McCurry, and in 2019 we held a seminar for the managers of our various meeting places on Disaster Recovery; little knowing that the imminent disaster would not be from building fabric, fixtures or fittings but a viral pandemic that would force the closure of each venue. We have been constantly working with representatives of every meeting venue, keeping them aware of the legislation applicable at the time, providing details of the necessary requirements for re-opening, and we held Zoom meetings to share good practice. It has been a story of stop/start opening and closing but at each stage the managers of the venues have been diligent and have produced risk assessments and access guidance. They carried out whatever precautions were necessary to provide a Covid secure environment for the safe return to our meetings. I was able to deliver, on behalf of the Province, a re-opening starter pack to every venue (face shields and masks, hand sterilisers, Covid safety signs, surface wipes and also contactless thermometers).

Some of our larger venues, Bletchley and Marlow, had managed to stay open for other activities such as food preparation, food distribution hubs, clothing recycling and blood donations, again whilst observing the restrictions in place. The use of our Slough Centre has been taken up by a local school, just along Ragstone Road. It has provided a safer entrance to the school, staff

car-parking and a newly installed gate gives access to a very large school field, available for our use. We were further able to support the school by providing twenty four laptops for the students. The extended use of our venues is being constantly explored and I am currently investigating the possible use of our larger centres as local vaccination hubs and also local Freemasons assisting with the marshalling.

Other areas within my remit are the interest and sports groups around the Province including green bowls, golf, fishing and clay pigeon shooting. Unfortunately the Covid restrictions have prevented these groups assembling very often but they are all in readiness to recommence when possible. These groups are very enthusiastic and in normal circumstances, very active with full programmes and fixture lists. My wife, Jean, and I attend as many events as possible throughout the year and of course sample the activity. Although I should say that I have only caught one trout and I have 'shot' more clays with my camera than a gun! I have even been able to develop some of my own interests becoming a Founder Member of the Classic Car Lodge and the Nomadic Motorhome, Caravan and Camping Lodge. We look forward to a happier time when we can all meet up once again.

With my Training and Development responsibilities there have been Annual Secretaries Conferences and Annual Workshops for Master Elects, Directors of Ceremonies and Secretaries. This year, as we cannot



assemble, we will be offering on-line seminars/workshops, dates to be announced.

I also liaise with our ProvGOlator, Neil Robertson, who until the restrictions was regularly visiting Lodges delivering orations and introducing Solomon. He is now working with the Marketing Team and producing promotional material. I am very pleased to say that the NECC include Solomon and other development material in their Saturday Zoom presentations.

I also have overview of the garden areas maintained by Buckinghamshire Freemasons at Milton Keynes Hospital Courtyard Garden, Bletchley Memorial, High Wycombe Station and Gerrards Cross Station and these are regularly reported on in Concord. However, my appeal for volunteers to take on the station gardens was only responded to by three brethren and there is an urgent need for more volunteers if we are to continue maintaining these gardens. Please contact me at trobinson@buckspgl.org if you are able to help.

At this time of writing, the nation is in another lock-down and there are many questions about when the meeting places will re-open and we might re-start our meetings. However, as the Government has given no date for this lockdown to finish, I can give no answer to this question. What I can say is that until such a time as we can return to a 'more normal life', our community will be cared for and our meeting places will be maintained in a safe condition so that we can have a future to look forward to.

A New Venue for Great Ouse Valley Lodge No 9235



L to R Bros B. Stammers, T. Murtagh, J. Duckworth (WM), O. Ringsby-Burgess, I. Walker, D. Rogers

Great Ouse Valley Lodge (No 9235) was consecrated on 13th June 1987 by the R W PGM Lord Burnham. In its early days the Lodge was based at The Bull in Olney, an old coaching house, but moved to the United Reformed Church in Olney, along with other masonic orders, due to the anti-masonic feelings of the landlord at that time.

Initially the new venue proved ideal and, under the auspices of the Olney Masonic Club (OMC), much was done to improve facilities. However, in later years the Church elders had been repeatedly asked to improve the fabric and facilities within the building, especially the kitchen and toilet facilities, but they refused to do so unless OMC made a substantial donation; this was considered inappropriate by the brethren.

OMC undertook a search for a new venue where the various affiliated masonic orders could meet. The North Crawley Institute was considered ideal for a variety of reasons and after consultation OMC reluctantly gave notice to the Church and enacted an agreement with the Institute; effective September 2020.

The Installation ceremony of Great Ouse Valley Lodge on 7th October 2020 was the first Craft meeting to be held at the new venue. Due to COVID-19 restrictions the Lodge was limited to 6 Brethren plus a Tyler and we Proclaimed our existing Master, W Bro Jaeson Duckworth for a further year. The ceremony took 30 minutes in a much-reduced masonic format.

Supporting the WM were W Bro Ringsby-Burgess (IPM), Bro Murtagh (SW and ME), W Bro Walker (JW), W Bro Stammers (Secretary), W Bro Rogers (DC) and Bro M. Whitehouse (Treasurer) who acted as Tyler.

We look forward to returning to normality soon and installing our ME in proper style next October.

Brian Stammers



We just beat the lockdown!

Taplow Lodge 3111 just beat the lockdown with a meeting to initiate brother Leon Gill.

Following strict guidelines they held a meeting on the evening of the 4th of November just in time before the national lockdown. Worshipful Master James Tait said "with two further candidates in the wings we could not afford to waste this chance to bring a new brother forward". Leon really enjoyed the evening, the new way of working has been really thought through and it works; every one said how safe they felt.

Charity Steward W Bro Bernard Friess, who doubled as JW and Chaplain before doing the charge to the initiate,



Top image: Nick Maclean, Leon Gill, James Tait, Bernard Friess, Barry Robinson, David Lamsden. Bottom image: Taplow with Leon Gill And James Tait WM

highlighted various items to explain what would have happened had this not been a COVID meeting. He said "I believe this gave a greater understanding to the evening and really helped our new brother understand the difference COVID had made without distracting from the essential elements of the ceremony".

All in all a great evening and Leon's response made that clear; "I'm still bewildered by everything, it was an amazing evening and I look forward to seeing the ceremony again. I'm grateful for having the chance to be a Freemason, I'm really going to enjoy my new friendships".

Olney Lodges Relocated to North Crawley



Left to right: Mike Read-Tyler, Philip Compton-Acting Secretary & JW, Mark James-WM, Paul Dawson-IG, Paul Collins-Treasurer & SW, Tom Jones-DC (Front Centre)

It has been an unusual year in many ways, but for Olney Freemasonry, particularly so.

February 2020 was the last installation meeting for Cowper & Newton 2244 in Olney, and saw Mark James being installed to a gathered assembly of 65 members and guests.

March was to be the final ceremony held in Olney, which was planned to be a more modest affair followed by a traditional festive board to see us out of Olney in style! Unfortunately, the world changed in March 2020 and the party was cancelled due to Lockdown.

Over the summer recess members worked together to vacate the United Reformed Church located in Olney, our home for the last 132 years and relocate all of the furniture for the combined eight Lodges and Orders to nearby North Crawley Institute. This was achieved by a team effort, with involvement across all the orders. No mean feat as the storage facilities at the new location were somewhat smaller than we were used to! Some creative construction was completed, and by September 2020 all was in place for the start of the new season.

Our first scheduled meeting was in October 2020, a very much subdued affair due to the 'Rule of six' Pictured

above are the Brethren present on that occasion (taken on a timed photo due to the Government imposed limitation on numbers allowed to be present.)

Just as we were getting used to the 'New Normal' England was hit with another Lockdown, and the November meeting was cancelled by another communication from the Grand Master suspending all Lodge & Chapter meetings until restrictions are eased.

This situation will not last for ever. There is a distant glimmer of light, visible in the darkness, in the form of vaccines. I firmly believe that Science will overcome this situation, and allow us once more to enjoy the Brotherly Love that we have all missed this last year.

When the situation improves, you will be most welcome to visit us at our new home.

The North Crawley Institute is located just over the road from the Chequers Pub - 24 High St, North Crawley, Newport Pagnell MK16 9LH

**Mark, Secretary
Cowper & Newton Lodge 2244.
Secretary2244@gmail.com**

All Lodges and Orders based in Olney have now relocated to nearby North Crawley Institute.

50-year celebration for Arthur



On the 18th of September 2020 W Bro Tony Martin, the Worshipful Master of Notarius Lodge, made a visit to the home of W Bro Arthur Driver and surprised him with a signed 50 years in Freemasonry Certificate. This had been produced and signed on behalf of the Province of Buckinghamshire and Notarius Lodge in particular, where Arthur was one of the Founding members in September 1997.

Arthur was initiated in a London Lodge on the 18th September 1970 and had been expecting a certificate to be presented in London. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 situation, Arthur's Mother Lodge regular meeting, where the presentation had been on the agenda, had not been able to take place and he would have had to wait for some future occasion to receive it.

When Tony Martin arrived at his house with a certificate on behalf of Notarius Lodge it came as a complete surprise and was even more poignant as it was exactly 50 years from the date of his Initiation. Arthur expressed his grateful thanks to W.Bro Tony and the brethren of the Lodge.



BUCKS FREEMASONRY BACK WITH A BANG

Slough Masonic Centre welcomed Freemasonry back with a very special meeting on Tuesday 1st September, some 4 months after the suspension of all masonic activity. Marcellians Lodge held an emergency meeting and performed what was hoped to be the first of many post lockdown ceremonies encompassing social distancing rules (no Rule of 6 at that time).

The meeting was hugely important being the first initiation in the Province since lockdown and made extra special as our Provincial Grand Master, RW Bro John Clark, conducted the ceremony, initiating his youngest son David with

his eldest son Jack acting as Junior Deacon. In attendance was W Bro Don Doe, a Past Master of Marcellians Lodge, an old friend of the Clark family who was Junior Deacon when the Provincial Grand Master was himself initiated at Slough in 1988. On that occasion John was initiated by his own father making this a most pleasing case of history repeating itself.

Several of the Provincial Executive, most of whom are members of the Lodge, were in attendance amongst a total of 17 attendees. The meeting was seen as a template for future meetings at Slough and, indeed, all other centres with social distancing strictly observed at all times and masks worn throughout the ceremony. The amended ritual was very interesting to observe and performed to an excellent standard with younger brethren excelling in presenting the working tools and the charge. It will certainly be long remembered by all who were present.

The whole evening was hugely successful and demonstrated how we can move forward as a Province after lockdown, holding meetings and performing ceremonies in a safe environment, observing all the necessary social distancing requirements. Little did we know what was just around the corner!

Welcome to Buckinghamshire Freemasons Brother David!

Gary Brodie
Assistant Provincial Grand Master





Stokenchurch Remembers



Every year it is a tradition that the Master of Stokenchurch Lodge, or a nominee, lays a wreath at the War Memorial. Despite the restrictions due to the current CV19 situation, W Bro Martin Hill, Master, ensured the tradition was continued and on Sunday 8th November laid a wreath at the Stokenchurch War Memorial. The wreath was very generously sponsored by W Bro Steve Jones ProvAGDC.

The War Memorial is located outside the Memorial Hall. It is a grade II listed building with Historic England and commemorates the men of the village who died in the First and Second World Wars. It was built in 1925 alongside a memorial hall erected at the same time. It includes the names of two women who died during the Second World War, Eleanor Slade, a pilot in the Air Transport Auxiliary who died following a crash in 1944, and Florence Mary Steptoe, a private in the Auxiliary Territorial Service, who died in 1942. Upholding tradition, the Lodge paid its respects to those who we acknowledge showed courage and sacrifice serving their country.

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BEFORE

AFTER



Haddenham Lodge 8944 Lodge of Instruction (LOI) 18th November 2020



Haddenham Lodge has long had a proud history of thinking outside the box. As a local village Lodge, many of its members live within, or just a short distance from, Haddenham. So, even with the Covid restrictions, they have been able to meet up and stay in touch throughout 2020, both physically and via a buddy system set up at the outbreak of the pandemic.

When the restrictions were lifted to allow groups of six to meet up, the LOI preceptors organised socially distanced gatherings at the local pub. At one of these pub LOI's one of the members asked about the make up of Grand Lodge and the leaders in the Craft. This needed an expert to give a full response and so the LOI Secretary, W Bro Steve Smirthwaite, leapt into action and organised a Zoom meeting with the Past Assistant Grand Master (PAGM) David Williamson.

It did help that, for many years, David and Steve used to work for the same company, and that another member of the Lodge is also a close friend and colleague of the PAGM. However, the clincher was that David is also an Honorary Member of Haddenham Lodge and has visited several times over the last 17 years.

On 18th November David logged on and was welcomed by our Worshipful Master, W Bro Olly Murray. David answered the first few questions fully, with anecdotes and historical

information, that kept the LOI fully involved. Sadly, due to the time limits of this particular Zoom meeting, we had to end the session after 40 minutes with numerous questions left unanswered.

However, David kindly offered to do another session to complete the outstanding questions and this was arranged for 9th December.

This was again very well attended by the Lodge members and a most informative session was held, with many more questions answered by David.

The Brethren of Haddenham Lodge were extremely grateful for David giving so freely of his time and knowledge, wished him and his family well for the Festive Season and looked forward to welcoming him back to Haddenham as soon as circumstances allow.

Steve Smirthwaite
Haddenham LOI Secretary



Moorfields Eye Hospital 'Cataract Drive'

In September W Bro Steve Smith (Industria Lodge) was proud, as part of the wider St. John Ambulance Covid-19 response, to be part of a team who volunteered to support Moorfield Eye Hospital's cataract drive and was fortunate to have been able to undertake all six twelve hour shifts between Monday and Saturday.

The cataract drive was a new initiative to quadruple the amount of operations undertaken in a week to help clear surgical waiting lists and was the first of its kind in the UK.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the patients were unable to be accompanied by friends or family and we as volunteers worked in harmony with the wonderful staff at Moorfields. We met the patients as they arrived at the hospital, assisted with their pre-operative assessments, sat with them in the waiting room, accompanied them during their surgery and helped with

their discharge from the hospital.

During this event I met some joyous individuals and it was a pleasure to spend time helping to alleviate their anxieties simply by chatting to them or holding their hand during the operation.

I got to know each patient very well whilst in the waiting room and they were happy to share with me photos of their families, stories from their lives and one 90 year old lady in particular gave me her recipes for goat curry and Jamaican rum punch!

The patients were very thankful to us for being there for them and I was

described as being their "Guardian Angel" or their "Hand of God". One gentleman who is a West Ham United football fan, who found out I was a Liverpool FC fan, gave me a thumbs up as I reunited him with his family following his discharge and said "Steve, you will never walk alone" (the motto of Liverpool Football Club), which was a most touching moment.

In total 724 cataract operations were undertaken during the week. We received heartfelt thanks from the staff at Moorfields and it was an honour to have worked with such a professional, friendly, and dedicated team.

Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity brings help and relief to a member of the Province

Liza Brissenden Hemstock (wife of our outgoing Provincial Senior Grand Warden) works for Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity (FNHC) as a fundraiser. Before Lockdown Liza was busy developing enriched links with the Province which included securing sponsorship of the 'Not-The Midnight Walk'. Incredibly, in these testing times, the support the charity received was unprecedented, raising nearly £100,000 and each of the 800 participants wore a t-shirt that had the wording 'sponsored by Buckinghamshire Freemasons' on their backs.

The Province's relationship with FNHC is epitomised by an article that Liza wrote of her personal experience of how the FN@Home team supported her and Paul as her Dad passed away at home during Lockdown.



Dad was a Warhorse. A Trojan of a man. His name was Tony, he was 6'4" and he looked like Sean Connery in his heyday. He fought in the Korean war when he was 19 and met mum when they were both in the army. My parents were a team, a real Morecombe and Wise. They moved to Aylesbury and when he retired from the Army, Dad became a Driving Examiner. He's legendary in Aylesbury, ask anyone who either passed or failed their driving test. He took his job very seriously.

Dad worked hard to support Mum and four daughters and they embraced retirement and travelled the world together, but Dad was never happier than being at home, in charge at a family BBQ. Dad was always in charge; he commanded your attention.

When illnesses crept in that didn't stop Dad. He kept going because that's what

"Just the way they were with him and the way they were with us, and all they brought was soap and water, love and experience and that meant so much"



Liza's mum and Dad - Pat and Tony Hemstock.

his generation do. They are stoic and resilient and just get on, but no-one was braver than Dad. Although he was wracked in pain and could no longer walk, he adapted to what he could do. He was a demon on his scooter, a well known sight around Bedgrove, zooming to the shops to get the paper, and rarely missed his 4pm pint with the Boys on a Friday. Both Mum and Dad both really embraced life. Last year was the first year we managed to keep him out of hospital and 2019 was declared a success! We went cruising to the Fjords and enjoyed the best Christmas ever. There were lots to look forward to. Dad just kept on pushing and was so independent. He was so incredibly brave, funny, and very cheeky.

Then, out of the blue, on the verge of Lockdown, Dad ended up in A&E to be

told there was nothing more that could be done. So we brought him home to die there, just how he wanted. With a referral from his GP, FN@Home visited by the afternoon of the following day and everything stopped feeling so out of control and frightening.

The nurse, Sue, came in like a busy bee and we were so relieved to know Florence was on our side. She was with us for a good two and a half hours, and we drank a lot of tea together. She made us feel safe and took time to speak to Mum, speak to Dad and to me and my sisters. We could talk and say we were scared about what would happen now and she was so reassuring. Sue arranged for a hospital bed to be set up by the beautiful large window in the living room so Dad could look out on the garden, and that's where

he remained to the end. My sister Fiona and I would camp downstairs next to him to help him through the night.

It was such a strange time for us, as we thought that Dad was invincible; he'd been through worse, but this was the end now and we as a family had to go with it. The nurses reassured us that all was as it should be.

The Florence team came twice a day for fourteen days and were wonderful, coming morning and evening to wash Dad, change his t-shirt, change the bedding if it needed it and make sure the medications were working.

One of the HCA's even gave Dad an Indian Head massage which he really enjoyed. As a team, they also made sure that we as a family were ok. They had time to talk and over endless cups of tea, they allowed us to laugh and cry

together. They taught us that we were just experiencing the Circle of Life; that everything must end eventually and it was ok. Not scary. Such magnificent support and all they brought with them was soap and water, love and experience and that meant so much.

The sun was shining on a Thursday morning, it was the beginning of spring and it was set to be a beautiful day. Glenn Miller, 'Moonlight Serenade' was playing on Alexa, and Dad chose this peaceful, perfect moment to take his last couple of breaths. Then he didn't breathe any more. The War Horse had passed. Dad was 4 days off his 87th birthday.

When we were ready, I phoned Florence and in half an hour they were with us. They washed Dad, put on a clean t-shirt, brushed his hair, and put on his favourite aftershave. Debbie (Dad's

favourite) then went into the garden and picked Spring flowers for him. It was just beautiful how they spoke to him throughout, getting him ready for his journey.

I can't explain how absolutely wonderful the nurses were during this, the most difficult of times. And all of this happened in Lockdown. They were serenely patient and supportive and looked after Dad (and the rest of us), with great kindness and dignity. Because of their dedication to the job that they do, Dad had a 'good death' at home, just how he wanted.

Liza Brissenden Hemstock

In memory of Tony Hemstock

For more information or support visit www.fnhospice.org.uk

Letter from Lee Buckingham

A few weeks ago I was invited to make a presentation of iPads which had been funded by Buckinghamshire freemasons to local hospice, Florence Nightingale.

At the start of the lockdown in March, Florence Nightingale Hospice was put in a terrible position. Patients within the hospice were unable to have visitors. A time when their family and friends longed to be with them in the final days of life to offer support and comfort and also to say those hard goodbyes.

The Aylesbury area lodges have always been close supporters of the charity and Buckinghamshire Province a true advocate of all they do.

Graham Dearing put a call out to some of the local lodges to see if we could assist in raising money to enable

a fast procurement of iPads to enable each patient to be allocated one for the term of their stay to have contact 24/7 with friends and family.

Of course, the lodges contacted stepped up to the plate and monies were raised quickly to enable 8 iPads and cases to be obtained.

Haddenham Lodge 8944

Haddenham Mark 1629

Vale Lodge 6632

Ferdinand de Rothschild Lodge 2420

Ferdinand de Rothschild Chapter 2420

Entente Cordiale Lodge 9490

The hospice has waited for months to be able to invite a representative along to make the presentation and was only able to do so recently when restrictions lifted and they had changed their own guidelines for non relatives / friends to attend.

I arrived at the hospice, greeted by the Fund Raising Manager Lee Lloyd, sanitised and quickly ushered out into the garden. They are so very

thankful for this initiative, assisted with so quickly, and to Buckinghamshire Freemasons for the continued support given to them.



Left to right: Tracey Batt, WBro Lee Buckingham and Heather Wilkinson

Here I am presenting 2 of the iPads (which had been quarantined purposely for this) to two of the staff:

Tracey Batt - Day Hospice Team Leader
Heather Wilkinson – Healthcare Assistant

Kind and fraternal regards

WBro Lee Buckingham ProvSGD

Charity Steward - Haddenham Lodge 8944



200 Teddy Bears delivered to Milton Keynes University Hospital Children's A&E department in time for Christmas

Many children end up in Hospital over the Christmas holiday and these bears do offer some comfort to our sick kids. Claire Norton, sister in charge, along with her staff do a fantastic job and were on duty right through the Christmas period.

"We would like to thank every Lodge, and indeed every Freemason who has contributed to this wonderful cause, which makes so much difference to our poorly children throughout Bucks. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas"...

Lou Amey, Andrew Mais, and Tony Robinson.



For more information visit teddiesforlovingcare.org.uk

Prebendal Close Gets a Well Deserved Morale Boost

After a troubling few weeks that included positive Covid tests and a number of residents feeling unwell for other reasons, the Chairman and committee of Prebendal Close sent out an appeal to the Buckinghamshire Freemasons for some assistance for the residents who were now in isolation. As usual, there was an excellent response, with the members pledging to provide meals and staples for the residents in their time of need.

The team have been supplying everyday essentials such as bread, milk, sugar, tea, fruit and vegetables and prepared them in a Covid safe manner for distribution.

Shirley Hanlon and her team have been baking pies and even our own Assistant Provincial Grand Master, Tony Robinson, has been donning his (rather fetching) apron and making sponges too!

The residents were also treated to a Friday night fish and chip supper. The support of the Freemasons has been an enormous boost to the morale of the residents and staff. Further testing is scheduled to ensure that any Covid cases are managed in accordance with Public Health England guidance.

Our thoughts go out to the residents and families of those affected by the pandemic.



Winter Night Shelter MK



Left to right: APGM Phil Blacklaw, with Sam Hall - Fundraising Manager and Sara Millington - Communication Manager.

A huge THANK YOU to Buckinghamshire Freemasons from the Winter Night Shelter for helping us with Covid-secure preparations and clothing.

The Winter Night Shelter MK provides supervised overnight accommodation and meals to homeless and vulnerable people who would otherwise be rough sleeping during the coldest months of the year. We work in partnership with many churches and community centres across the city who provide their facilities as an overnight venue, although due to Covid-19 our overnight provision will look different this year as we seek to ensure everything is safe for our guests, staff and volunteers.

Between the beginning of lockdown and the end of July we supported 140 adults, 30 children and 3 babies (plus 12 dogs and 20 cats!) with emergency food relief in the form of over 850 food

parcels and 8,500 re-heatable meals, in addition to welfare support. The team are now focused on planning for a busy winter ahead.

Last month we were delighted to receive the gift of four contactless thermometers which were presented to us by Martin Lucas, Worshipful Master of Cymbeline Lodge, and a very large donation of clothing which was presented to us by Assistant Provincial Grand Master Phil Blacklaw. The contactless thermometers enabled us to ensure we could be a Covid-secure environment to reopen the weekly Community Club which is a lifeline for many people each week. The clothing will keep us well stocked for some time to come, not only with clothes to keep our guests warm but with items like suits and shirts which will help someone feel prepared for a job interview.

Jon was one of the 81 guests accommodated by the WNSMK last

winter, which gave him a safe place to stay. With a safe bed, nutritious meals and the support of our welfare team he found the confidence to start thinking about the future. He spent lockdown staying with a friend and continued to receive support from the Welfare Manager.

The Night Shelter has provided him with an opportunity for a permanent job and a bike to get to work. Once he has a few weeks of pay behind him Jon hopes to move out into his own accommodation. He says *"I don't think I would still be here without the help the Winter Night Shelter has given me. When I'm back on my feet I want to come back to volunteer and show others in my position that there is a way forward."*

Thank you again to everyone for their support.

**Sam Hall - Fundraising Manager,
Winter Night Shelter MK**

For more information about the work of the Winter Night Shelter MK visit www.winternightsheltermk.com or email fundraising@winternightsheltermk.com

Marlow Masonic Centre: Helping SHOC (Slough Homeless Our Concern) and Carers in Buckinghamshire

In September 2020 the Deputy Provincial Grand Master contacted W Bro Eddie Irwin (of Marlow Masonic Centre) to see if he would be able to assist with a project on behalf of the Province to provide meals for Slough Homeless Our Concern (SHOC) and Carers in Buckinghamshire.

On 11th October, the evening before this was due to begin, Eddie's sous-chef, Josh, broke his hand and would therefore be unable to assist. A call was put out for assistance and in stepped W Bro Gary Fraser (Iver Lodge) and his wonderful partner Julie Robins who both very kindly said 'we'll see you in the morning' and have given up every single morning since then to help.



On Christmas Day, the team were in the kitchens from 5am and delivered a full Christmas meal with all the trimmings, as well as meals for Bank Holiday Monday.

The team prepared 65 freshly cooked meals daily, using fresh, locally sourced produce. With the funding provided, they will continue to make meals until the end of January 2021, by which time over 4,800 meals will have been cooked including dietary requirements such as vegetarian, gluten and lactose free.

A special thank you to W Bro Martin Wing and Heatherden Lodge for their massive support collecting the meals from Marlow and delivering to SHOC.

In addition, Eddie and his team were contacted by W Bro Steve Jones (Stokenchurch Lodge) to see what they could do for the One Can Trust. With the help of W Bro Tony Martin and the Brethren of Marlow Masonic Centre, they raised over £3,000 towards this.

With Eddie's contacts within the catering industry he secured massively discounted produce turning this £3,000 into £6,000. This has been a huge help to the One Can Trust who advise we have helped in excess of 4,000 families over the 3-month period. There is one more delivery left to make in January.

Thanks go to Eddie and all those who have supported him in this fantastic endeavour.

Thank you to Marlow Centre

The support and help from yourselves has been immensely helpful and greatly appreciated by all. Below is a quote from Lin and Tony, who are the two individuals who started Recycle Teenagers and still run it:

"On behalf of the Recycled Teenagers committee and members, we would like to say a great BIG THANK YOU to all that

are involved with the dinner deliveries, the company that have donated them and all the fantastic team going round in all-weathers to deliver them. We get so much great feedback from our members by phone, text and Facebook. There is so much appreciation from them all, the meals are really tasty, but it is also about someone knocking on their door, having a chat, knowing someone is thinking and caring about them makes such a difference to their lives and makes their day a bit brighter. Nearly all our members have now

been in isolation since March, so people delivering food to their door means a great deal to them. So please pass on our Thanks and Appreciation to everyone involved."

Tony/Lin Smeaton

Kind Regards

Aqeel Akram

**Community Development Officer
(North)Community Development Team
Adults and Communities**

Supporting Homeless Charities

This year the Kimble Masonic Club as it is known within the local community, or Cymbeline Lodge & Entente Cordiale Lodge as we all know them, decided for their Freemasonry in the Community project to support the homeless.

This came about as the Master of Cymbeline, W Bro Martin Lucas, was the first Brother in the Province to get the Superhero award for the work he has been doing for the last 18+ years supporting the homeless in London with his local church.

He approached W Bro Eugene Matthias, Freemasonry in the Community Coordinator for the Centre, and the project was agreed and planned. They found a homeless centre in Milton Keynes and approached them to see

how they could support them; it was clothing they needed desperately. A drop off day was agreed with Brethren dropping off spare clothes and with COVID restrictions in place. The clothing was stored for three days to make sure nothing was contaminated. W Bro Phil Blacklaw gave his support to the project and agreed to attend when we handed over the clothing. The centre was so amazed with the quantity of clothing they received on the day.

When talking to the charity it became apparent that they could not open in September as they normally would have done because they did not have thermometers to test everyone who would be coming to them for help. So, Martin went back to Cymbeline Lodge, raised the money and the following



Sara Millington and W Bro Martin Lucas

week presented the charity with four thermometers.

This project has proved so successful that we are looking for other projects to support the homeless. If you know of any homeless centres or charities please contact W Bro Eugene Matthias – info@themagicclub.com or 07730 111111

Crisis at Christmas

Beaconsfield Freemason Denver Lynn has been raising funds for the homelessness charity 'Crisis UK' for the 3rd year running. This year he chose to dye his hair and has shared with us his fabulous new hair-do.



W. Bro. Denver is currently Junior Warden in Bulwer Lodge of Cairo 1068, and Joshua in Bowen Chapter 948. Denver said: "Given the current pandemic, it is important now more

than ever to help those in need and so I decided to fundraise for Crisis UK; a national charity for the homeless. I like to do something charitable every year and wasn't going to let Covid-19 stop me! I thought it might be fun to change the colour of my hair, something I could do safely from home whilst observing Covid-19 restrictions. I asked all my sponsors to make suggestions on the hair colour, and so I was at their mercy. My daughter Natasha, 14, was tasked with making the final colour choice. While incredibly embarrassing to be sporting a brightly coloured hair do, it was all worth it to raise nearly £1350.00 for the charity".

Denver contacted Sam at Crisis UK to ask how donations and funding is used. She noted that during the pandemic people have come together as a society to achieve extraordinary things for people facing homelessness. When lockdown is lifted and restrictions begin to ease, Crisis UK is keen for this progress to continue; homelessness should not be an accepted part of life.



Your support contributes to the wonderful work being carried out by this worthwhile charity:

- Helping people leaving temporary accommodation to find a permanent home
- Providing advice and practical help to people newly facing homelessness
- Providing the support people need to keep their homes – with mental health, wellbeing, work and benefits
- Calling for governments to commit to ensuring everyone has a safe and settled home
- Supporting local organisations to provide permanent housing through a grants scheme

If you would like to sponsor Denver, just visit the JustGiving website and search for "Denver Lynn".



Pamper Packs delivered by Bucks Masons

Pamper Packs delivered by Bucks Masons for Bucks Carers (some young, some old) to bring a little bit of Christmas joy to their lives.

A whole litany of volunteers descended on the Aylesbury Masonic Centre in Ripon Street to do their bit for Freemasonry in the Community on Tuesday 8th December. Sometimes giving your time is more precious than money. Many turned up in their workwear as they were taking a little bit of time out of their day and going straight back to work afterwards.

On receipt of these Pamper Packs there were some people in tears. One Lady said she had heard of the Masons but thought we just looked after ourselves. I believe we definitely won a few hearts and minds today. Many just wanted to chat as we were the only ones that had knocked on their doors for weeks, reinforcing the fact that mental health issues, long after Covid 19 has been eradicated by the vaccine, is the next big thing that will be affecting people

from all walks of life. You probably won't see it on the news and we will have to keep an extra special eye on our Brethren and our communities.

The volunteers were, Bill Smithson, Andrew Ludlow, Martin Fifield, Paul and Tracey Gausden, Keith and Karen Noonan, John Wells, John Morris, Paul Brissenden-Hemstock, Ameet Doshi, Stephen Tunney, Paul Lear, Steve Acton, Steve Barker, Neil Howard and Tim Gerrard.

This was one of many tasks delegated by Phil Blacklaw who spends a great deal of his time in collecting the Pamper Packs from the furthest point north in our Province at Olney and delivering down south to Aylesbury. He can only load 40 packs in his car and there were 200 to distribute.

It is nice to see all the usual people turning up for this task but it would also be great for a new generation of volunteers to step forward and raise their hands.

Please give this your most serious contemplation whilst always remembering the main tenets of Freemasonry - Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. This task met all expectations.





School Uniforms for Young Carers

After donating £3,000 to Carers Bucks to assist with the purchase of uniforms for children returning to school in September, Phil Blacklaw received this letter of thanks on behalf of the Province

Dear Phil, I am contacting you to give an update on your kind donation for school uniforms. I am sure that you won't be surprised to know that we've spent it! Support was offered across Bucks and Milton Keynes. An amazing 54 young people have benefited from

your generosity - 36 young carers and 18 young adult carers.

Our purchases included - school uniform, blazers, shoes, stationary, school coats (7 for one family!), trainers, specialist dance shoes, books, backpacks, college bags and finally, overalls, disposable gloves and safety specs for a female YAC starting a car mechanic course. It has created an amazing impact on families and young people and we cannot thank you enough!!

Please see below a few of the comments received after your generous donation towards school uniform support:

"I must apologise, I received the school uniform and completely forgot to email you to say a huge thank you, I'm so sorry, I'm so tired at the minute, just thinking about things is as far as I get with anything!"

"Thank you so much for all your help and caring. It really is so amazing and means the world."

"We really are incredibly grateful for this amazing gesture of kindness. It is fantastic & means so very, very much. We really can't thank you enough for this."

"After the amazing help & offer from yourselves and the Masons [she] has fallen in love with this coat. She will look so lovely and smart for school and we honestly cannot find the words to thank you all enough. It has taken away a massive worry & cost from us."

"We really are incredibly grateful for this amazing gesture of kindness. It is fantastic & means so very, very much. We really can't thank you enough for this."

"Thank you so, so much for the offer of school shoes.. It is a massive worry off our shoulders, trying to buy a new uniform is so expensive. Thank you so much."

"I hope everyone is well. I just wanted to let you know that the shoes arrived last Saturday. They are absolutely amazing thank you so much. I am sorry I didn't let you know earlier I have been very poorly and had a visit to hospital again. Please take care and keep safe."

"Please can you thank Masons for their amazing help and caring. It means everything and more to my amazing children and me. We are very grateful and excited to send the children to a new term looking incredibly smart."

Thank you from the team, it was fantastic to be able to offer something that made a real difference.

Kindest regards

Sally

Sally Mansi

**Service Manager
Young Carers Bucks & MK**

One Can Trust

In October 2020, W Bro Tony Martin, ProvSGW, Deputy Chair of Marlow Masonic Centre Committee, and the Marlow Masonic Centre caterer, W Bro Eddie Irwin, held discussions on ways that the Marlow Centre could help feed children in need during school holidays, and the many pitfalls involved in doing this.

W Bro Steve Jones of Stokenchurch Lodge suggested that the Wycombe and Marlow food bank, the "One Can Trust", would be a very good idea as it feeds families in need of help all the year round, including the School closure times. It was therefore decided that financial donations would be sought from Lodges, Chapters and individual members who currently meet at Marlow. Tony Martin put out a plea to all Secretaries and Scribe E's, and to other individual Masons for suitable donations and the funds started rolling in.

The Trust were contacted, and during discussions on any particularly urgent requirements, we were advised that they supply food and other requisites to 3000 families every month.

We elected to supply as much pasta, canned meat, tinned pies, tinned potatoes and canned vegetables as we could to provide the ingredients of a hot meal to as many people as possible. Eddie Irwin also offered help in the future by obtaining foodstuffs for the Trust at wholesale prices wherever possible. The attached photograph shows Brethren delivering one of the many substantial donations to the trust.

In all, over £3000 was raised resulting in multiple donations of tinned and packet foodstuffs during the run up to the Xmas period, for which the Trust were extremely grateful.



Report on the development of a new liaison between Slough Centre and Slough and Eton CofE Business and Enterprise College



Headteacher Peter Collins and Tony Robinson in front of Slough and Eton CofE Business and Enterprise College

As a Province, we are always striving to develop stronger links with the local community and this Covid 19 pandemic has brought us to focus on how our larger centres can engage. Many of you will already know that Phil Blacklaw APGM has been working with Bletchley Centre and they already have strong links with a local school and the centre is used for other activities such as blood donations. Likewise, the Aylesbury Centre and the Marlow Centre have been used for food distribution and producing meals.

However, towards the end of the very first national lockdown another opportunity arose in the south of the



Chris Fisher, Tony Robinson, Gary Mason, Gary Brodie, and Peter Collins

Province at the Slough Centre. At this time pupils were about to return to school and the 'social distancing' required was creating accommodation



Headteacher Peter Collins and Tony Robinson at the newly installed gate with the school fields

problems. Tony Robinson APGM telephoned a number of schools that were very close to some of our Centres. Whilst most schools were coping, Chris Fisher, Business Manager, of the Slough and Eton CofE Business and Enterprise College, just along Ragstone Road from our Slough Centre, expressed a serious interest. A meeting was arranged between Chris Fisher, Gary Mason, Chairman, Slough Centre, and Gary

Brodie, APGM, at the Slough Centre. Following a guided tour of the Centre, it became clear that a liaison between the Centre and the College was possible. Initially the development was around the use of the premises but whilst exploring the carpark, Chris noticed that the school playing field backed onto the carpark and immediately the use of the car park for staff parking was agreed and a gate was installed so that staff could gain access directly to the school ground.

There was a secondary bonus in that the main entrance to the college, which is quite narrow, was often congested at peak times when the staff and pupils are going into or leaving the college. This new access greatly reduces the congestion. The college has agreed to the Centre having full use for the playing fields for outdoor events. A large flat field, large carpark and the Centre facilities, a great combination!

The story doesn't finish here as Gary Mason was invited to become a Governor of the college, which he eagerly accepted. Well done Gary!



Above: New Laptops in use at Slough CofE College. Below: The new laptops bought with the funding from the Masonic Charitable Foundation as a result of the joint application between the Buckinghamshire and Berkshire Freemasons.

Laptop computers for local school

Following up on the newly formed liaison with Slough and Eton CofE College, Tony Robinson, one of our Assistant Provincial Grand Masters, had further discussions with Chris Fisher and it became clear that there was a need for some additional laptops in the College.

Pupils were receiving their education by way of on-line learning and most of the college's existing laptops had

been loaned out to the students and replacement laptops were needed in the classroom. A joint application was made by Buckinghamshire and Berkshire Freemasons to the Masonic Charitable Foundation Covid grant scheme for funding. The application was successful and a grant of £13,000 was awarded. Twenty four new laptops have been delivered and are in full use within the college. Mr Peter Collins, the Headteacher, thanked Berkshire and Buckinghamshire Freemasons for the generous donation and is looking forward to a long liaison with the Slough Centre.



Neeld Lodge No 3720 give the Marlow Opportunity Playgroup £1,000 to help it through the Covid-19 Crisis



These are the smiling faces of the wonderful staff of the Marlow Opportunity Playgroup (MOP). The playgroup provides pre-school 1-2-1 care and support for children in the Marlow area with acute and severe special needs.

The Playgroup operates out of the Scout Hall in Wooburn Green and, like many playgroups, MOP has suffered a significant fall in income due to Covid-19. This year costs have increased due to the extra care and attention that is now needed to keep the centre open and exceptionally clean.

The Group's leader, Jane Gibbons, said that they had taken all possible steps to reduce costs but it was so difficult to balance income and expenditure, particularly when many of the main fund raising events have had to be cancelled. "We need to raise some £90,000 each year to keep the centre going and this year, thanks to the Covid-19 pandemic, it has been especially difficult,"

Jane said that Neeld Lodge's Charity Steward, Paul Munro, had recognised that MOP needed extra help and, despite it being difficult for the Lodge to carry out any fund-raising initiatives this year, she understands that the Lodge members had rallied round, and as a result, Paul had said he was delighted to be able to send MOP an additional £1,000.

Jane Gibbons added that we regularly get a Christmas donation from Neeld Lodge and had just recently received £300 from them and then they came up with an extra £1,000, which was fantastic. We cannot thank them enough.

BACK WITH A BANG.

Buckinghamshire Masonic activities came to a very sudden and abrupt halt when the coronavirus pandemic hit the UK shutting down the golf and clay shooting as well as other organised events at the drop of a hat.

Covid-19 certainly put a kink in charity fundraising events in Bucks at that time, but now we are back and with a bang. The clay shooting section is up and running again. First of all we had two five shooter teams entered in a Hertfordshire Province Charity shoot on 25th August 2020 in which the "A" team came third overall, missing out by two clays for second place with a score of 452/500.

The "B" team shot well but only managed a score of 361/500. Bucks did have a shooter in the prizes when Phil Goddard shot a very good 96/100 putting him in second place. Well done to both teams and congratulations to Phil.

All the members that shot on the day enjoyed the event and are looking forward to more of the same, so if you would like to join us you would be most welcome.

For more information, on the Buckinghamshire Masonic Clay Pigeon Shooting Association, contact Roger Gills on rjg@bodger51.plus.com



Team "A" left to right: Micheal Blackwell, John Hopcroft, Phil Goddard, Dave Hollis, Lou Amey.



Team "B" left to right: Wyn Beckett, Roger Gills, Neil Odedra, Dave Woodham, Steve Cheshire.

29 September 2020

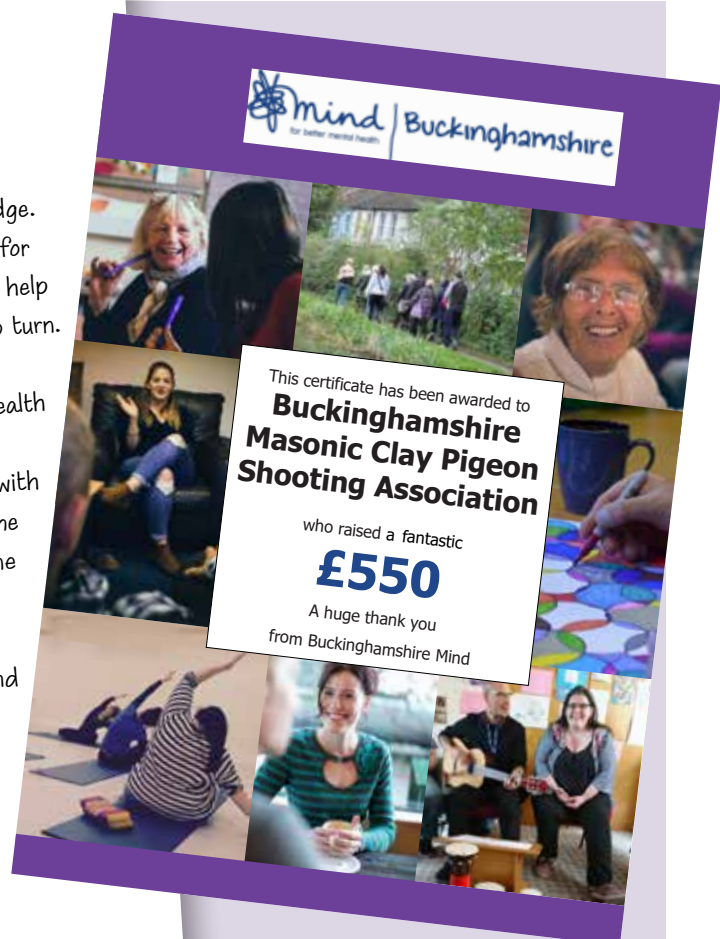
Dear Buckinghamshire Masonic Clay Pigeon Shooting Association,

I am writing to thank you all for the generous donation of £550.00 to Buckinghamshire Mind raised from your recent shoot at Tittershall Lodge. Buckinghamshire Mind is extremely grateful for groups such as yours, for your help raising vital funds for our services. Every penny donated will help to make sure people with a mental health problem have somewhere to turn.

Buckinghamshire Mind supports and represents people with mental health problems living across the county. We bring focused mental health expertise to our partnerships and the services we provide. We work with people in their communities. We believe in supporting people to live the lives they want, as fully as possible. We will not give up until everyone in the county with a mental health problem gets both support and respect. This work relies on donations and community members like you, whose generosity helps to make sure that Buckinghamshire Mind can be there for everyone who needs us. Your contribution really will make a difference to people's lives.

Kind regards,
Kari Channell

Fundraising and Communications Officer
Buckinghamshire Mind



TEAM "A"

The day started wet and windy which made some of the higher targets tricky, as the wind was moving them about quite a lot.

As the shoot went on the rain stopped but the wind did not ease until later in the day after both teams had finished shooting the rounds but that's the luck of the draw.

The shoot was also extended from one to two days as there were over 120 shooters taking part, (originally it was a one day event with 60 shooters).

Hertfordshire managed to raise £465.00 for Noah's Ark Children's Hospice (Barnet).

TEAM "B"

B.M.C.P.S.A. would like to welcome both Neil Odedra and Steve Cheshire to shooting with us and look forward to seeing you both at up and coming charity shoots,

*COME ON BUCKS
THERE MUST BE MORE
SHOOTERS OUT THERE
THAT COULD JOIN US
AND HELP RAISE MORE
CHARITY MONEY.*

B.M.C.P.S.A. had four charity shoots booked by the end 2019 for 2020 season, the first at Oxford Gun Co. at the end of

March, the second at Drayton Parslow (Lou's S.G.) in July. Both had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 along with the Masonic National Championships at Preston, the Home Counties Championships in Sussex and the second Masonic International in Scotland.

When the lockdown was eased we contacted Tittershall lodge, where we had booked our third shoot, to see if we could have the shoot safely on the date we had booked and Mike Redman, the manager, assured us there would be no problem.

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THAMES VALLEY CHALLENGE TROPHY

On 5th September 2020, 37 shooters from Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire turned up to shoot (although 42 had booked) and there were 3 non-shooters which included A.P.G.M. Tony Robinson. This shoot was for the THAMES VALLEY CHALLENGE TROPHY for teams from BERKS, BUCKS and OXFORD, (to be shot for once a year and hosted by the previous winning team).

On a gloriously sunny Saturday morning, with the course set and all the shooters raring to go, the first two squads moved off to the starting stands and at 10.00 am the guns broke the silence. Bucks Masonic C.P.S.A. first shoot of the year was underway. 36 guns completed the testing course with scores from 89 to 25 and everyone enjoyed themselves, even the lower scorers.



Winners Lou Amey, Dave Hollis and Phil Goddard. Roger Gills presents the trophy.

The team event (THAMES VALLEY CHALLENGE) was won by BUCKINGHAMSHIRE with a score 220/300. OXFORDSHIRE came second with 205/300 and BERKSHIRE third with 170.

Winning team:- Bucks

- Lou Amey 75
- Dave Hollis 74
- Phil Goddard 71

Second place:- Oxford

- John Hopcroft 77
- Phil McDonald 65
- Paul Baker 63

Third:- Berks

- Bob Stratford 72
- Jim Dance 66
- Malcolm West 32

The Masonic High Gun prize was won by Chris Lynch from Herts the only Mason to get a score in to the 80's.

Masonic High Gun:-

- Chris Lynch 86/100 Herts.

Masonic Run/up:-

- John Hopcroft 77/100 Oxford.

The Non-Masonic High Gun was won by Michael Blackwell with the highest score of the day with a very good 89. Well done.

Non-Masonic High Gun:-

- Michael Blackwell 89/100

Non-Masonic Run/up:-

- David Swallow 78/100
(on count back)

There were only three lady shooters and the Ladies High Gun went to Emily Damment with Lea McDonald second and Ully Kohl Third.

Ladies High Gun:-

- Emily Damment 45/100

Ladies Run/up:-

- Lea McDonald 41/100

Third:-

- Ully Kohl 32/100



Ladies High Gun Winner, Emily Damment.



Dave Hollis scores.

The day was finished off with everybody enjoying Gammon, Egg and Chips and a drink from the bar, then the raffle and prize giving by A.P.G.M. Tony Robinson. Roger Gills then presented Phil Goddard with his trophy from the Hertford Shoot, and Phil McDonald (Oxford) presented Fatme Redzhepova with a prize to mark her first attempt at shooting.



Lou Amey in action

Dave Hollis thanked Mike Redman and his team for a good well organised shoot and the caterers for the excellent meal and for looking after us so well. He then announced the shoot had raised over £700.00 for Buckinghamshire Mind. Well done everyone.

By 3.00 pm everybody had left, heading for home.



The Season gets underway...at last!

The Buckinghamshire Golf Society eventually managed to play one of their annual golf tournaments on the 24th September, at Aylesbury Vale Golf Club.

Due to the COVID pandemic it was the only tournament day that they had been able to arrange this year.

Even though the golf club house and course were subject to the "group of 6" and social distancing, the day went well, and the weather was kind to all the golfers. Seventeen golfers played for the trophies, but eventually The Bucks Open Trophy, and the Scratch trophy were both won by Brent Levitt, with

a handsome score of 43 points. Nigel Gough won the final of the "annual knockout" beating Paul Smith at an extra hole following a tied match.

All who attended had a good day, and we all look forward to resuming properly next April, when we will compete for the Winter Cup.



Anyone wishing to join the Bucks Masonic Golf Society should contact Tony Martin, Society Secretary.
ama15346@aol.com

Buckinghamshire Masonic Golf Society

The Buckinghamshire Masonic Golfing Society is open to all Buckinghamshire Masons.

The Society hold eight Golf days per year at various venues within Buckinghamshire, both North and South of the County. These are club tournaments for various trophies, plus occasional matches against other provinces.

The Annual cost to join the Society is currently **£14.00 per annum**, and the cost for the days golf, with coffee + snack before golf, and a meal after the match, is always kept **below £55.00**

Members are required to wear a jacket and the Society tie at the bar and dinner afterwards, unless it is a rolling lunch. The etiquette of golf must always be observed.

The Fixtures for 2021 are not yet available.

The members are not all fantastic golfers, we are of varying standards, but we all enjoy a day out with good company and a game of golf, so please do come along and join us. If you do wish to join this Happy Band of golfers then contact the society Secretary for a joining form.

Secretary: Tony Martin Tel: 07702347550 email: ama15346@aol.com



Charity Update from Provincial Grand Charity Steward.

There are four areas relating to Charity that we should all be aware of, General Charity, the 2021 Festival, Covid Initiatives and MCF related grants.

General Charity

We are all fully aware of the restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 virus that all Lodges are working under. Since the first lockdown in March 2020 there have been very few actual Lodge meetings taking place. This has had an impact on the members not contributing to alms collections, raffles and organising charitable events. In addition, no Ladies Festivals have taken place and the main income has been coming from Regular Payment Plans that members had in place to their Lodge Relief Chests. I guess this is actually stating the obvious as we are all experiencing the restrictions I have outlined. This does not mean that Lodges have not engaged with charity and I am aware of many charitable deeds and virtual online fund raising which is a credit to our members.

2021 Festival

The donations into the Festival are continuing and the Festival total forecast including gift aid reflects the great passion members of this Province have shown. It will come as no surprise that our Festival total is way behind what was expected due to the Covid -19 restrictions. Lodges are still managing to transfer funds from their Lodge Relief Chests even during lockdown, and this is enabling the total to slowly increase together with the RRP's that are current. The Festival Finale was arranged for Saturday 26th June 2021, but this will now take place at our Provincial meeting on Monday 25th October 2021 in Grand Lodge.

Please save this date in your diaries as this is an ideal opportunity for wives/partners to be present with you at our

Provincial meeting and celebrate the Festival Finale in the Connaught Rooms over dinner. Further details will be circulated nearer the time.

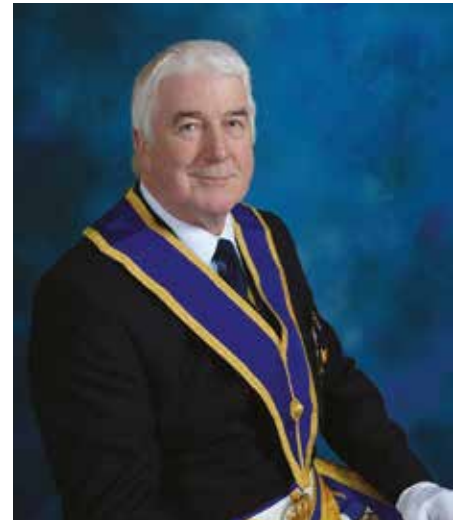
Many Lodges have already been making regular donations from their Lodge Relief Chests into the Festival and I am very grateful. My plea to all Lodges is to consider making further donations from the funds being held in Lodge Relief Chests to help make up the shortfall due to the Covid - 19 restrictions. The Bucks Masonic Benevolent Fund is available to assist those members and their families in need and the Lodge Relief Chest can safely be used at this time to support the Festival appeal. Once the Festival ends, Lodges will have the next six years to build up their funds in their Lodge Relief Chest as the next Festival will not start until 2027.

Covid Initiatives

Our members have risen to the challenge of providing funding and assistance to many worthy causes and our efforts have been publicised through the various media platforms. Thousands of meals have been prepared and delivered to those in need, laptops and a vast amount of PPE has also been provided throughout the Province. These efforts have mainly been led by the Freemasonry in the Community Team and headed by members of the Provincial Executive.

UGLE created a Covid Relief Chest and the MCF match funded donations from Lodges up to a total of £1 million and this had a positive effect on many Lodges who took advantage of the donations also being included in their Lodge Festival totals. Winners all round.

As a result of this Relief Chest the



MCF has commenced the Freemasons' Community Fund with the overall aim of contributing to the national rehabilitation phase of the COVID-19 pandemic by providing charitable support to those disadvantaged as a result of COVID-19 and, in so doing, raise awareness of the core values of Freemasonry; friendship, integrity, charity and respect.

Phase one was to identify Homeless/Rough Sleepers Charities that would benefit from funding. In Buckinghamshire there are about ten such charities and these applications are being considered. The grants will be from £10k - £100k maximum.

MCF Grants to Buckinghamshire

The MCF has continued to provide funding for many Charities in Buckinghamshire. This current Financial Year from 1st April 2020 to 5th October 2020 there has been 28 Grants with a total amount of £63,338. Since 1st April 2016 we have received 296 Grants amounting to £555,549.

My thanks go to everyone for the charitable contributions, both financial and by actions. Plans are in place to hold another Big Festival Fortnight in 2021 for you all to look forward to, subject to the restrictions being lifted of course. Stay safe and keep well.

Mike Clanfield

Provincial Grand Charity Steward.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE MASONIC BENEVOLENT FUND



had no further requirement for the equipment, if we could find another mason who would use it. We jumped at the chance and have built up a small stock held ready for use. We have also boosted our stores by taking in scooter donations and charitable gifts of equipment. Our skilled fitter, a qualified electrician, keeps our stairlifts moving. He will respond and fit a fully reconditioned lift to an ordinary stairwell very punctually. If the stairs are unsuitable, we are happy to help with an application for a grant from the MCF.

We keep our wheelchairs and electric scooters in a container at the Slough Masonic Centre. We have two different types of wheelchair, the self-propelled with large wheels and the smaller wheel, pedestrian-controlled chairs. The scooters are those which fit in a car boot. We service the scooters before lending. The batteries are fully charged, and the tyres are sound. We do simple on the spot training and ask that each is insured, not only for replacement but also in case there is an accident. We also arrange annual servicing by a mobile engineer to make sure the scooter is safe and reliable. As these items are loans, we hope that we get them back when no longer useful. We have also been supplying rise and recline chairs as grants for those who find sitting in an ordinary chair impossible. We commission a firm of specialist providers who will visit, measure, and supply a chair tailored to individual needs.

If you know someone who needs a helping hand talk to your Lodge Almoner - he will contact the Provincial Almoner and between us all we can experience not only the satisfaction of a good job well done, but also share the look of relief and pleasure when someone whose life was becoming restricted suddenly finds the freedom to go upstairs, accompany their family on a walk or keep their mind fit and active in comfort.

The Provincial Grand Master, Lord Addington, at the Provincial Grand Lodge Meeting in October 1902, set up a fund to aid distressed Buckinghamshire Freemasons and their families.

The fund, now called the Buckinghamshire Masonic Benevolent Fund (BMBF) is the envy of many Provinces, not only because it was the first such Fund but also because we can promptly assist those Brethren and their dependants when they need help desperately, either by outright grants or no interest loans. The fund is exclusively for Buckinghamshire Freemasons and their families. We can alleviate distress within twenty-four hours, giving time for the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) to assess the longer-term needs of each case before offering its support. The secretary to the Fund is the

Provincial Grand Almoner. The Deputy Provincial Grand Master is the Chairman of the Fund Trustees and he is unstinting with support and guidance.

Since its foundation we have not changed the fund's aims. Originally Buckinghamshire Lodges and Chapters gave donations to the fund but we no longer have to rely on these as we have built up investments over the years from the donations by the many individual Buckinghamshire Freemasons who have made contributions. By carefully investing the money we have ensured a good income so that we can supply grants and loans without eating into our capital. Brethren recently affected financially by the Coronavirus pandemic have received help from our grants with little effect on our income so far.

Over the past few years we found ourselves giving loans and grants, not only in cases of financial distress, but for items such as stairlifts and mobility aids; often for expensive items such as mobility scooters. Many kind and thoughtful people asked us, when they

Marketing Update January 2021

I think we would all agree that 2020 has been one of the most challenging years for everyone, and for all of those involved with Freemasonry 2021 continues to be so. However, the Province of Buckinghamshire has continued to forge a path actively promoting Freemasonry through our Marketing strategy.

Throughout lockdown the marketing team has been placing adverts across various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to encourage new enquiries for membership. Using various types of campaigns such as “**Think Again**”, “**Don’t Wait To Be Asked**” and “**Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things**” we have managed to generate some 600+ active enquiries for membership.

This, along with the outstanding work of our Membership Officer Simon Williams, means that we now have approximately 120 new members ready and waiting to join when we can resume full masonic activities. In addition, we have been promoting many outstanding initiatives that



Buckinghamshire Freemasons have been involved with during the pandemic such as the supply of free meals to local causes, much needed PPE to local frontline workers, and local schools support for home learning. These stories have been placed strategically in front of a far wider and general audience rather than just our own provincial following on social media. The impact of this has been very popular overall and has helped many people to understand all the good that Freemasons do throughout the community.

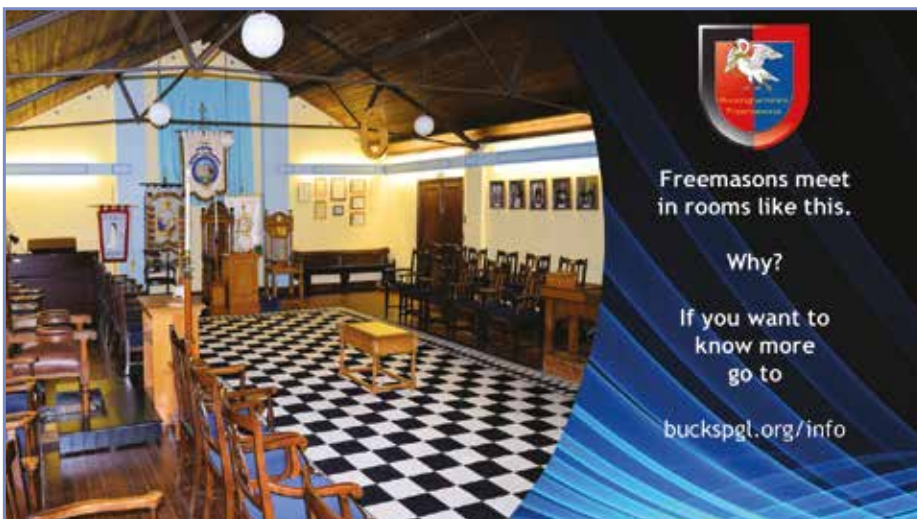
The above successes have come as a result of a huge amount of effort across the Communications team, led by Matt Perkins, and the Marketing and Membership teams and I would personally like to thank all those

involved for the time they have put in to make it the success it has been. This success has not gone unnoticed as we have been asked to make several presentations about our strategy to other provinces to assist their drive for new membership. In addition, last autumn we were requested to present to the Membership Committee at Grand Lodge. Such was the interest in our results that we understand it will form a substantial part of the UGLE national marketing strategy going forward.

Thanks to the hard work of all involved, and the strong leadership and encouragement from our Provincial Executive over the past year, we have been able to make huge strides forward in encouraging new membership across the Province.....all throughout a period when we could not even meet.

We will continue to adapt and try new ideas going forward to keep driving new enquiries and membership to Lodges throughout the Province.

We are always on the lookout for people with marketing and social media experience, so if you would like to get involved please contact me at philiwitney@gmail.com for a chat.



Philip Witney
Provincial Marketing Officer



Membership Update

They say you should try and look at the positives in any situation and as Buckinghamshire Freemasons we have a lot of positives to be proud of in 2020. None more so than the support we have given across the Province to those most in need.

The only reason we achieve the great work we do is because of all of our members in Buckinghamshire and luckily one of the positives in 2020 is that we have taken a big step towards reversing the decline in membership and getting our numbers back over the 3000 members level.

As a Province we now have over 200 candidates waiting to join lodges with over 120+ of these being passed over to lodges since March 2020 from the membership team efforts alone.

There is no denying that it has taken a lot of hard work but this has been achieved by lots of people pulling together. The Marketing Team, Membership Team, Provincial Communications Team, Mentoring Team, NECC and the Orators Team have all been working as one with the goal of increasing and retaining membership.

This joined up approach, along with the results we have achieved, caught the attention of UGLE, with David Staples The Grand Secretary asking to attend one of our Zoom Membership Meetings. This led to us being asked to present to the UGLE Membership Committee as they wanted to have a better understanding of how we were achieving the results we were.

However, we cannot rest on our laurels in 2021. There is still a big task ahead of us which will require a lot more hard work but I know that everyone involved across the various teams all have the same goal and I don't doubt we will achieve the results required to make Buckinghamshire one of the healthiest Provinces in the country.

As you are all aware, the increase of membership within Buckinghamshire is not solely as a result of the efforts mentioned above. I would therefore like to ask for the continued support of all of our members in finding people they may feel would be suited to Freemasonry and introducing them to their own Lodges or, if they are not sure how to best approach it, why not speak to the membership team and we will be happy to assist you.

I would just like to take the opportunity to personally thank everyone in the membership team as I know you have all worked tirelessly to achieve the results we have and to thank all the other teams we have worked closely alongside them and who will continue to do so in 2021 to create more positives.

If you are someone that enjoys talking to people, building relationships and likes to share ideas and would like to be involved in the membership team please contact me on 07961 126007

Simon Williams
Provincial Membership Officer



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