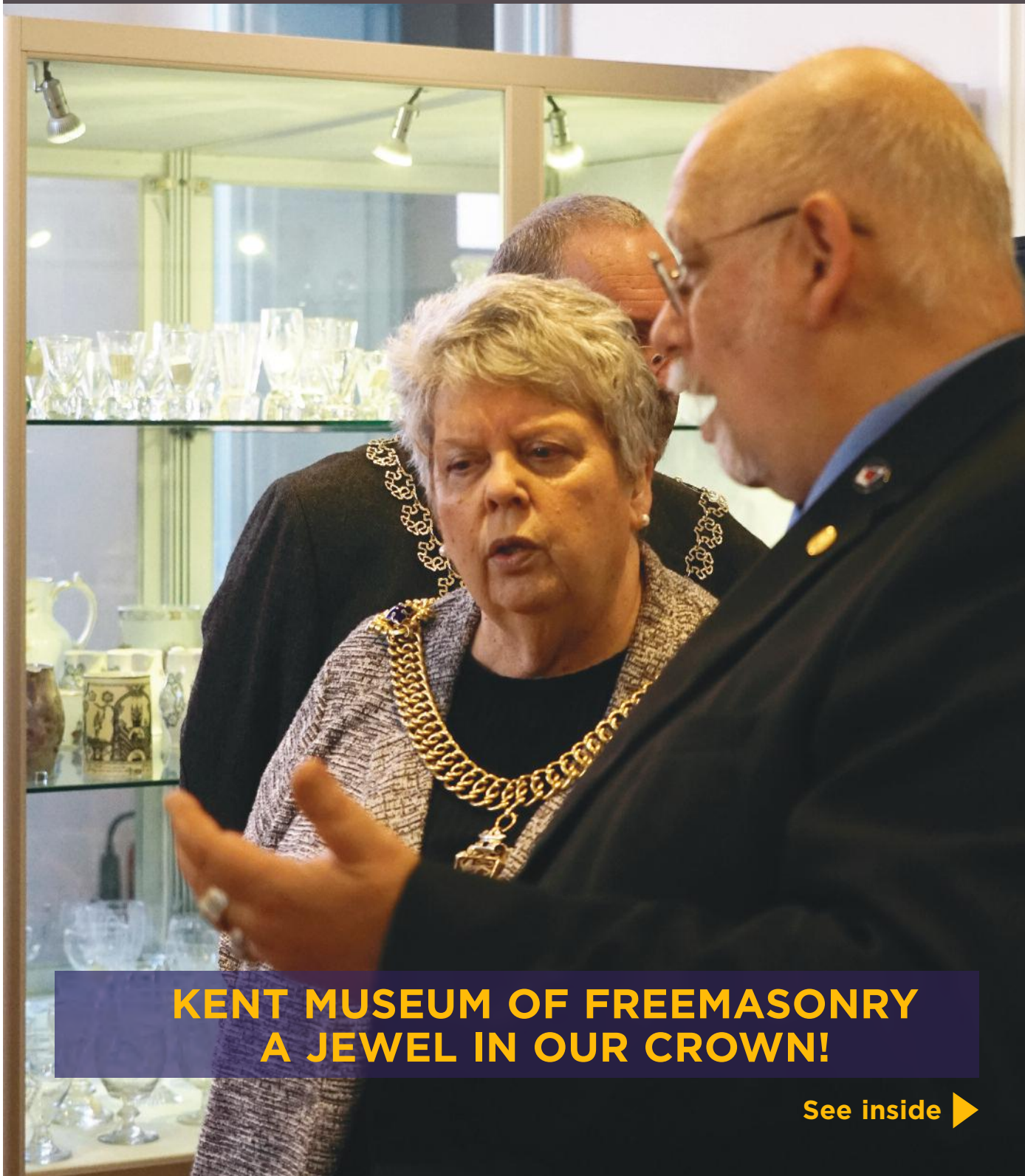


PROVINCIAL



THE MAGAZINE FOR EAST KENT CRAFT AND ROYAL ARCH



**KENT MUSEUM OF FREEMASONRY
A JEWEL IN OUR CROWN!**

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In Memoriam: Michael Robin Bailey



It is with much sadness that we report the passing to the Grand Lodge Above of Right Worshipful Brother Michael Robin Bailey, on 29th July 2023, aged 78 years. His funeral was held at Rochester Cathedral on the 14th September.

Michael was initiated into the Norman Lodge No.3502 in Gillingham on the 8th May 1968 and went on to have an illustrious Masonic career. He was East Kent's Provincial Grand Master and Grand Superintendent from 2004 to 2011 and served in an exemplary manner.

Michael continued to assist the Province after his time in office, being a great supporter of the Provincial Choir and acting as Organist for many Lodges, Chapters and side degrees.

Trevor Youens of Norman Lodge says, "I'm sure many of us have very fond personal memories of Michael. I so enjoyed his musical interludes at our meetings, his unerring encouragement and appreciation for even the smallest of things you might have done for the Lodge, his warm and welcoming greeting, and his parting quip (often dropped on you just after delivering a pearl of wisdom): 'I'll leave that with you'.

"Michael was a man of extraordinary generosity, of unwavering dedication, and of boundless compassion. He believed in the strength of unity, the power of kindness, and was a true advocate of Freemasonry.

His life was a testament to his values and his actions, always kind, always considerate. His legacy will be a tribute to that kindness which he encapsulated and encouraged in others.

"Our thoughts are with his Widow Sandra and their family. He will be missed by many. A man who truly lived respected and died regretted."

Editor's Notes



Welcome to issue 74 of *The Provincial*.

We have come a long way in the past twelve months.

As always, our focus is on the East Kent Province's 2025 Festival and the immense benefits that the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) can bring to so many people's

lives. If your Regular Payment Plan is coming to an end, why not renew it? Contributions are welcome up to the end of 2026. As for ad hoc giving, any sum, no matter how small, will be most welcome, "thankfully received and faithfully appropriated to its destined purpose", as we say.

One of the biggest Events for 2023 has been the redevelopment of the Members' Pathway, now an integral part of the United Grand Lodge of England's seven-year Strategy to revitalise and re-enthuse our love of the Craft.

One major outcome has been the introduction of the new Visiting Officers scheme, which took effect this Autumn. From now on, each Lodge and Chapter has its own VO who will be permanently assigned to it and

who will be on hand to assist and advise when called upon. He is a useful conduit between you and Province and can be expected to fly the flag on your behalf when necessary. Regard him as a "best buddy".

On our front cover the then Lord Mayor of Canterbury, Cllr Anne Dekker, is in animated conversation with Marcus Sherwood-Jenkins earlier this year at our splendid Kent Museum of Freemasonry. She had a whale of a time and was sorry that she had not visited before. The Museum is a real asset to the community and is well and truly on the 'Tourist Trail'. Read about it in this magazine.

How much do you know about the 'chaps from Province'? Our Provincial Grand Master/Grand Superintendent Neil Hamilton Johnstone, our Provincial Grand Almoner Nigel Fitz and our Provincial Grand Organist John Fry have all been interviewed for the magazine and give us some insights into the nature of their jobs and their hopes and aspirations. How does our PGM keep slim? You'll find out.

As always, we have lots of reports on fundraising activities and support for local Charities – our bread-and-butter work, but something of which we can all be especially proud as Freemasons.

And in October we celebrated the Consecration of a new Lodge: the Combined Services Lodge No.10038. We have a report in this magazine.

John Ray, Editor

Fraternitas Toughs It Out

"Tough Mudder is more than just an obstacle course. Built on a foundation of teamwork and overcoming obstacles, it's the chance to unplug from the daily grind, experience the unexpected, and accomplish something bigger than yourself."

"Featuring 20 world-famous obstacles to tackle, Tough Mudder 10K is the perfect mix of distance and challenge."

So says the Tough Mudder website. It's enough for many of us to say, "No blooming fear". Not so the intrepid, courageous lot at the Fraternitas Lodge No.6046. On a crisp September morning, the camaraderie and indomitable spirit of the Masonic community shone brightly as seven dedicated Brethren from the Lodge embarked on a thrilling adventure – the London South Tough Mudder.

Representing Fraternitas were Ken Quarrington, Wayne Bourne, Terry Love, Michael Elkan, James Batchelor, Aiden Hicks and Brad Sowter.

The Holmbush Estate provides a stunning backdrop for the event, with rolling hills and picturesque lakes. However, it is the obstacles that take centre stage. The course features a range of challenges with such forbidding names as the Arctic Enema, Electroshock Therapy and the infamous Block Ness Monster – a rotating, log-filled water obstacle that tests not only physical strength but also teamwork and coordination.

What makes the Fraternitas team's achievement even more remarkable is that they raised over £3,000 for their chosen charity, Step and Learn. Step and Learn is dedicated to assisting physical and educational improvement in children with Cerebral Palsy and associated motor difficulties.

Through mud, water and electric shocks, the team had faced each obstacle with determination and encouragement.

Ken Quarrington commented, "Participating in Tough Mudder as a team was a remarkable experience. It strengthened our bonds as Brethren and reminded us of the importance of supporting one another, both within our Lodge and in all aspects of life".



[L:R] Michael Elkan, Brad Sowter, Aiden Hicks, James Batchelor, Wayne Bourne, Ken Quarrington and Terry Love



Q&A's To The PGM



Our Provincial Grand Master/Grand Superintendent, Neil Hamilton Johnstone, kindly agreed to an interview with Provincial Magazine. We set out to learn about the man, his life in the hot seat and his aims and aspirations for the future. Here's what he had to say to us. Fourteen questions, fourteen straight answers:

1 In what way do you think your career in the Police has helped you in your current role?

Thirty-three years in the Police Service certainly gave me wide-ranging experience in managing people, whether they were colleagues requiring advice and guidance or members of the public needing help and understanding. One minute it was individuals on the wrong side of the law who required a firm hand and the next minute it was those who required compassion and the gentle approach. So, the ability to manage people in the broadest sense was, and still is, an essential skill.

It was important to be ready for the unexpected which occurs in many walks of life including Freemasonry. To be able to respond to those occasions with thoughtfulness, confidence and good judgement is important.

2 What have you learnt from Freemasonry that you didn't know before?

The history of Freemasonry has been fascinating and educational. There are meaningful messages regarding how you live your life and the values that Freemasonry is founded upon, as shown in our Ceremonies. If everyone adopted the true principles of Freemasonry, the world would be a much better place.

Whether you are a Lodge Secretary, a Chapter Principal, a Mentor, an Almoner, a member of the Provincial Executive or any other area of our Fraternity, your role requires time and commitment. We must not lose sight of the fact that everything is done on a voluntary basis and through goodwill.

3 Describe a typical week as PGM

Here is an example. In a recent week I have: had a personal meeting with the Deputy Grand Master and Second Grand Principal as part of the national programme to understand and support Provinces; represented our Province at the Installation of the new PGM/Grand Superintendent in Suffolk; had a Zoom meeting with a committee of other Grand Superintendents; held a Provincial 'Development' meeting with members of the joint Craft and Royal Arch Provincial Executive; attended a Rose Croix meeting (another Order in Freemasonry that I enjoy); attended the annual meeting of the Hertfordshire Royal Arch Province; attended the Pro Grand Master's business meeting at UGLE Headquarters at Great Queen Street in London; enjoyed a Royal Arch meeting at Great Queen Street focussing on Chapter Ritual; attended the Supreme Grand Chapter Convocation at Great Queen Street.

Despite all this, I made sure that I spent a couple of evenings with my grandchildren, went out to dinner with my wife and some friends and did my best to help at a local Craft Fair on behalf of a group that my wife manages. So, it's not all Freemasonry - and I try my best to keep Sundays clear for other interests, activities and down-time.

4 Do you find it easy to delegate?

It is essential but not always easy to delegate. No PGM/GSupt can possibly handle the minutiae of everything himself. The Provincial Executive, and the teams that operate within it, are absolutely first-class. They willingly take a great deal of pressure off my shoulders.

5 Is there one outstanding issue that drives you forward as our PGM?

Membership is the single most important factor for me. My desire is to see that everyone in our Province enjoys his Freemasonry, which will lead to inspiring others to join us and help us not only to retain but to increase our membership and attendance.

6 How do you balance the heavy demands of your role with family life and outside interests?

I try to plan ahead as much as possible, organise the diary, and reserve time for family and 'outside' interests. It doesn't always work, and my wife Margaret is not afraid to remind me if the balance has gone out of kilter!

7 How do you manage to keep slim?

Avoid the bread roll and the cheese.

8 It must be difficult to be the Guv'nor whom we all look up to with due deference and to remain approachable. Do you have any special techniques to put the average "foot soldier" at ease?

I hope that the Brethren and Companions see me as I am and I hope that I am seen as approachable.

I am, for the time being, the head of Freemasonry in East Kent. I have a special responsibility, title and a very nice apron. But I don't want or expect anything to become a barrier to the way I have always wanted to be, another Freemason heading along the same path of the Masonic journey with the same aspirations and goals and enjoying the company and friendship that goes with our memberships.

9 To what extent do you see Freemasonry as a business or as a hobby?

A hobby is something done in one's free time for pleasure, but Freemasonry has additional elements to it. It is an enjoyable but unique activity and one which has helping others at its heart.

But inevitably many parts of the organisation have to be operated on business lines to manage the administration successfully, whether that be at Provincial or Lodge and Chapter level.

10 If you could start your five years with a "clean sheet", what would you have done differently?

I wouldn't have been quite so anxious about what was coming in terms of responsibilities, expectations and the demands involved

I should, however, have realised that those duties required a whole new approach to time management so that there is the right balance between Masonic and personal life.

I should have made a greater effort to visit more Lodges and Chapters - but there is still time!

11 Please pick out five Events during your tenure that stand out in your memory.

Naturally, my Investiture by the Pro Grand Master, Peter Lowndes, an experience never to be forgotten.

Processing into my first Provincial Grand Lodge meeting, seeing those hundreds of Brethren and thinking "I'd better get this right".

The celebratory concert at Freemasons Hall to mark HRH The Duke of Kent's fifty-five years as Grand Master at which I was privileged to have a speaking part.

Escorting a new Pro Grand Master, Jonathan Spence, into Grand Lodge for his Investiture, a rare honour.

If I can roll five years into one 'Event': meeting and rewarding honours recipients at Provincial Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Chapter meetings - a huge and special pleasure on each and every occasion.

12 Are there any low points during those five years? Has anything had a particularly adverse effect on you?

Given that the definition of adverse is 'preventing success or development' then the dreadful experience of COVID which we have all experienced has without doubt had a detrimental effect on our plans to move forward and improve, both across the Province and indeed throughout Freemasonry. That was a low point, and I think it had an adverse effect on us all.

But there have not really been any particularly low points for me that have affected my optimistic view of Freemasonry and life in general.

13 Where, in the broadest terms, do you see the Province in the next year and in the next five years?

Within the next year I sincerely hope that we will have relegated the COVID effect to the history books and, combined with the Members Pathway and our strategy for the future being so well embedded, we will see an upturn in membership and attendance at our meetings.

I foresee that in the next five years we will be much stronger as an organisation and as Lodges and Chapters, and that we will be even more connected and involved with charities and communities than we already are. I can see a positive future for the Province. I base that optimism on us being more open as an organisation, benefitting from increased numbers of Initiates and Exaltees, and ensuring that we engage and retain our members. Everything in respect of membership is interlinked, and all the evidence points to the benefits of our public interaction and openness.

There is no doubt that world events have impacted our economy, and the effect on Freemasons has been no exception. I do hope that we shall soon have overcome those hurdles. All the signs are that we shall, and that we have a thriving future.

14 If you were to give one piece of advice to our average "foot soldier", what would it be, and why would you give it?

Engage with and enjoy your Freemasonry. By that mean, "keep asking questions, enjoy the meetings, enjoy our ceremonies and social activities. Be proud of what Freemasonry has been doing for 300 years and what your Lodge and Chapter are, with your engagement, continuing to do today".

A Wealth Of Intrigue And Interest – And It's All Ours!



THE KENT MUSEUM
OF FREEMASONRY

**Open to all and located on the heart of
Canterbury's tourist route**

**Close to the Westgate Towers and a
five-minute stroll from the Cathedral**

**An absolute GEM of a place, and a must for
all who are interested in Masonic history**

**Yes – it's our own collective treasure:
the Kent Museum of Freemasonry**

Ron Carter is the Museum Curator. Working with him are Terry Perkins (Deputy Curator) and Mike Farrell. Mike doesn't have an official title, but they like to call him the 'Jeweller', as his knowledge of Masonic Jewels is second to none. "Without him," says Ron, "Terry and I would be totally lost".



Heading up the management team is Richard Wingett, Chairman of the Trust. Richard White is the Secretary and the very knowledgeable Marcus Sherwood-Jenkins the Treasurer. Peter Hazlewood is the Museum's bubbling and enthusiastic Marketing and Development Manager.

If you've not been to the Museum yet, and think that all museums are boring and stuffy, think again! Under Richard Wingett's dynamic leadership the Museum is being transformed into a bright, cheerful and ever-changing attraction. Some highly significant items will always be on display, of course, but elsewhere you will find such initiatives as the rotating exhibit where every so often the existing section is replaced by something different. To date, it has featured Rose Croix and the Lord Cornwallis, who is one of Kent's Past Provincial Grand Masters and who was in fact the instigator of the Museum being built. →



Richard Wingett explaining an item of interest to the then Lord Mayor of Canterbury, Cllr Anne Dekker, with her husband and Escort Ken alongside her. Also in the picture are, [L:R], East Kent's Provincial Grand Master Neil Hamilton Johnstone, Peter Hazlewood and West Kent's Deputy Provincial Grand Master Ian Gallehawk.

← Over the decades the Museum has acquired thousands of relics and other items, not all of which have yet been properly catalogued. Ron and his team are constantly delving into their storeroom and finding things that intrigue and fascinate them. Often, they will need to do some research – and they have good contact with the British Museum and with universities and other scientific bodies.

In the upstairs Gallery, where Mike Farrell 'lives', there is an abundance of Masonic Jewels, most of which have been lovingly repaired or restored as necessary by Mike. He also collects and maintains historical records of countless Lodges, not only in Kent but from overseas as well. If you are looking for information, why not go down and have a chat with him? Phone first, and the team will

make sure he has been fed! And please get in touch if your Lodge or Chapter has some historical material that you wouldn't mind donating: they would be very grateful for anything - old Summonses, centenary meal menus, and so on. Remember that the Museum serves both East and West Kent Provinces.



An Ancient Egyptian maul

And there's more. The library contains over 3000 volumes comprising general Masonic reading, books on individual Masonic orders, reference and research books of many Masonic Study Groups, histories of Lodges, Chapters and other Provinces.

For those who wish to investigate their Kentish Masonic family history there are Provincial yearbooks dating from 1879.

The Library has books for all levels of interest, from the casual reader to the serious student.

There is also a whole bookshelf containing publications particularly selected to help the newer Mason through his early years.

The Library's Church Collection has an impressive stock of books and publications on genealogy and heraldry which is acknowledged to be one of the finest in the county.



Children are especially welcome to come along.

Says Richard Wingett, "It is this drive out and into local communities which is key to our future success. We have joined in annual events such as the Canterbury Medieval Pageant where we had over 500 members of the public through the doors in just one day. The Pageant is a family fun day and this year we provided Face Painters for the children, and 175 faces were painted".

To check on opening days and times, visit the website at kentmuseumoffreemasonry.org.uk

If your Lodge or Chapter has a significant event coming up in its history, such as a Centenary, the Museum could, with your help, turn it into an Exhibit in its own right. Just give them a bit of time to get things done.

Why not organise a group visit? Contact Peter Hazelwood at:

peter.hazlewood@kentmuseumoffreemasonry.org.uk.

Says Ron, "We are a very keen and enthusiastic bunch, but we could do so much more with a few more helpers. If you can spare one or more days a month, please get in touch. To become a Steward at the Museum you do not have to be a Freemason: anyone, Mason, non-Mason, male, female, any religion or no religion, all we ask is that you are a kind and caring person and above all reliable. You can also bring your wife/partner along if you want to, not just to keep you company but to get involved. You would work alongside an experienced Steward until you developed your own way of interacting with our Visitors.

"Give it a try. It is great fun, you meet some very interesting people, and the buzz is incredible".

**THE KENT MUSEUM OF
FREEMASONRY
THE ONLY PERMANENT
SHOP-WINDOW OF
FREEMASONRY IN THE COUNTY**

Sussex, Suffolk And Essex Show The Way



The East Kent Annual Clay Shooting Challenge 2023

Home advantage counted for nothing when the East Kent Provincial Clay Shooting Team hosted their annual Clay Shooting Challenge on the 30th September at the Abbey Clay Shoot at the Kent County Showground, Detling. But nobody was bothered – it was the camaraderie that mattered most.

Roger Wilkes writes:

This year's Event included the "Home Counties Inter-Provincial Competition". Eight Provinces supported the Event as well as a team from the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association's Disabled Shooters Group whom East Kent Clay Shooters have supported for many years.

The sixty-nine competitors had travelled from as far away as Cambridgeshire and Buckinghamshire with Sussex, Metropolitan Grand Lodge, Essex, Suffolk and Hertfordshire also offering their support. One hundred clay targets were thrown from ten stands in both open ground and woodland settings, representing game targets of birds, hares and rabbits.

There was also a 'Pool Shoot' with a difference. East Kent's Chairman Bernie Connolly had manufactured ten knock-down metal targets which we set out on the ground between fifteen and forty metres from the shooting point. Three members had brought their pre-charged air rifles for those who wanted to have a go. This proved quite a challenge after shooting at clays: here we had to hit a tiny, five-centimetre-diameter disc. At forty metres this was no mean feat!

The weather stayed very warm and sunny, so we were able to spend the whole day out in the fresh air.

The Home Counties Inter-Provincial Trophy went to Essex with a top-three-person score of 250.

The East Kent Clay Shooting Challenge prize went to Sussex with 229.

The Non-Masonic Team prize went to The Disabled Shooters Group with 199.

The Masonic High Gun prize went to Colin Jelliff of Sussex with an individual score of 85.

The Non-Masonic High Gun prize went to Ollie Lewis from Suffolk with 85.

The Ladies High Gun prize went to Lisa Brereton from Suffolk with 68.



The Provincial Clay Shooting Team are always looking for clay shooters to join us. If you are new to the sport and would like to try it, you will be most welcome – as are lady shooters and juniors, as all Masonic competitions have categories for you. Contact me, Roger Wilkes, at eastkentclays@gmail.com or phone me at 07768123449.



Nigel Fitz – Our Provincial Grand Almoner



It takes a special kind of person to be an Almoner. You need patience, empathy, understanding and a generous dollop of love for your fellow creatures. You also need time to get out there and offer practical advice and help to your fellow

Masons and Companions. In many ways, the Almoner's is one of the most important roles in Freemasonry.

So, who better to interview on the subject than East Kent's Provincial Grand Almoner, Nigel Fitz? Here is what he had to say.

My Masonic career began at Bredenstone Lodge No.8093, based at St Margaret's-at-Cliffe, in 1992. I really appreciated the camaraderie and the opportunity of making new friendships. I enjoyed being in a team delivering Ritual and attending Rehearsals and Meetings. I have held the Office of Charity Steward and was Secretary of Bredenstone from 2002 to 2019. As time went by, I came to know far more about the charitable work we so enthusiastically embrace, supporting both national charities and the smaller local good causes that do so much for our communities.

Serving as Provincial Senior Grand Warden I learnt much more about the activities of the Province as a whole. I became much more aware of the crucial importance of the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) and the extent to which we care for our Masonic families and to which those in real need get the support they are looking for. We should also take a great deal of pride in the exceptional facilities our Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution Care Homes provide.

Two years ago, right out of the blue, our Provincial Grand Master Neil Hamilton Johnstone asked me to take on the role of Provincial Grand Almoner. Naturally I was delighted and honoured, but it was an aspect of the welfare side of Freemasonry that I knew little about. It was a steep learning curve understanding how the Provincial Almoner Team and the MCF worked closely together to provide care, advice and financial assistance to those in need across the Province. In 2022 I became the Province's Grand Chapter Almoner as well. I am also a Trustee of the Cornwallis East Kent Freemasons' Charity.

I received a great handover from my predecessor when I took on the Craft Almoner role and decided that I needed to engage with my Almoners Committee at a very early stage. This was invaluable and gave me real insights into the challenges ahead.

The Committee is made up of the Group Coordinators who were also the Visiting Volunteers. I soon found them to be a very talented and knowledgeable group. I began to understand the approach and processes necessary for handling the real-life cases they dealt with. To gain knowledge of this and of how they interacted with the MCF was my first challenge. It was abundantly clear that, like me, many members of the Province were completely unaware of what the MCF was, what its objectives were, what they could provide and – most importantly – how to contact them if the need arose.

A major task for the Province as a whole is to implement the United Grand Lodge of England's Seven-Year Strategy. Having been appointed Provincial Grand Almoner for both Craft and Chapter I think we as a Province are well ahead in terms of ensuring we are looked at as 'One Province' as suggested by UGLE. Having the same Almoner for both I believe sends a message that Craft and Chapter are intertwined as one organisation.

Another part of the Strategy Plan is the Membership Challenge and the establishment of Membership Teams in all our Lodges. The Team comprises the Lodge's Membership Officer, Mentor and Almoner. As laid out in UGLE's document the 'Members Pathway', the Almoner should now be central and take a lead role in ensuring that the Lodge has an up-to-date Profile (selling itself to prospective Candidates), looking after and listening to the Members, engaging and getting to know them much better and identifying any warning signs where a Member might be losing interest, is unhappy or is in need of support.

Similar considerations, of course, apply to Chapters.

As PGA I am regularly contacted regarding serious issues and concerns within the Province that affect our Masonic community. There have been several harrowing, heart-wrenching stories, but with the aid of the MCF we have been able to help so many people.

It is often rightly said that "we are all Almoners". As Masons we naturally care and have respect for one another and are on the lookout for signs where someone may need an arm around their shoulder. It is important that Brethren/Companions do understand how the Provincial Team can help them. The new Visiting Officer scheme, in which a senior Mason is assigned to each Lodge in an advisory capacity, will hopefully lead to improved dialogue between Lodge Members and the Provincial Team.

To all Brethren I would say, "take the time to speak to your Almoner". He has a wealth of knowledge and information. By seeing and understanding the work he does 'up close' you may yourself be inspired to take on this developing key role.

One Big Family – Helping The Homeless



One Big Family Helping the Homeless

For most of the Freemasons there, this was just another day of volunteering and doing some good in the community. For one however, it meant a whole lot more...

One Big Family (OBF) is a charity based in Chatham helping the homeless. As well as operating a soup kitchen and delivering food parcels and home starter packs, OBF provides supported accommodation at Dukes House in Chatham for up to nine residents, all of whom were formerly sleeping on the streets. Volunteers provide practical and moral support to help turn lives around.

Liz Shaw, one of the founders of OBF, had put out a plea for volunteers to re-paint the kitchen at Dukes House. East Kent Freemasons were quick to get involved. Mark Lawson, Sam Bearman and Chris Luchford of Honor Oak Lodge No.1986, Ken Quarrington of Fraternitas Lodge No.6046, David Mantle of St Michael's Lodge No.1273 and Tom Carter, future Initiate of Honor Oak, gave up their Saturday and got on with the job.

To most of the men there, it was just another day doing what Freemasons do. But for one, it meant so much more. Ken Quarrington, a Past Master of Fraternitas Lodge, had special reason to support charities like OBF, as he was once homeless himself. After coming out of the army, with whom he had served in Kuwait and Bosnia, Ken fell deeper and deeper into alcoholism and eventually lost everything – including his marriage.

Owning nothing but a bag of clothes and the car in which he was living, Ken realised he'd hit rock bottom and decided to make a change. With the help of Alcoholics Anonymous, the support of his Lodge, and his own determination to set an example for his children, Ken turned his life around. He is now a very successful businessman and is the managing director of his own company employing more than twenty people. He's been sober for fourteen years.

Said Ken, "The work that OBF does at Dukes House is so important. Getting people back on track and supporting them in learning to manage the stresses of everyday life is such a great help. I can remember when just the thought of opening a letter made me so anxious that I had to build myself up to it! I'm more than happy to do what I can to give back and help such a great charity".

As for the kitchen, Liz couldn't be happier. She said, "We are so very grateful. This really makes a difference to a small charity like ours. Seriously, you lot are bloody amazing!"

To find out more about the work that One Big Family does, or to volunteer, please visit the website:

www.helpingthehomeless.org.uk



[L:R] Ken Quarrington, Mark Lawson, Sam Bearman, Chris Luchford, David Mantle, Tom Carter

Double Trouble At King Edward VII

King Edward VII Lodge No.3252 at Wigmore have taken on the sponsorship of twin boys at Step and Learn, a charity helping children with cerebral palsy and similar motor function disabilities in Kent and Medway.

Caiden and Reece Todd are the twin sons of proud parents Chris and Lisa. Unfortunately, they were born prematurely at thirty weeks weighing only 3lb 1oz each and consequently both suffered serious brain injuries.

Caiden had a grade 1 brain bleed at two days old. Reece's cranial scan also showed a flare. Chris and Lisa were told when leaving the hospital after six weeks that both boys had bilateral periventricular leukomalacia (PVL), an injury that affects the ability of the brain to transmit information between nerve cells, the spinal cord and from one part of brain to the other.

They were later diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy and have been attending Step and Learn since they were ten months old. At their original assessment, neither of them could sit up, roll, crawl, or bear weight. Caiden, in particular, had very poor head control and his hands were always closed in a fist.

Since then, the boys have made great progress. Caiden's head control has improved so much. He has learned to roll over onto his front and back. He can sit when placed in position on the floor with very little assistance, can sit on a chair resting hands on a table, again with little assistance. He can bear weight through his arms when four-point kneeling, his hands are no longer constantly fisted, and he can now raise his arms and push the buttons on cause-and-effect toys. He's even begun to feed himself with snacks. He can bear weight through legs in standing and even tries to stand on his own.

Reece can now roll and crawl across the floor. He can pull himself over a soft play block, sit unaided for up to five minutes when put into position, and sit on a chair at a table unaided. He pushes himself into four-point kneeling and can bear weight in standing – and if there's a table in front of him, he doesn't need assistance. He's even starting to take steps in a walker!

The family came to visit King Edward VII Lodge just before they started their October meeting. It was a great opportunity for the members to meet the boys and see exactly where their money was going.

Lisa thanked the lodge for their support in sponsoring Reece and Caiden. In a short but emotional statement, she said, "The work they do at Step and Learn is amazing. The boys wouldn't be

able to do half the things they can do now without them. Reece sat up on his own for the first time last Saturday and I just cried my eyes out. Knowing that you guys have secured their place with the sponsorship means so much to us, and we can't thank you enough".



Ron Stronach, the Lodge's Charity Steward, said, "It's a great pleasure to meet the family. As Freemasons, we all give money to charity regularly, but to see where it's going and the tangible good that it's doing is just a fantastic feeling. We're proud to sponsor Reece and Caiden at Step and Learn, and we hope to be able to do so for many years to come".

Step and Learn chairman Patrick Barden presented the Lodge's sponsorship pack to Acting Master Derek Chapman, and the family posed for photographs in the Lodge before having a quick drink at the bar and getting the boys home for bed.

They were due back soon, though, as Brian Ross (Master of the Lodge) had invited them to be his Guests at their White Table meeting in December.

If you'd like to find out more about Step and Learn, or perhaps even sponsor a child, please visit www.stepandlearn.org



Tiger Gardeners Are Blooming Good



Lodges and Chapters throughout East Kent are always happy to support local community initiatives. Belvidere Lodge No.503 is no exception. Tiger Gardeners teaches youngsters the benefits of growing flowers and vegetables on an allotment at Loose, Maidstone. At the Coolings in Bloom 2023 Awards Ceremony in September, TGs were presented with the Best Community Project Certificate of Achievement by the Mayor of Maidstone, Cllr Gordon Newton.



Pictured with the Mayor are Belvidere's Mike Harwood, TG Jacob Castle, TG Emily Glover and Emily's mother Debbie.

Daytime Lodges: Millennium Lodge Of Charity



Most Lodges and Chapters throughout the world meet in the evening. Traditionally, you would attend the formal business in the Lodge or Chapter Room and then retire to the Festive Board, with a substantial meal. If all went well, the meeting would be over by 10pm, but sometimes much later.

This lifestyle suits many Masons, but there are some who find the schedule incompatible with their working life or their digestion – or both! If that is you, you might like to know about the East Kent Province's rare birds – the Daytime Lodges.

In the Autumn 2023 issue of *The Provincial Lite* we featured two such Lodges: Essetesforde in Ashford and Renham in Sittingbourne. Here's a third: the Millennium Lodge of Charity In East Kent No.9730. Chris Doll tells us more:

9730 is a unique Lodge that is not progressive. It serves to support and inform its members who are drawn from serving and past Charity Stewards, Almoners, Mentors and Membership Officers. They receive talks and information from portfolio holders within the Provincial Teams, a good number of whom are also members of the Lodge. A recent topic was a

presentation on the Provincial Fishing Charity from former Assistant Provincial Grand Master David Alexander.

The Lodge plays a very important role in the organisation and hosting of the PSA Prostate Testing Day in collaboration with the Cornwallis East Kent Freemasons' Charity. Several of our Brethren and Companions have tested positive, the early discovery ensuring prompt treatment to prevent any serious issues that might have arisen if left unchecked.

The Lodge has firmly embraced the Membership Pathway: it has changed its terms of membership so that Mentors and Membership officers can become Joining Members. Alternatively, they can subscribe to the Lodge's Correspondence Circle and gain access to other holders of these important offices who are more than willing to assist each other and provide guidance where needed.

The Lodge holds its Installation Meeting in September at the Maidstone Masonic Centre. Other meetings are held around the Province on the first Saturday in January, May and September. Each meeting starts with a hearty breakfast, which is always warmly welcomed.

Their next meeting will be held on Saturday 6th January 2024 at the Canterbury Masonic Centre. The Lodge would love to welcome you along. Please book in at bookings9730@gmail.com

If you have any questions, please contact the Lodge's Membership Officer Christian Doll at 9730membership@gmail.com

Widows Sons

We've probably all heard of them - but who are they, what's it all about, and what do they do?

Melvyn Penney, road name 'Fourteen', provides the answers.

The Widows Sons originated in the USA. The first Chapter, based in Illinois, was formed in 1998 by motorcycling Masons to raise charitable funds for widows and orphans of Freemasons.

The idea soon spread to the UK. In February 2004 the first meeting of the as-yet unchartered Widows Sons in England was held in a small meeting room at the Masonic Hall, Goldsmith Street, Nottingham.

The number of founder members was limited to seven, all of whom would become Officers. The revised bylaws, patch and list of founder members were duly approved. Widows Sons Florida duly chartered the Widows Sons (England) in August 2004. The name Widows Sons Masonic Bikers Association (WSMBA) was adopted at the same time.

We are the only Widows Sons Association in the UK that is recognised by the United Grand Lodge of England. We support a wide range of Charities and Events.

Our offices are manned by volunteers who are elected annually and provide help and guidance to the governing body of the Widows Sons of Great Britain. The Chairman is the presiding officer of the WSMBA and is there to represent the Association's members to the world at large. The Back Office deals with the day-to-day issues of running an association with over 1000 members and thirty-seven Chapters.

To be a member of the Widows Sons Chapter you must be, and remain, a Master Mason of good standing in a Lodge under the jurisdiction of the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE), or a Lodge under a jurisdiction that is fully recognised by UGLE.

We actively encourage partners and friends to join up and to come along on rides, events and charity runs. It's a great way to find out more about Masonry and what we do!

Not a Mason? No problem! If you ride a bike (or go pillion) and are not a Mason, Cornerstones, the social support group of the WSMBA, is for you. Membership is open to family, friends, Freemasons and riding buddies of all ages and genders. You can join in many WSMBA (East Kent) activities such as ride-outs, Christmas Toy Runs, Easter Egg Runs and social Events. What are you waiting for?

We also had the opportunity in East Kent to save a Mark Master Masons Lodge in Hoo as they were on the point of handing their Warrant back. To date nearly twenty members of the Widows Sons have now joined, and the Lodge is once again making progress.

In our financial year 2022/3 we raised £8,592 for charitable causes. We donated £6,656 of this sum to key causes including £3,500 to the Christmas Toy Run, £900 to the Easter Eggs Run and £2,000 to Lifelites, a national charity donating specialist assistive technology packages for children with life-limiting conditions.

When you join the Widows Sons and you have been initiated (Patched) you will be given your road name, which would have been bestowed on you by the Chapter members.

We also visit East Kent Lodges and do a talk/presentation. If you would like more information, or have a motorbike and would like to join, please contact the East Kent Secretary at secretary@eastkent.wsmba.uk



Norman Chapter Celebrates 100 Years

Trevor Youens writes:

Norman Chapter No.3502 held its Centenary Meeting on Thursday 12th October 2023 at the Franklin Rooms, Gillingham.

After the Chapter had opened and the normal business had been concluded, it received the Grand Superintendent, Neil Hamilton Johnstone, accompanied by the Second and Third Grand Principals, the Deputy Grand Superintendent and thirteen members of the Provincial team.

The MEZ (Head) of the Chapter, David Smisson, offered the Sceptre to the Grand Superintendent who accepted it and took the Chair. This must have been a special moment for the Grand Superintendent, Norman being his Mother Chapter. Having recalled with much regret the recent death of former Provincial Grand Superintendent Michael Robin Bailey, he explained the purpose of the meeting and handed over to Trevor Youens, Scribe E, who gave a brief overview of the Chapter's history which was covered in more detail in the books that had been printed and would be handed out to everyone at the Festive Board.

In 1923 Supreme Grand Chapter gave permission for the Chapter's formation and agreed that The Most Excellent Grand Superintendent Colonel F S W Cornwallis (later First Baron Cornwallis) would Consecrate the new Chapter on Tuesday 26th June that year at the Masonic Temple, Franklin Road, Gillingham. The Chapter, however, was to have its regular meetings at the Masonic Hall, Manor Road, Chatham. At its Consecration it had sixteen Founding Members, of whom only four came from Norman Lodge. These four, incidentally, were also Founding Members of the Norman Lodge itself. The Consecration Ceremony of the Chapter was performed by the Grand Superintendent, assisted by officers of the Provincial Grand Chapter.

The Centenary Warrant was read out by the Provincial Grand Scribe E, David Graeme, and was presented to the MEZ. Ian White, Third Grand Principal, gave a very interesting and enjoyable Oration. The rest of the Chapter business was then concluded. A splendid Festive Board followed, during which a cheque for £1,000 was presented to the Provincial Grand Charity Steward Michael Smith towards the East Kent Province's 2025 Festival. A bottle of malt whisky was given to the Grand Superintendent along with a bouquet of flowers for his wife Margaret.



Honor Oak – Helping To Make Miracles

Making Miracles is a birth trauma and baby bereavement care charity serving Kent and Medway. The charity was founded by Kelly Wells in 2014 after experiencing a traumatic high-risk pregnancy and the near loss of her daughter's life. After being told at twenty-two weeks there was only around a 15% chance of her daughter living, she prepared for the worst and began the grieving process. Kelly searched for organisations to help her through this incredibly traumatic time but found nothing online or locally to help in her feelings of pure loneliness and grief. Later, as Kelly reflected on what she had been through, she recognised the significant gaps in her emotional and mental well-being care. Kelly never wanted another person to feel so alone - and so Making Miracles was born.

On the 7th October, members of Honor Oak Lodge turned out to man the shop at The Mall in Maidstone. After a quick briefing from Sally Howells, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, they set to work welcoming customers, talking to them about what the charity does and hopefully selling a few items.

Although it's a charity shop, all the items on sale are brand new, handmade with love by an army of volunteers and donated to Making Miracles. These are mainly knitted baby items but also quilts, toys, handmade cards, nappy cakes and gift boxes.

There were also some other very special items. The most notable of these were the memorial teddy bears. These have a special compartment in which some parents choose to keep their child's ashes. Sally said that these can bring great comfort to a bereaved parent as they feel that they can still hold their lost child.

The charity also has an association with Maidstone prison, where inmates make wooden toys for donation to the shop: these are proving very popular with customers.

All profits from the sale of these items go towards providing free bereavement counselling for parents and grandparents affected by birth trauma and loss. Profits are also used to maintain a memorial garden in Borstal.

Volunteers from Honor Oak on the day were Dave Claughton, Mark Lawson, Tony Evernden and his wife Liz, as well as Tom Carter, who hopes to be initiated into the lodge next year.

The day was organised by Dave Claughton as Making Miracles is especially close to his heart. Dave's wife Denise lost a child at birth thirty years ago. In keeping with the attitudes of the time, she was told, "Never mind, go home and make another one".

Dave said, "The work that Making Miracles do is so important. The trauma of losing a child stays with you all your life and can still reduce you to tears years after the event. You often find yourself wondering what they would be doing now and what talent may have been lost to the world".



If you would like to know more, or if you'd like to volunteer at Making Miracles, please visit www.makingmiracles.org.uk, or contact Sally directly at sally@makingmiracles.org.uk.

Long Service Congratulations

The Provincial Grand Master/Grand Superintendent, together with the joint Executives, offers warmest congratulations to the following Brethren and Companions for their long Masonic service, along with sincere thanks for their valuable contributions to Freemasonry in general and to this Province in particular:

CRAFT 60 years

W Bro John Bye		Gundulph	L1050
W Bro Noel Charles Bramley		Taurus	L3981
W Bro David Jenner Cork	PPSGD	Swakely	L6634
W Bro John Sutton Walsh		Royal Navy	L429
W Bro Peter Louis James Matthews	PPDepGSwdB	Dover Castle	L7202
W Bro David Thomas Whiting		Universal	L8219
W Bro Peter John Standen	PPGChStwd	St Mary's, Gillingham Green	L6499
Bro Keven Maurice Richard Parrett		Prince Edwin's	L125
Bro Douglas Meager Wallace Wagland		L of Rectitude and Harmony	L9093
W Bro Keith Reginald Mitten	PPSGW	Gill Lodge of Friendship	L8453

CRAFT 50 years

W Bro Barry Kenneth Macey	PPGReg	Lodge St George Bahrain	L7389
W Bro Terence John Ray	PPJGD	All Saints	L5383
W Bro Keith James Breading	PGStB PProvJGW	Swakely	L6634
W Bro Robert Lonsdale Naylar	PPSGW	Gundulph	L1050
Bro Trevor Malcolm Gilks		Gundulph	L1050
Bro Derek George Goddard		King Edward VII	L3252
W Bro Raymond Charles Young Simmons	PPDepGReg	Minnis Bay	L4292
W Bro Reginald Arthur Pridmore	PPJGW	William Russell	L3103
W Bro Ronald Arthur Edward Bodkin	PPGReg	Rochester	L3494
W Bro Colin Graham Cooper	PPGSwdB	Martello	L8712
W Bro William Leitch	PPGSwdB	Romney Marsh	L4743
Bro Martyn Fuller Rowland		St Lawrence	L3350
W Bro Edward Peter Goldfinch	PPJGD	Invicta Lodge of Ashford	L709
Bro John Button		Lodge de Wydemere	L6282
W Bro Roy William Lightfoot	PPDepGSwdB	Weald of Kent	L1854
W Bro Gordon Hammond		Hoo St Werburgh	L4829
W Bro Trevor Leslie Willis		Royal Kent L of Antiquity	L20
W Bro Roger Henry Harley Croucher	PPJGD PProvJGW	Bradley	L7929
W Bro Anthony James McComb	PPJGD	Peace and Unity	L4101
W Bro John William Arthur Reuther	PPSGD PProvSGW	Ashford	L8535
Bro Anthony Thomas Abbott		Binnewith	L6338
Bro Peter John Sweet		Cinque Ports	L1206
Bro John Sewell		Northfleet	L4149
W Bro Anthony David Hayward		Sir Joseph Williamson	L4605
W Bro Graham Arthur Jolly	PPGReg	Lodge St George Bahrain	L7389
W Bro Peter John Horn	PPJGW	Hundred of Hoo	L8986
W Bro Karl Anton Georg Biscoe		White Rose	L9308
VW Bro Keith Stephen Hodgson	PPGSuptWks	Weald of Kent	L1854
W Bro John Beeney	PPGReg	Cobham	L7269
W Bro Ean Michael Moore	PPGChStwd	George Hamilton	L3452
W Bro Malcolm Brooks	PPDepGSwdB PProvGDC	United Service	L3124
W Bro Philip John Sayer	PAGDC PPGReg	Belvidere	L503
W Bro Kenneth Vernon Dimmick	PPSGW	St Peter's	L4193
W Bro David John Green	PGStB PPDepGReg	Christopher Marlowe	L8014
W Bro Kevin Charles Bampton	PPDepGReg	Cobham	L7269
W Bro Geoffrey Edward Nelson Homewood	PPGSuptWks	Stour	L2305
W Bro Alexander Ballingall Penrose	PPJGW	St Lawrence	L3350

CHAPTER 60 years

E Comp Colin Leonard Manington	PPGSN	King Edward VII	C3252
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CHAPTER 50 years

E Comp Alan Richard Thornhill		Chapter of Harmony	C133
E Comp David Hitches	PPAGSoj	Norman	C3502
E Comp Ronald Reginald Pritchard	PPGReg	Gundulph	C1050
E Comp Grahame S. J. H. Whittlesea	PPStdB	Bertha	C31
Comp Brian Richard Luckett		Prince Edwin's	C125
E Comp Howard Francis Doe	PPGSN	St Peter's	C4193
E Comp Peter Colin Thomas	SLGCR	Thanet First Principals	C8918

Note: Ranks are those obtaining at the time the Long Service Certificates were issued.

Continued →

Third Time At Libertas Secunda



Richard Eastwood writes:

Peter Eastwood (pictured, centre) is back in the 'hot seat' in Libertas Secunda Lodge No.6433 for the third time – forty-seven years after his first Installation!

Initiated into the Lodge in 1967, he was proposed by Dick Smith and seconded by Dick's son Raymond, who is currently the Junior Grand Warden. Peter's own son is now a member, having joined in 2006 when Peter had his second stint as Master.

Aged seventy-seven, Peter is the longest-serving member of the Lodge and has been a Preceptor for an amazing forty-four years. He remembers a slightly more regimented Lodge of Instruction, not to mention a far more clandestine system of recruitment. It's all change now as the Lodge actively seeks new members.

Libertas Secunda (the Second Freedom) was Consecrated in the post-Second World War boom because its Mother Lodge, the Lodge of Freedom No.77, had become too big. Nearly all its members worked on the river or allied trades, but the name of one of the other Founders can still be seen on his old shop in Windmill Street – 'Munns' Art Shop.

The two Lodges are the only ones to use a form of working known as the Freedom Ritual that dates back to 1751, when No.77 itself was Consecrated. It has its own idiosyncrasies, which can make it a challenge, the Addresses and Working Tools certainly being 'off the beaten track'. The Lodge Banner depicts a man breaking free of his bonds: it is taken from Lodge 77's Banner which celebrates the Abolition of Slavery.

Allington's Nonagenarian Master



You're never too old to aspire to the Master's Chair.

Here's John Lean, now in his ninetieth year, on the evening of his Installation as Master of Allington Lodge No.7086 on the 25th October 2023.

Pictured with Charity Steward Mo Morris



First Royal Arch Presentation Playlet

Royal Arch, or Chapter, is a logical progression from the three Degrees in Craft Freemasonry: but what is it about, and what can you expect if you join? East Kent Province has developed a playlet which has already been shown at Maidstone and Gravesend and will be performed at Sittingbourne and Margate in 2024.

So, what is this all about?

It is an initiative for all Brethren, Entered Apprentices and above, who are not yet Royal Arch Masons (Companions).

The aim is to provide an opportunity to come along, casually dressed, to an informal setting where you can listen, learn, ask questions and obtain a balanced view on what the Royal Arch is all about. It will enable you to make the judgment to complete your Masonic journey by becoming a Royal Arch Mason, now or in the future. Note that you must be a Master Mason before joining.

Delivered as a playlet, the presentation is more interesting than a straight lecture, because it involves Companions moving around the room, dressed in various items of Royal Arch regalia, with different voices, interactions and presentation styles.

Who is it for?

Chiefly for Brethren who are not yet Royal Arch Companions, but such is the depth of topics covered that Companions too can advance their daily knowledge. You never know - it might help clear up some myths and misinformation.

Venue

Although it is performed in a Lodge or Chapter Room, the presentation is not part of a Masonic meeting. Dress code is therefore casual, there is no Festive Board, and most importantly the event is free.

What topics are discussed?

Aspects of ritual/history demonstrating the indissoluble link between the Craft and Royal Arch Masonry, followed by sections on regalia, clothing, jewels, officers, eligibility, meetings, costs and government of the Royal Arch.

There is even a section where two Companions personally share their experiences: why they joined, what it has meant to them and what they are getting out of it.

Question & Answers

At the conclusion of the presentation participants are encouraged to ask questions.

Duration

The presentation takes around an hour, providing sufficient time at the end for questions followed by Tea and Coffee and a chance to chat with others.

Next presentations

Sittingbourne Friday 16th February 2024 - Albany Road, ME10 1EB

Margate possibly in March/April 2024 - New Cross Street, CT9 1EH

Each demonstration starts at 7pm and ends by 9pm.

For further information about joining the Royal Arch or coming to the next demonstration, please speak to your Lodge's Chapter Liaison Officer or go to the Provincial website or email our Provincial Membership Officer Dennis Fordham at dnfordham@aol.com



Group 8 Social Events Go Public

The Birchington Community Ad magazine has been very good to Minnis Bay Lodge No.8496 over the years, giving them numerous one- or even two-page spreads free of charge when they held Events that were open to the Public.

Now Lodge member John Matthews, who is Area 8's Community Liaison and Communications Officer, wants to exploit this approach. He is producing two booklets, updated monthly, one for Masonic Events and one for Events open to the Public. The latter is being posted on Facebook sites in the locality.

Clearly this initiative depends on input from all the seventeen Lodges in the Thanet area to be really successful. John does not see it simply as a recruiting tool, more as a way of showing the community all the charitable work that Freemasons do and encouraging them to join us in helping to raise money for good causes.



From Rags To Riches

FROM 'RAGS' TO 'RICHES' AND THE VALUE OF COOPERATION

We hear from time to time of Lodges and Chapters that have fallen on hard times and struggled to keep going. There is an answer, as is being proved in East Kent and other Provinces – and the buzzword is 'cooperation'.

Rochester neighbours St Andrew's No.3948 and St Peter's No.4193 were floundering in the aftermath of COVID and declining numbers and were wondering whether it was time to hand back their Warrants. Both were founded just after the end of World War 1, when many servicemen were returning to civilian life and were looking for friendship and companionship in an organisation in which they could feel 'at home'. Both Lodges had recently celebrated their Centenaries.

Dean Volante, Immediate Past Master of St Andrew's Lodge, takes up the story:

Lodges helping each other is one of the initiatives that both Grand Lodge and Province are actively encouraging. We took a good look at ourselves and decided that this was the path we would follow. From early 2022 we attended each other's meetings and re-engendered our enthusiasm. When Charlie Twiner and Adam Herbert joined us, they created the spark that got things moving. Adam Herbert quickly became Membership Officer, created our Facebook page advertising the Lodge, revamped the website and together with Charlie brought in five new members.



[L:R] Dean with new member Tom Davis

By early 2023 the two Masters, myself at St Andrew's and Norman Godding at St Peter's, decided we would pool resources and have a joint Ladies' Festival.

The event was held at the Franklin Rooms, Gillingham, on the 15th April. We had seven large tables surrounding the dance floor with about seventy people attending. Many members kindly said it was one of the best Ladies' Festivals they had been to.

We raised an amazing £1,500 for the Dementia Café at Saint Peter's Church. The café wanted new equipment for their Social Club so that they could bring music to those with dementia. The system they wanted was a karaoke device with a facility to display lyrics. Music is known to be a major memory trigger in people with dementia.

We had raised more money than was needed for the karaoke machine, so we gave the café a cheque for the balance. Our next move is to pop down there and try the equipment out.

None of this would have been possible if our Lodges hadn't worked together and supported one another through those difficult times.

Consecration Of East Kent Combined Services Lodge No.10038



It's not every year that East Kent Province celebrates the Consecration of a new Lodge. It last happened in 2016, when the Spirit of Rugby Lodge No.9922 kicked off to the sound of referees' whistles and rugby balls as gavels.

On Saturday 14th October 2023, some 250 Freemasons assembled in the Clive Emson Conference Centre at the Kent County Showground, Detling, to attend the Consecration of the Combined Services Lodge No.10038.

Provincial Grand Master Neil Hamilton Johnstone opened the Lodge in all three Degrees. He welcomed everyone, saying that he was sure this would be the beginning of a very special and successful Lodge, noting that its existence would add weight to the Province's commitment to the Armed Services Covenant. "Brethren - enjoy the day."

Provincial Grand Secretary David Graeme read out the lengthy Citation from the Grand Master, the Duke of Kent, authorising the creation of the Lodge and instructing our PGM to lead the Ceremony of Consecration.

Provincial Grand Chaplain the Revd Howard Pashley delivered a very interesting and well-researched Oration, the PGM scattered Corn - the symbol of Plenty and Abundance, then poured Wine - the symbol of Joy and Cheerfulness, then Oil - the symbol of Peace and Unanimity, and finally sprinkled Salt - the symbol of Fidelity and Friendship.

Deputy Provincial Grand Master Phil South installed Steve Simmons as the Primus Master of the East Kent Combined Services Lodge No.10038. If you have attended the annual Installation of a Lodge, you will be familiar with the process: the Master Elect takes his Obligation, the junior Brethren retire for a short period while the Master is placed in the

Master's Chair, then the juniors return, and the new Master is proclaimed from the East, West and South. On this occasion the PGM then presented Steve Simmons (pictured) with the Warrant and Charter of the Lodge.

The Deputy PGDC next presented the Officers of the Lodge in turn as requested by the Master and escorted them to their positions in the Lodge Room, changing places with the Provincial Officers.

Steve Simmons has a strong, clear, commanding voice, which was a pleasure to listen to. He thanked the PGM for Consecrating the Lodge, the DPGM for Installing him (Steve) as Master and the Deputy PGDC for running the show.

Assistant Provincial Grand Master Mark Costelloe gave the Address to the Master, APGM Trevor Carter gave the Address to the Wardens and APGM Duncan Rouse gave the Address to the Brethren.

Deputy Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies Graham Cuthbert led the PGM and Senior Officers out of the Lodge. The remaining items on the Lodge Agenda were then concluded and the Lodge was closed in due and ancient form.

Full credit to all those who organised the Event, from mastermind Kevin Stones - who now appeared a good deal less anxious! - to Graham Cuthbert, an excellent stand-in for PGDC Andy Stevens who was unavailable that day.

At the Festive Board, the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, Corps of Drums marched in with drums beating and Bass Drum thumping. Quite a few military hearts were now a-flutter! The diners watched, thrilled, as they were treated to a display of precision stick work, skilled paradiddles and drumming of a first-class order. The Drummers departed to rapturous applause.

Steve Simmons stepped up to the mic. He clearly seemed a lot more relaxed, now that the pressure of the day was over. He delivered an inspiring and passionate speech that showed his commitment to the formation and Consecration of the Lodge and his pride in becoming its first Master.

With a final flourish, he then presented a cheque for the sum of £1,038 to the PGM for the 2025 Festival. 10038 was up and running!

There is a full report on the Ceremony on the Provincial website.

Armed Forces Covenant News

Kemsley Whittlesea of Chillington Manor Lodge No.4649 writes:

In November 2022 East Kent's Provincial Grand Master Neil Hamilton Johnstone signed the Armed Forces Covenant, which committed the Province to doing what it could to help serving officers and veterans of the armed forces community. An AFC team was formed with Peter Marno from Douglas Lodge No.1725, Paul Gear from Lord Warden Lodge No.1096 and me. Behind the scenes we have been busy. We have sent out emails to Brethren within the Province to gather information about serving officers and veterans. We have had around 140 positive replies.



Above: [L:R] Kemsley Whittlesea and Tony Bell, a Royal Forces Auxiliary serving officer and member of Chillington Manor Lodge, at the War Memorial in Maidstone on Remembrance Sunday 2023

We have had meetings with teams that deal with personnel leaving the services and transitioning to become veterans, with the hope that we can capture the attention of the service leavers via podcasts and emails to highlight the similarity between the military and Freemasonry. Many leavers find that they miss the camaraderie, sense of service and belonging, and being around like-minded people, so we hope that we can spark some interest with them to think about joining Freemasonry.



We have been bouncing around a lot of different ideas to show how the Province can support the AFC, for example by Lodges and Chapters offering facilities to charities such as Help for Heroes for running courses or coffee mornings. We are collating a list of different military charities and what they specialise in, so that Almoners will know whom to contact if a Brother needs assistance. We aim to set up an online Forum for the serving/veteran Brethren to be able to discuss issues, ideas, pass on useful information and generally help each other out. In the new year we will be inviting them to coffee mornings so we can sit down, meet each other and take on board any ideas they might have to strengthen the support to the AFC.

It is important that we as Freemasons are seen to be positively engaging and supporting our Armed Forces communities. In November 2023 Masons and Companions helped the Royal British Legion sell poppies where volunteers were scarce or absent. At the last count we had helped collect some £20,000 in donations.

Septem Hits The Road Again

Kevin Kemp writes:

On Friday 6th October 2023 twenty-six members of Septem Lodge No.7788 set out for Belgium and the Installation Meeting of the Spinoza Lodge No.50.

After brunch at Adinkerke we made our way to Ostend, where we were met by Brothers Hendrik Huys and Mark Stubbe. Together that evening we visited the Tyne Cot War Cemetery and Memorial, and then went on to the Menin Gate where Kris Taillaert and Peter Snauwaert from Spinoza joined us. Septem's Master Paul Nicholls and Lodge members John Miller and Wes Hudson took part in the daily wreath-laying ceremony.

Among those present were members of a Victoria Cross holder's family and a school party from the Isle of Skye with a fourteen-year-old Piper, who played a Lament in memory of the fallen: a very moving ceremony that touched everyone who attended.

On the Saturday we all met in our hotel's Reception and followed directions we had been given to a Castle in the middle of a Forest. There we were met by some fifty Freemasons from Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and France who had all come to attend the Installation Meeting.

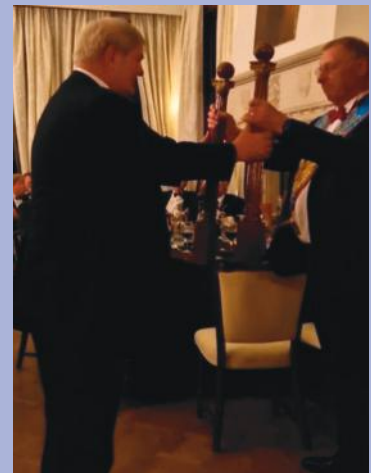
All eighty of us enjoyed an excellent Ceremony, which was followed by a splendid Festive Board in the Castle's main Dining Room. After the meal there were several presentations. East Kent's Assistant Provincial Grand Master Mark Bassant gave Provincial Ties to Spinoza's new Master and other Lodge members; Paul Nicholls gave Dany Verte, the Immediate Past Master, a Certificate to mark Septem's eighth visit; and Kevin Kemp gifted a Pair of Columns for the Senior and Junior Wardens' Pedestals and, on behalf of Ian Townsend who could not attend, a Tyler's Sword - all of which Spinoza will actively use in their Lodge. In return, among other things, Spinoza gave Septem a commemorative Lodge Jewel.

On our way home on the Sunday we stopped as usual at Adinkerke and dished out the 'fines' to those who had transgressed in any way, whether true or imaginary, during the visit. The £360 raised is being donated to East Kent's 2025 Festival.

The camaraderie, fellowship and brotherhood that are evident between the two Lodges, Spinoza and Septem, encapsulate the essence of Freemasonry. We have made some long-lasting bonds and friendships, not only with Spinoza but through Spinoza, meeting brethren from different European nations and through that a visit to a German Lodge. Long may it continue to be so, and who knows where it will lead us next?



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John Fry – Our Provincial Grand Organist

James Kitney writes:

Music has been used for millennia to set a scene, provide ambiance, or impart emotion. It can summarise excitement or build tension. It can soothe the spirit and calm the mind. These same rules apply to the ceremonies that Masons hold dear. The inclusion of music adds something to the ceremonies that only live music can.

Reporter's notebook in hand, I caught up with John Fry, the Provincial Grand Organist for East Kent, and asked him about his experiences with music and Freemasonry.



What does the Provincial Grand Organist do?

The standard job is to play music at the yearly Provincial Meetings to provide atmosphere for the members there. This includes parade music in and out for the Executive, and incidental music throughout the meeting during quiet periods.

I also get contacted throughout the year from Lodges who have no Organist, or whose Organist cannot make the meetings, and find myself very busy throughout with the assistance I provide.

I also must put together music for special Events, such as Centenary Meetings or Consecrations.

What is your favourite genre of music?

My father was a brass band teacher and in the military. So, I started my love of music with Big Bands. When I was eleven, I got a scholarship to Trinity College of Music. I was educated in orchestral music and on the piano and became a part of the Essex Youth Orchestra, which led to the love of orchestral music! Shortly after this, I got involved in Jazz and started to play some Pop. Basically, I like everything - except Punk!

How much does music influence your life?

Between May and September (our out-of-season months), not much. However, when in season, I find myself playing most of my time. My wife works and does not get home until nine or ten in the evening, so I use that time to come and play, so it can take up quite a few days of the week during the Masonic active year.

What do you enjoy most about the office of Provincial Grand Organist?

Meeting new people is what I enjoy the most. With attending ten or eleven different Lodges and Chapters regularly there is always someone new to meet. I also love the fact that I can provide the music to meetings that makes them special.



Is there anything you like to bring personally to the office?

I like putting my own spin on the pieces. Sometimes I have a bit of fun with the types of music that I play that put a smile on people's faces, or I drop in a quick change of time signature just to keep people on their toes, when processioning for instance. It's the small bits that make things interesting, especially as there aren't many Organists left.

How long have you been a Freemason?

I was initiated into Fleur de Lis Lodge No.8969 in 1991 and was Master in 1999. After my time as Immediate Past Master I took the role of Almoner in the Lodge and received my first Provincial rank around 2007. I took over as Provincial Grand Organist around eight years ago.

What made you join Freemasonry?

Before I joined Masonry, I was a member of a darts team at my regular pub. One evening the owner of the pub asked me for a lift to his meeting as he didn't have any other way of getting there. After I had given the landlord a few lifts, I asked what it was all about, and he said it was a charitable group. Now I like charity and do what I can, and I like a group that shares camaraderie, so he invited me along to a few social events and that was it: I was hooked. I joined up as soon as my working life allowed.

What do you enjoy about Freemasonry as a whole?

I like being able to look after people. It is why I enjoy the Almoner role. The personal support that can be offered is just as important as any help people receive financially. I also like the breadth and diversity of the people we get to meet.

Is there anything you would like to bring attention to in the Province?

I'd just like all capable musicians to take up the cause and let their local Lodges and Chapters know if they can help with the music, especially those who have to struggle with pre-recorded music.



THE ROYAL ARCH



JOIN NOW
Contact Dennis

Speak to your Lodge Chapter Liaison Officer
or email the Provincial Grand
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dnfordham@aol.com

The Communications Team

The East Kent Province's Communications Team, reporting to Assistant Provincial Grand Master Trevor Carter, is here to help keep you informed about activities and events in the Province and to facilitate effective communication between Lodges, Chapters and the general public.

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A REMINDER



And finally, Brethren and Companions: a reminder that the members-only portal "Your Province" — a.k.a. YP2 — is the principal source of information for all Craft and Royal Arch Freemasons in East Kent.

This secure website is full of interesting material that will support all Master Masons and Companions irrespective of experience or rank.

To register, please visit the Provincial Website
www.eastkentfreemasons.org and click on:

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