

THE PROVINCIAL



ISSUE 75

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A great day out for Veterans and their families

Male Breast Cancer

Navigating the journey of male breast cancer



The Provincial

The Magazine of East Kent Freemasons

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Editor's Notes

**Welcome to issue 75 of
The Provincial, your annual
printed magazine.**

The Communications team have invited me back to edit one more edition of the magazine. Once again we are using the cloud-based desk top publisher which lends itself to a team approach to the design. I am once again grateful to Paul Gear, Paul Goodwin and all the other contributors for the part they have played in putting this together.



Andrew Notley

Articles in this issue range from 'Breast Cancer in Men' to 'How to Help the Hard of Hearing' and from 'The Not Forgotten' event at Quex Park to reports from around the Province. There are also reports from both Deputies and all four Assistant Provincial Grand Masters.

As you will see on page 8, sixty-one East Kent Freemasons achieved Long Service Awards in 2024. One completed seventy years, eleven achieved sixty years and a long list celebrated fifty years, forty-two in the Craft and six in the Royal Arch. Past Provincial Grand Master John Bonomy is one of those celebrating sixty years' membership and we feature him on page 10. We salute them all for their long commitment to Freemasonry.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *The Provincial*. I wish you all a peaceful Christmas and a happy and healthy 2025, a year in which there is much to look forward to in East Kent.

Andrew Notley

Front Cover: East Kent Light Blues Brother, Rocky Ramharak, prepares to go gliding.

www.eastkentfreemasons.org

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The Provincial Grand Master's Christmas Message

"Membership of Craft and Chapter is a single journey"



Neil Hamilton Johnstone

Another year has gone by and during that relatively short time much has happened in the life of our Province – far too much to try and cover in what is in effect a reflection on the past twelve months. There have been many highs and a few lows as is perhaps to be expected in any organisation but, without doubt, the highs have outweighed the lows.

The Province of East Kent continues to move forward steadily in a concerted and co-ordinated way to become stronger and even more responsive to the needs and expectations of its members. I am keen to give credit for this to the Provincial Executive who work tirelessly and consistently to address, in particular, our membership challenge which is so essential in our determination to maintain the vibrant and progressive Province that we all enjoy.

You will note that I refer to 'the Provincial Executive' and not 'the Craft and Royal Arch Executives'. We have one Executive in this Province, the members of which work closely and effectively together sharing experiences, pursuing projects, addressing challenges and providing support to all our Lodges, Chapters and members.

The 'one Province' concept is something that I have long advocated and it has increasingly proven successful in reinforcing the message that membership of Craft and Chapter is a single journey.

You will no doubt be interested to read the articles in this magazine from each of the 'Chains', but they will be too modest to mention their personal commitment to the hard work involved in their respective portfolios. So I take the opportunity to thank them and their teams for their invaluable contributions in taking us forward together as a Province. Utilising their skills and those of their teams we will, in the coming months, be increasing our community engagement activities, building and developing the positive image of Freemasonry. Every member of the Provincial Executive will be playing their part in that, as indeed I am sure, will all our Lodges, Chapters and members in one way or another.

In my travels around the Province I am heartened to hear from those Brethren and Companions I talk with, that they enjoy their Freemasonry. In addressing the membership

challenge, the majority are also keen to embrace novel opportunities for growth, retention and involvement. This is a refreshingly welcome departure from the 'we've always done it that way' thinking and I applaud their forward-looking approach wholeheartedly.

I do not want to spend too much time in this short article repeating matters that you will have heard and read elsewhere. However, I do want to thank you once more for your continuing support of the 2025 Festival. We have just about a year left to run and my sincere wish is that we reach, and hopefully exceed, the target we have set ourselves. Let us all conclude this Festival by demonstrating not merely the fact that we can raise money, but more importantly that so many lives are changed for the better through our commitment to one of the fundamental aims of Freemasonry.

I hope that we will all enjoy the opportunity to spend time at Christmas with our loved ones, but let us not forget that there are some who perhaps need more than a passing thought to make theirs more enjoyable as well.

So to all within the family of East Kent Freemasons, Margaret and I wish you a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.



EAST KENT LIGHT BLUES

By Nigel Mann



What a couple of months we've had!

The East Kent Light Blues have certainly been busy during September and October. We've been active in all of our various guises and have demonstrated at first-hand just how rewarding being an East Kent Light Blue can be.

Firstly, we enjoyed two Saturday Social Breakfasts – one in Gravesend, the other in Ashford. These are always a good morning, and a great chance for the Province's newer members to catch up, swap stories and to ask and answer questions. These are exclusively social gatherings, there is no dress code and definitely no schedule. We typically meet at the host town's Wetherspoon and orders for various sizes of breakfast are submitted coupled with several gallons of coffee. At the Gravesend meeting, we were also provided with a whistle-stop tour of Gravesend by Ian Pollard who showed us sights such as the Pocahontas Memorial and the Gravesend pier (with a peek across to Essex). Plans are being drawn for the next Breakfast. Do join us if you can.

Secondly, the Old Roffensian Lodge (home of the Light Blues) held their September Meeting at the Old School House in Faversham, where we not only enjoyed an excellent Masonic meeting, but were also treated to a fascinating talk by Lyndon Jones on the

considerable history of the Faversham Masonic Centre. It was built in 1587 and still sports 300 year-old school graffiti etched into its wooden walls. If you ever get the opportunity to visit one of the three Craft Lodges (or one Royal Arch Chapter) that meet here, I would highly recommend it and the caterers put on a good spread too.

Thirdly, in October the Light Blues Demonstration Team were hosted by Snar Gate Lodge No. 6770 in Dover where we were invited to demonstrate a ceremony of Initiation complete with various nuggets and narration, signalled by a bell rung by Steve Salisbury (sometimes, even at the appropriate part of the ceremony). On this occasion we were under some undue pressure as our candidate for the evening was none other than Assistant Provincial Grand Master, Trevor Carter.

Thankfully, Trevor was the model Initiate and was expertly led through the ceremony by James Wright of Septem Lodge No. 7788. (No pressure there James!) The Working Tools were then presented and explained to the candidate by Rob Carter (Trevor's son) who did so with supreme confidence – a real treat for all those present. Finally, we were privileged to witness Freemasonry's quickest and most significant promotion, as the newly-made Entered Apprentice returned to the Lodge in full Assistant Provincial Grand Master regalia!!

A magnificent Festive Board followed and yet another memorable Light Blues night was recorded.

Should any Light Blue wish to make their daily advancement in Masonic knowledge there is a wide variety of opportunities available through Your Province, our own Provincial Website or by logging in to Solomon hosted by Grand Lodge.

Lastly (and at the time of writing we're still a few days away), the Light

Blues will do golfing battle with the Dark Blues for the highly prestigious David Graeme Trophy. This will be held at the Weald of Kent Golf Club on Friday 25th October and as usual the competition will be fierce. It would be fair to say that the Light Blues very much have the bragging rights at this annual fixture having won the Trophy three times out of four, but the margin of victory is getting slimmer each year.

Editor's postscript: The Light Blues team won for the fourth time.

The East Kent Light Blues Brothers have almost 400 members and life membership is just £10. The above events offer just a slice of what's available and give every new Freemason a chance to enhance their social circle, to share Masonic experiences and learn a little more about our amazing institution. To join us please visit <https://eklbb.org.uk/>

For any advice regarding Masonic education, or to register interest in joining the Light Blues Demo Team, please contact Steve Salisbury at education@ekprovince.co.uk

If you happen to be a Light Blue and a golfer, please reach us at golf@ekprovince.co.uk



The Not Forgotten Association

Restoring dignity, confidence and independence to veterans since 1920

Article and Photos

Martin Li

The Not Forgotten (TNF) is an association (registered charity 1150541) that provides a varied programme of social activities, outings, respite and challenge breaks for Veterans and wounded service personnel. It helps to improve physical and mental health, address isolation and loneliness and promotes a sense of community and balance.



The Masonic Province of East Kent supported TNF's drive-in concert at the expansive grounds of Quex Park in Birchington on a sunny day in September.

Some 150 Veterans and fifty of their helpers sang and clapped along to Queen, Tom Jones and Take That tribute acts, played games, enjoyed Pimms and a delicious hog roast lunch and tea and cake. The key purpose of the event was to allow Veterans to socialise. Many find it difficult to get out and TNF remains true to its founder's vision by fighting isolation through offering "comfort, cheer and entertainment" to those wounded in war. Sharing principles that also guide Freemasons, the charity seeks to "talk to everyone as a friend, regardless of rank or fortune, but most especially as an equal human being".

In 1919, American soprano Marta Cunningham witnessed the "suffering, silence and loneliness" of WWI Veterans in a Ministry of Pensions hospital. This horrified her, and she and her friends soon set about organising tea parties, concerts and outings for the veterans. Within a year they had supported some 10,000 men.

Thanks to the support of the Royal Family, other charities and the public, around one million men and women have benefitted from TNF's activities since 1920. (A WWII air raid destroyed the charity's records, so the precise number is not known.)

The Quex Park concert was part of a packed calendar of events that TNF organises, including hospital visits, outings, drives and tea concerts. It was one of five drive-in concerts around the country that Freemasons supported during the week in aid of the charity. These started in York and moved on to Hereford, Blenheim Palace and Quex Park, and finished at Helmingham Hall in Suffolk. Over the week, the five events hosted some 856 Veterans and helpers (including a D-Day Veteran and one aged 104), supported by 139 Freemasons. The multiple locations are important because many Veterans wouldn't be able to get to events that required significant travel.

Jamie Gwatkin, Provincial Grand Almoner of Suffolk and the principal masonic contact with the charity, commented that the military shares many of the values and principles of Freemasonry, such as integrity, service and respect. Supporting the charity is a natural way for Freemasons to put into action the Armed Forces Covenant.

Attending VIPs included Deputy Lord Lieutenant Clive Stevens, the Mayors of Medway and Broadstairs and St Peters, the Deputy Mayor of Ashford, Provincial Grand Master Neil Hamilton Johnstone, his Deputy Philip South and two of his Assistants Trevor Carter and Peter Rhodes.

Matt Jury, who served in the Royal Navy for ten years, co-ordinated the

team of East Kent Freemasons at Quex Park. Over twenty volunteers from the province carried out various duties, including greeting and engaging with guests and VIPs, helping to deliver food and drink, and picking up litter. With some guests having restricted mobility, one of the key tasks for volunteers was to direct car parking and ensure guests settled into their seats with a good view of the stage. Another logistical challenge the team dealt with impressively was to deliver the hog roast and other refreshments to attendees.

The impact on Veterans of events such as this can be unexpected and profound. One Veteran enjoyed the Hereford concert so much he signed up for the one the following day at Blenheim Palace. There, he met a trustee of a local museum who put him in contact with four members of his former battalion of the Royal Green Jackets, whom he hadn't seen in forty years.

For those of us without military or Veteran experience, the Quex Park event provided a glimpse of the challenges facing men and women who return from active service with emotional and/or physical scars. Many such scars are unseen. Even physical disabilities are often not visible, as evidenced by army Veteran John Ray. He is part of the TNF team and is a double amputee, although you would never know watching him hurrying about in his organising capacity.

TNF's Drive-In at Quex Park

THE DAY HELPED ME FEEL SOCIALLY INCLUDED, I FELT THAT I FITTED IN.

Covid lockdowns were challenging for many people, but many military Veterans who were already struggling with issues, found it devastating to be confined to their homes for a year. Many lost the confidence to go out.

TNF's Chief Executive, Colonel (retired) Richard Walker, referenced one such veteran who hadn't left his home in three or four years until he attended an event like this. Colonel Richards explained that it can take Veterans one or two years to build enough confidence to start re-engaging with the outside world. One attending Veteran in his forties suffers from PTSD and is housebound. His Veterans' association persuaded him to come to the Quex Park concert, which the Veteran described as a "safe space" for him.

Neil Hamilton Johnstone, Head of East Kent Freemasons, said, *'The Not Forgotten Association is a fantastic organisation that provides vital support to ex-service personnel, Veterans, and their families. They offer a range of activities and services to help those who have served their country to rebuild their lives and overcome the challenges they may face. We are wholeheartedly dedicated to upholding the Armed Forces Covenant. Our aim is to ensure that all individuals who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, as well as their families, are treated equitably and with the utmost respect.'*



Extract of a letter from the TNF Chief Executive

Dear Provincial Grand Master,

Please find attached a heartfelt thank you from The Not Forgotten and Jamie Gwatkin for the exceptional co-delivered event at Quex Park on 19th September. I thoroughly enjoyed the day so much and it was a great pleasure to meet you and the team. I smiled all the way home, as I am sure you did too!

Please also take a moment to ponder the impact communicated so powerfully by one of our new guests here:

"The day made me feel socially included, and I felt that I fitted in. As a disabled Veteran, my injuries make it very difficult to get out and about doing things that normal people do. After time this chips away at your mental health and it has done so for me, until I discovered The Not Forgotten and attended your Drive-In. I was feeling very isolated, completely ignored, and frankly left to rot by the country I was injured in serving. I came home from the Drive-In absolutely beaming with positivity and since that day my mental health and outlook on life has improved dramatically and I have not stopped talking about it since. I now feel strongly that my service to my country was not all one-sided, and it is The Not Forgotten Team I must thank, from the bottom of my heart."

We do hope we can remain connected and deliver more community focussed impact together in the future too. The delivery of these events fundamentally depends upon partnership and sponsorship.

Respectfully, Richard Walker OBE
Chief Executive, The Not Forgotten

For more information please visit www.thenotforgotten.org

Long Service Congratulations

The Provincial Grand Master / Grand Superintendent, together with the Executive team, offer their 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 the Province of East Kent in particular.

CRAFT 70 YEARS

Bro Ian Thomas DAVIDSON

Duke of Kent

5818

Very sadly W Bro Eric Hay **PAGDC**, of Lodge St George Bahrain No. 7389, passed away just six weeks short of receiving his seventieth Long Service Certificate which was due on 18th November.

CRAFT 60 YEARS

W Bro Rex Henry BOBE	PPJGD	Norman	3502
W Bro Cecil Arthur Henry BOORMAN	PPJGW	Prince Edwin's	125
W Bro Michael George HARRIDINE	PAGDC	Pentalpha Lodge of East Kent	8535
W Bro John David MEDCALF	PPAGReg	Invicta Lodge of Ashford	709
W Bro Allan Smellie MELROSE	PPJGW	Adam's Lodge	158
W Bro Gordon Edward HOLTER	PPSGW	Saint Augustine	972
W Bro Michael Frederick NAPPER	PPSGW	Chestfield	9058
RW Bro John BONOMY	PProvGM	Temple	558
W Bro Rodney Earle MARSH	PPSGW	Royal Military	1449
W Bro Derek James Robin DOUGHTY	PPGReg	Royal Engineers Chatham	4465
Bro Rowland Frank POLLITT		George Hamilton	3452

CRAFT 50 YEARS

W Bro David Bruce WEAR	PPGSwdB	Macartney	3283
Bro John Herbert NORRIS		Wakefield of Hythe	6059
W Bro Thomas Anthony DENNE	PJGD PProvDepGDC	Invicta Lodge of Ashford	709
Bro Victor Horton GRIFFITHS		Minnis Bay	8496
W Bro Albert David SPENDLEY	PPDepGSwdB	United Service	3124
W Bro John Jude Bosco TOOMEY	PPDepGSwdB	Lord Warden	1096
W Bro Martin POLLEY	PPDepGSwdB	Richard Watts	8534
RW Bro Geoffrey Gordon DEARING	PProvGM	Douglas	1725
W Bro Barry Edward TUCKER	PPDepGSuptWks	Renham	8211
W Bro Daniel Frederick FIRTH	PAGDC	New Composite	7522
Bro Peter Dodson HINDLE		Corinthian	1208
W Bro Nicholas Edward MURRAY	PPJGW	Isle of Sheppey	6769
Bro Martin James PHIPPEN		Gillingham Lodge of Friendship	8453
W Bro Gerald Edward DARNLEY	PPDepGSuptWks	Simon Langton	7586
W Bro Roger WHITEHOUSE	PPSGW	Adam's	158
W Bro Ian Irving SMITH	PPAGReg	Watch and Ward	8809
W Bro Edwin Charles READ	PProvAGDC	St Michaels	1273
Bro William McEWAN-CARGILL		United Industrious	31
W Bro Anthony PLUCKROSE	PPGChStwd	Prince Edwin's	125
W Bro Peter David KENT	PGStB PPGSwdB	Mid-Kent Masters	3173
W Bro Barry Reginald MORGAN	PPDEPGSwdB	Cinque Ports	1206
W Bro Michael John IVES	PPSGW	Gundulph	1050
W Bro Christopher REBBECK	PPSGD	Cornwallis Lodge of Installed Masters	9515
W Bro Keith Alfred DOWNING	PPGReg	Nore Command	9199
Bro William Joseph WILSON		Peace and Unity	4101
W Bro Timothy Shaun BAKER	PPJGD	United Industrious	31
W Bro Alan PLEDGER		West Kent Masters' Lodge	5778
Bro Michael Harry Scott BRIDGEFORD		Simon Langton	7586
W Bro Peter BROWN	PPAGDC	Sharpers Hall	9196
W Bro Keith Clive SMITH	PAGDC PPGSwdB	King's Navy	2901
W Bro John Raymond ALLEN	PPDepGReg	Pentangle	1174
W Bro David JECKELLS	PPAGDC	St George Abadan	6058
W Bro Barry Rogerson PIZER	PPSGD	White Ensign Gillingham	4180
W Bro John Albert HANCHETT	PPGReg	Lewis's	1209
W Bro Eric William GEE	PPDepGSuptWks	Corinthian	1208

CRAFT 50 YEARS (Continued)

W Bro Robert John CATLING	PPGSuptWks	Radnor	2587
W Bro Andrew NOTLEY	PSGD PAsstProvGM	Pentalpha Lodge of East Kent	8535
W Bro Rodney Carl BRITTON		Wakefield of Hythe	6059
Bro Peter Keith PITMAN		Snar Gate	6770
Bro Argent Frederick CARNEY	PPJGD	Old Manwoodian	7636
Bro William Leonard TURNHAM	PPSGD	Lodge of Freedom	77
Bro Selwyn Francis Wade PHILLIPS		Dickens	8047

CHAPTER 50 YEARS

E Comp Brian Richard LEDGER	PAGDC PPGSuptWks	Agricola	4501
E Comp Alvin Lewis Michel FENNER	PPDepGReg	St George's	4387
E Comp Peter David WILLIAMS	PAGSoj PProvDepGDC	Triangle	184
E Comp Graham SMITH	PGStB PProvGSoj	United Service	3124
E Comp Gary Homer CHAPMAN	PPGSuptWks	Belvidere	503
E Comp Lucjon Leon FINNIS		Wellington	784

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

Fifty Years in the Royal Arch

Graham Smith celebrates fifty years in Royal Arch Masonry

The Companions of United Service Chapter No. 3124 in Sheerness were delighted to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary in Royal Arch Masonry of one of their Past First Principals, Graham Smith, at their September Convocation.

To mark the occasion the Companions were also delighted to receive a visit to the Chapter by the Deputy Grand Superintendent, John Kennett Baker, accompanied by Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies, Jeffrey Tiley.

During the ceremony, presided over by the Chapter's First Principal, Paul Pavitt, the Deputy Grand Superintendent presented Graham with his fifty-year long service certificate in an entertaining and

informative manner.

Graham then reminisced about his illustrious career in Freemasonry, which spans nearly sixty years. He described how he came to join the Royal Arch, which provided a pathway to many other Degrees in Freemasonry, some of which he was later proud to become Head of the Order.

Graham told of his many happy years in the Royal Arch, and also recounted his work career in an often humorous manner. He reflected on his time in the Merchant Navy, through to his role as a Director of Ward and Partners Estate Agents.

After the convocation the



The Deputy Grand Superintendent presenting Graham Smith with his fifty-year certificate.

Companions retired to a very enjoyable Festive Board, where John Baker, Jeffrey Tiley and Graham Smith were each presented with a delightful bouquet of flowers to mark this special occasion.

A Diamond Anniversary

Report: Stuart Bonomy, photos: Rocky Ramharak

No fireworks were needed in Temple Lodge No. 558 on the 5th of November when Past Provincial Grand Master, John Bonomy OBE, was presented with a Long Service Certificate to mark his sixtieth anniversary as a Freemason.

Fifty-seven Brethren led by Provincial Grand Master, Neil Hamilton Johnstone, Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Phillip South, and Assistant Provincial Grand Master, Peter Rhodes, were there to mark the occasion. They were joined by many other illustrious Brethren that had played a part in John Bonomy's Masonic life.

The Provincial Grand Master delivered a very insightful presentation of the certificate which included many interesting points regarding John's personal, working and Masonic life. John was most grateful for the presentation and kind words. He then gave a brief response saying how he became a Freemason and some of the memorable occasions he had experienced over the last sixty years. In particular how he had been privileged, through Freemasonry, to have met so many wonderful people.

John was born on the 4th February 1933 in Blantyre, Scotland and moved to Folkestone with his family while still a child. He was initiated on the 3rd November 1964 in Temple Lodge No. 558 in Folkestone, reaching the Master's Chair in 1972. In the Royal Arch he was exalted in Temple Chapter No. 558 in 1966 and worked his way to First Principal in 1975.

After a stellar rise through Provincial and Grand Ranks, John was invested, in 1990, as Grand Superintendent in and over the Royal Arch in East Kent. On subsequently being invested as Provincial Grand Master in 1992, John became the first in the Province of East Kent to hold both high offices simultaneously. He held these offices with distinction until he retired in 2004.

Outside of Freemasonry, John has been very active in his local community. He served as a magistrate for over thirty years and was honoured with an OBE by Queen Elizabeth II for his services to magistracy.

Once the meeting was closed, the Brethren retired to the Festive Board at the Folkestone Bowls Club. It was much enjoyed by all and ran on late into the evening!



John Bonomy OBE with the Provincial Grand Master



Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Philip South



Brethren and Companions, as I look back on the last twelve months my first thoughts are just how quickly it's gone but then they turn to just how much we have achieved in that time.

At the forefront of this must be the successful adoption by most Lodges in our Province of the Pathway, which is undoubtedly bearing fruit. As I and other members of the Executive travel around the Province we constantly see new members being initiated, hear of Lodges with a backlog of

work and see many doing multiple ceremonies. I'm sure we will see the same results for the Archway given time. With both of these initiatives the future is looking good.

The old saying is "new members bring in new members". To achieve this however we must ensure those new to Freemasonry are looked after by those of us with a few miles on the clock. This is a job for us all Brethren and Companions, not just the Mentor.

We have recently seen the completion of the first year of the Visiting Officer scheme. This is proving to be very effective. Please use your Visiting Officer, who is there to assist and if he doesn't know the answer, he certainly will know a man that does.

One of the big decisions over the past twelve months has been to conjoin our two Festivals on the same day at Detling.

There are many positive reasons for this decision, not least making it easier on our busy diaries and only taking one day off from work. I do hope you can support the event on the 11th April 2025 so look out for the Calling Notices which will be coming out in the early New Year.

My last thoughts are with the 2025 Festival. We have made significant gains over the last year but there is still a lot to do. It has been a pleasure visiting Lodges presenting Festival Awards. However, Brethren and Companions, as we enter the last year we need to put our collective foot on the pedal. I'm sure with our usual East Kent drive we will get over the line and achieve our target of £3.5 million to support the wonderful work carried out by the MCF on our behalf.

Finally Brethren and Companions, can I wish you and your families a very enjoyable festive season but, most importantly, a happy and healthy New Year.

Presentation of Five Grand Lodge Certificates

A milestone in the growth of Old Manwoodian Lodge No. 7636

By Paul Gear, Provincial Grand Communications Officer

On the 5th October 2024, Old Manwoodian Lodge No. 7636 celebrated a significant milestone in its history. The Lodge's five newest members received their Grand Lodge Certificates, marking their commitment to Freemasonry and their progress in the Craft.

The Provincial Grand Communications Officer and Lodge Visiting Officer, Paul Gear, presented the certificates to the five new members in his own unique way, describing the significance of the certificate, its meaning and the symbols contained on it.

The presentation of these certificates not only signifies the growth of the Lodge, but also highlights its strong commitment to fostering the development of its members. The five new members bring a diverse set of skills and experiences to the Lodge, contributing to its rich tapestry of knowledge and expertise.

With the addition of these new members, Old Manwoodian Lodge No. 7636 is poised for an exciting future. The Lodge is committed to providing a supportive environment for its members, enabling them to grow both personally and professionally. The Lodge also aims to continue its charitable efforts, giving back to the community and making a positive impact on people's lives.



Exciting Times Ahead

Have we entered a New Masonic Era?

Deputy Provincial Grand Superintendent, John Baker

It's an interesting question. An era is generally accepted to be a "period of time, usually in history, that is different from other periods, because of particular characteristics or events", but that definition can be interpreted in a number of different ways.

In this country we have long associated specific eras with the reign of a Monarch and, with the accession of King Charles III to the throne, we are now in the 'New Carolean Era'. But a new Monarch alone can no longer solely define an era; there are many other characteristics and dimensions that make it different.

At one extreme we see differences that reflect events on a global scale, one obvious example being the rapid development of information technology, which has drastically changed the way we interact with each other, making communication faster, more efficient and more accessible.



The email has replaced traditional letter writing; applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Zoom etc. allow us to connect with friends, family and work colleagues wherever they are. Artificial intelligence is increasingly impacting on our lives and the pace of change is exponential.

But, what of Freemasonry? The French have an old saying, "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose" – broadly translated as, the more things change, the more they stay the same. If we consider Freemasonry in this light, we could argue that it has changed very little, particularly since the Union; our Masonic forebears



would certainly recognise our ritual and ceremonies, as well as the format of our meetings and the camaraderie we share at our Festive Boards. But what is clear is that Freemasonry has indeed experienced considerable change over the last few years, which is evidenced in many ways.

For example, we have a clear Strategic Roadmap setting out three key priorities for future success: i.e. to build a thriving membership, create a coherent organisation, and engage with the wider community.

We have a clear focus on communication that has enabled us to become a much more open organisation and engage more directly with every member, and we are creating a 'can do' attitude. Perhaps the most significant change is the explicit focus and demonstrable commitment at the most senior level to ensure that the Craft and the RA are recognised as one organisation on one journey. Perhaps encapsulated in a mantra of: *"One Organisation, One Journey, One Complete Freemason"*.

Are we at the start of a new Masonic Era? It's for future Masonic historians to come to a final judgement, but I believe we are. At the very least we're writing a new 'Chapter' in our Masonic history.

Around the Province

The following pages report on various activities and events in each group

Group 3 *Provincial Clay Shooting Team*

Report by Roger Wilkes

On Sunday September 22nd, the Masonic Centre at Howard Hall, Wigmore, hosted an Open Day. The event featured displays from various Lodges, Chapters, and Companion Orders. It also included representatives from the Order of Women Freemasons, the Widows Sons Motorcycle Lodge, and the Provincial Clay Shooting team.

The shooting stand, managed by Chairman Bernie Connolly, Treasurer Martin Lane, Secretary Roger Wilkes, and Committee Member Steve Ball, showcased shooting equipment and the prestigious "Freddy with a Gun" trophy, currently held by Steve Ball. A rotating picture display highlighted the club's history.



Throughout the afternoon, visiting Freemasons and members of the public enquired about the Provincial Shooting Club and the National Masonic Clay Shooting Association, for which Roger Wilkes serves as National Secretary. These enquiries were added to the club's information circulation list. The event was well received, with the diverse stands showcasing the fraternity's wide range of interests.

Group 6 *Weald of Kent Lodge - A night to remember*

Report by Mike Goldthorpe



Following their relocation to a new meeting place, the members of Weald of Kent Lodge No. 1854 met for their first installation meeting at the Tenterden Club. Having constructed the temple the Brethren, accompanied by numerous guests, gathered in harmony to witness the Installation of Dr Robert (Bob) Fisher into the Master's Chair. In addition to the Lodge Visiting Officer, Ian Sullivan, the Lodge was delighted to host a number of visitors including Assistant Provincial Grand Masters Mark Costelloe and Duncan Rouse, who took part by occupying the Senior Warden and Junior Warden chairs for part of the ceremony.

A great evening was had by all and the icing on the cake was the opportunity for the Lodge to present two cheques for £750, the first of these was to local charity, The Hub, and the second in favour of the East Kent 2025 Festival.

CHARITY

Assistant Provincial Grand Master, Peter Rhodes



Brethren and Companions, as 2024 draws to a close it is a good time to look back and reflect on the past year. For me personally, being invested as an Assistant Provincial Grand Master in April was a particular highlight, despite the investiture taking slightly longer than planned!

Editor's postscript - One of the Festival guests was taken ill and proceedings were delayed for a short while.

Prior to my promotion I was the Provincial Grand Charity Steward for six years, and in that role I experienced first-hand the fantastic work of the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) and the positive impact its support has made on many charities in East Kent and the communities they serve. This of course would not be possible without the generosity of our members, for which I offer my sincere thanks.

As we look forward to next year, we will of course see the conclusion of our Festival in support of the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF). The closing event will be held at the Leas Cliff Hall in Folkestone on Saturday **29th November 2025**. Please look out for booking details.

Over the past two 'post-Covid' years we have gained significant momentum in our endeavours to achieve our £3.5 million objective. With a concerted effort over the remaining Festival period, I am confident we will achieve our aim.

Regular payment plans in support of the 2025 Festival will be allowed to run until the end of 2026, with those pledges being included in the final total announced at the end of November. I would therefore strongly encourage everyone to consider extending their existing plan or commencing a new one.

Together, we will change lives.

I wish you and your families a peaceful Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

A message from Mark Bassant, Chairman of the 2025 Festival Committee

"With the end of the 2025 Festival now firmly in sight, we have a narrowing window of opportunity to reach our objective, so I would personally like to thank you for your wonderful efforts to date and encourage everyone to make that final push to get us over the line. Please look out for and support the forthcoming Festival Events, which provide the chance to have a great deal of fun and raise valuable funds at the same time"



Your Lodge or Chapter Charity Steward should by now have received one or two copies of '**In Search of the Lost Note**', the last album from the Cymbolick Penalties. It features the band along with contributions from a number of other East Kent Freemasons.

Please use it in a raffle or auction with the aim of raising at least £50 per CD for the 2025 Festival.

With 400 copies altogether, the Festival would benefit by at least £20,000, hopefully more.

2025 FESTIVAL

Our two Provincial Grand Charity Stewards, Colin Barden and Miki Smith, introduce themselves and their roles.



Colin Barden



Miki Smith

Brethren and Companions, although we were appointed separately in Craft and Chapter we work very much as a team together with the 2025 Festival Team, the Group Charity Coordinators and of course the many Lodge and Chapter Charity Stewards, all of whom do a fantastic job.

We are sure that you are aware that the 2025 Festival formally closes next year in the autumn and work is well underway in the planning of the Closing Festival. We look forward to celebrating the fantastic work that has been carried out to date and which we are sure will continue in

what is effectively the last year of this Festival.

We would like to take this opportunity to give you an insight into some of the fantastic support that has been given to organisations in the Province by the MCF this year and highlight how you can help ensure that this can continue to happen now and into the future.

Since our Craft and Chapter Festival meetings in April and May this year, the MCF have made grants to the sum of £209,568 to seven organisations in our Province, ranging from £3,000 to £60,000. The organisations have included the Alzheimer's and Dementia Support Services (£60k), Age UK - Herne Bay and Whitstable (£56k) and Dandelion Time (£60k). Also receiving grants were SNAAP, Childs Vision, Association of Friends Prince George Duke of Kent Court and most recently the Not Forgotten Charity, who held a Drive-In Garden Party at Quex Park for veterans and their families. The event was supported by many Brethren and Companions from East Kent as reported on pages 6 and 7.

In order to make these grants possible the MCF use the money we donate immediately it is received. That is why it is important we don't hold onto our donations until the end of the Festival but transfer them to the 2025 Relief Chest as soon as possible. It also means that we take advantage of a better interest rate as well, making more funds available for use.

As you can see our Province has benefitted from some fantastic grants and we need your help to make sure these can continue. One way you can help is to take out a direct debit for the remainder of the Festival if you haven't already. The end date for direct debits is December 2026 and remember, if you are a tax payer you can add 25% to your donation by signing up to Gift Aid. If you already have a direct debit in place we can check it for you and if it is coming to an end, we

ask you consider extending it until December 2026, or if you are in a Chapter take out a new one to assist them to achieve their objective. That will help tremendously to achieve our aim of £3.5 million.

Finally, we would both like to thank you for your continued support and offer our help in any way we can in all things charity related, ranging from simply providing you with information relating to your personal or Lodge/Chapter donations or helping with Relief Chest enquiries.

We can be contacted on the following email addresses:-

Miki Smith:
pgcsra@gmail.com

Colin Barden:

2025festival@ekprovince.co.uk



One-off donation



Regular Donation

2025 Festival Ball

21st June 2025

3 Course Meal

Entertainment by
ACOUSTIC RAIN
and
SUPERSONIC QUEEN

Ashford International Hotel
Simone Weil Avenue
Ashford, TN24 8UX.

17.00 Arrival, Carriages midnight

£60 per person



Discounted Rooms Available
£114 BB Sole Occupancy
£128 BB Double Occupancy

MEMBERSHIP

Assistant Provincial Grand Master, Mark Costelloe



Brethren and Companions, while the Members' Pathway and Archway give us the tools to grow our membership, our progress is ultimately reflected in the membership challenge — the balance between losses and gains. Achieving positive growth isn't the result of any single action, but rather the cumulative efforts of everyone in this Province.

Each of us plays an important role,

so what does this mean for us in East Kent? It starts with simply speaking openly and positively about your membership. It's about delivering the right message and explaining to others what membership means to you. Our external marketing campaigns, open days at Masonic centres, websites, Facebook pages, our wonderful museum in Canterbury, and our involvement in local charities and community events all help attract new members.

Most importantly, these efforts position us where we belong — at the heart of the communities we support. We also have a strong network of Membership Advisers and a thriving Light Blues Brothers Club. Our Mentors provide guided learning and our Lodge and Chapter Membership and Care

Teams work to support all members, helping us minimise avoidable losses. Our Almoners and Retention teams remain focused on this crucial area, while our dedicated Visiting Officers offer their experience, knowledge, and support to all Lodges and Chapters.

When you reflect on these collective efforts, I hope you feel proud of the role you play in this broader picture. Thank you for all your hard work — please continue your efforts, and together we will drive the Province of East Kent forward in a positive direction.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend seasonal greetings to you and your families, and offer my best wishes for a safe and healthy New Year.

Steve Wyatt, Provincial Membership Officer



I would like to start by giving my personal thanks to all Membership Advisers for the hard work and enthusiasm they put into the role. It is as a direct result of their work,

and that of those Lodges that continue to bring in new members, that the Province is in a stronger position than it has been since the end of the pandemic.

The Provincial Membership Team continues to work closely with the Provincial Communications Team and it is evident that 'targeted' social and other media campaigns are paying dividends with significant increases in enquiries. These have been particularly noticeable in the Thanet and Rochester areas. This increase in activity has resulted in us recently advertising for additional Membership Advisers to bolster our existing teams and I am pleased to say we have further membership advisers strategically placed within the Province.

Open Days are again at the forefront of planning within Centres and Lodges. If you are thinking of hosting an Open Day, the Membership Team and Open Day Advisory Team are here to help you in any way we can. We have a range of pop-ups, gazebos and other materials that can help to make your day successful.

Steve Wyatt can be contacted at membership@ekprovince.co.uk

VISITING VOLUNTEERS

Assistant Provincial Grand Master, Duncan Rouse



It is often said that the role of the Almoner is one of the most important in Freemasonry and I for one, having had the honour to serve as a Lodge Almoner and Provincial Grand Almoner, would not disagree.

The role of the Lodge Almoner underwent an important change in 2017 because of improvements that the newly amalgamated Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) wanted to implement in dealing with applications for support. It was felt that the application process would be more efficient and effective if each Masonic Province identified a small number of brethren who would act on behalf of the MCF in carrying out visits to those wishing to make an application for support. They would help in completing application forms and collecting supporting documentation to help the MCF in carrying out its assessment of such applications. These brethren were to be known as **Visiting Volunteers** (VVs), and part of their remit was also to help those brethren and families who were already beneficiaries of ongoing support from the MCF.

The Province of East Kent decided that it would look for a brother with Almoner experience in each of its eight regions and have one additional brother to act as cover for holidays, etc.

Each of those brethren received formal training from the MCF to prepare them for the role they were taking on. The VVs also work closely with the MCF's Advice and Support Team (AST) member responsible for our Province, who also carries out some of the more complex and challenging visits.

We have seen a few changes in the VV team over the years and our current team members are pictured below.



Group 1 David Barden Group 2 Mark Treadwell Group 3 Eddie Halpin



Group 4 Headley Grace Group 5 Mark Poddington Group 6 Richard Dixey



Group 7 Kevin Kemp Group 8 Phil Hadden Holiday Cover Neville Morris

Since the launch of the VV scheme in East Kent, our VVs have carried out over 400 visits and, together with the AST member, have been responsible for helping secure over 1,250 grants totalling over £3 million.

This milestone underscores the commitment of the MCF to supporting our brethren and their families in time of need and underlines the importance of the 2025 Festival where we are raising much needed funds to enable the MCF to continue its work.

I am very grateful to all those VVs, the MCF AST member and the Provincial Grand Almoner who, over the years, have dedicated time and made a commitment to carry out this important and often rewarding job.



Provincial Grand Almoner
Nigel Fitz



MCF AST member for East Kent
Linda Valevous

Subject to meeting the eligibility criteria the MCF is able to provide support in the form of grants for Daily Living Costs, Health Care and Wellbeing, and Children, Young People and Education.

The MCF helpline is 0800 035 6090.

“30 years and counting ... ♪”

Tony Eldridge, founding Provincial Choir Secretary and Music Director, looks back

When the Provincial Choir steps on to the stage in April next year, it will be the thirtieth time we have opened the proceedings at both Craft and Chapter Annual Festivals.

It was in the autumn of 1994 that Provincial Grand Secretary at the time, Jack Ebling, called me into the Office – the challenge set by the then Provincial Grand Master, John Bonomy, was to form a Provincial Choir, the former Choir having disbanded some years before. Recognition must go to all who have taken to the stage since our first appearance at the Winter Gardens in 1995. John Bonomy was kind enough to recognise our efforts on the day and, in that year's Provincial magazine said, *'this introduction to the proceedings was both moving and very much appreciated...'*

It has been a great privilege, as well as a lot of fun – but I could not have done it without the support of my wife Judy and ALL those who have contributed as singers, accompanists, and conductors, to whom I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude. A special mention for Chris Metherell, who still sings with the Choir and shared the load as Secretary, working alongside me in my role as Music Director for many years.

In the early years, my good friend George Vass agreed to conduct



The Provincial Choir at the Provincial Grand Lodge meeting Festive Board on the 19th April 2024

and my wife, Judy, made a special arrangement of the traditional Sung Grace.

The core group became part of a seventy-strong choir of ladies and brethren for a Rochester Cathedral Concert in 1999 and for four Gala Festivals of Christmas Music. And there have been many other memorable appearances including nine Consecrations in the Province (Craft and Chapter). As our reputation for musical excellence spread, members of the Choir led the singing, as guest choristers, in the Grand Temple for the Consecration of Metropolitan Grand Stewards' Chapter. A particularly rewarding addition to our programme for many years was the annual Red Cross of Constantine Holy Cross Day Family Evensong Service in beautiful Boxley Church.

Whilst still singing with the Choir..."a time comes" as they say – and I will soon be handing over the reins to a new Music Director, DerekTompsett, who will be ably assisted by the current Choir Secretary, Steve Davies, and Conductor, Ian Blowers.

It is also hoped that the most recent choir accompanists, Graham Mitchell, John Fry, and Barry Kemp, will also continue to support our music-making when they can.

Looking to the future, and the combined ceremony in April 2025, Derek and the Choir will be extending a warm welcome to new singers (Master Masons and above) who would like to join the Choir or have a chat about what is involved. Those interested, please contact Secretary Steve Davies on **steve.davies.4330@gmail.com** or 07976 707876.

I firmly believe that music provides an additional and spiritual dimension to our lives and to our Masonry and, as we say in Sir Edward Elgar Lodge – formed by members of the Choir to celebrate the heritage and gift of music – “Yours in Harmony”.

In special memory of David Blowers and Michael Bailey, both stalwart supporters of the choir.

Not all Masons meet in the evening!

By Paul Goodwin

For some, evening meetings can be a problem – getting to a Lodge or Chapter after work, driving at busy times and late at night, eating late, leaving partners alone, or family and other social commitments are all reasons that may make it difficult to attend an evening meeting.

Daytime Lodges and Chapters offer an excellent alternative.

While there are a number of Lodges that meet on Saturdays, there are two Lodges and one Chapter in East Kent that meet during the day on weekdays.

One of those Lodges is **Renham Lodge No. 8211**, which meets at Sittingbourne Masonic Centre. The Lodge originally met in the evening but has since become a daytime Lodge meeting four times a year. The regular meetings are held at 11 am on the fourth Thursday of September, November and February and followed by a four course lunch. The installation starts at 10.30 on the last Saturday in April. The meetings usually end around 3 pm, providing the opportunity for evening social events or simply a quiet night in. You can find out more about Renham Lodge on their website <https://renhamlodge8211.org.uk/>

The second daytime Lodge is **Essetesforde Lodge No. 9746**, which meets at the Ashford Masonic Centre.

The Essetesforde Lodge was established twenty years ago as a Lodge that held its meetings in the afternoon of a weekday. The Lodge meets five times a year, followed by a self-service buffet where everyone is encouraged to sit where they choose. After the Installation Meeting there is a cooked lunch. The Regular Meetings start at 2pm and end around 5.30pm.



Attendees at Essetesforde meetings are encouraged to gather around to see the tracing boards being drawn.

There are certain variations in the Ritual, one such example being the tracing boards that are hand-drawn on boards on the floor of the Lodge at every meeting, which adds to the interest for the many guests that attend the meetings.

To find out more about Essetesforde Lodge visit <https://masonic-hall-ashford.co.uk/freemasonry/esstesford-e-lodge-no-9746/>

Weekday daytime meetings are not restricted to Lodges.

Monckton Chapter No. 9236 meets at the Maidstone Masonic Centre on the first Tuesday of March (Installation), June and November.

The Chapter meets at 10.30 am followed by lunch. Contact the Scribe Ezra by email: kenbeckett@tiscali.co.uk

If you think a daytime Lodge or Chapter could be for you then go along as a visitor. They will be delighted to welcome you!

Daytime meetings are ideal for those that prefer to travel in daylight hours or to dine at lunchtime.

COMMUNICATIONS

Assistant Provincial Grand Master, Trevor Carter



It has been a busy and productive year for the Comms Team and there is no sign of things slowing down in the near future.

One of the challenges has been to increase the level of engagement by both our members and the public at large, a fine balance between enough contact and too much. I believe we have reached a happy medium and are now able to keep you informed, without overloading you with information.

As part of this process we have streamlined our lines of communication by producing "The Second Rising", sent out every three to four weeks depending on how much news is available. In this, we communicate news and events, include links to broader articles which are published on the Provincial Website and direct you to the events booking facility.

The website is undergoing a facelift and further work will be carried out soon to align it with Grand Lodge's Brand Book. However, this will be a

continuation of our ongoing work, along with updating the Your Province website (YP2), to improve speed and accessibility.

We have welcomed some new members to the Comms Team to cope with the workload and this has enabled us to support Lodges and Chapters in getting their news published. We have Writers, Editors, Photographers and even Videographers available to support your events and presentations and I would urge you to make good use of them.

As I have travelled around the Province I have challenged Lodges to send details of their events and good news to the team. I have asked that you quite simply send a short video from the event or a one-line email perhaps, telling us where you are and what you are doing. The team will follow up with you to produce an article where appropriate. Details of where to send it are given below.

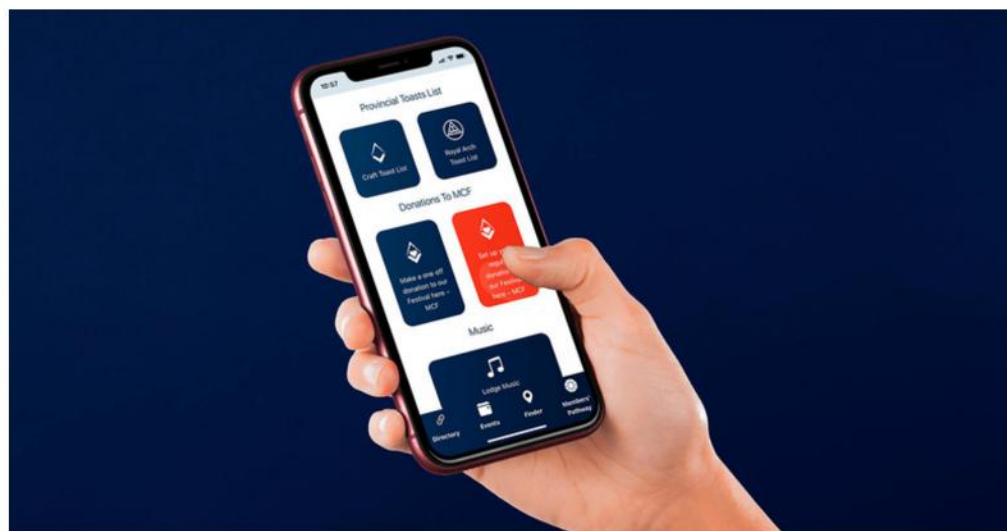
By now, you should have access to the new Provincial App.

This is the first app to be published by any Province as far as we are aware and I hope that you will find it useful to help navigate the many sources of information held by the Province. The app will be updated regularly and new features will be added in the near future. My thanks go to Comms Team member, Sam Watson, who was instrumental in designing and publishing it.

Finally, I must thank the Comms Team for all of their hard work on your behalf. They are a great asset to the Province, helping to bring our activities to the notice of the membership and to the wider public.

Brethren and Companions, may I wish you a happy and peaceful year's end and I look forward to meeting many of you in 2025.

If you have news or events, please let us know. You can do this via the new app or simply contact:-
news@ekprovince.co.uk



Living the best you can despite breast cancer

Article By Martin Li

Peter Swinbourne was preparing to take the Chair of United Industrious Lodge No. 31 in September 2019 when a medical diagnosis threw his life into turmoil. Medical tests diagnosed a lump in his chest to be stage three breast cancer. Surgeons operated urgently and removed a four-centimetre tumour.

Breast cancer is typically thought of as a women's condition although everyone has some breast tissue so anyone can get it. Most breast cancer in men occurs in older age although it can occur at any age, so it's important to be aware of the risk, and to check.

Peter first noticed a lump in his chest in 2016. Doctors carried out tests and deemed the lump to be innocuous gristle. Three years later, a month before his scheduled installation, he noticed the lump had grown larger and become sore. When his GP checked the lump again, he referred Peter to hospital, where a biopsy confirmed the cancer.

Having experienced the disease, Peter is keen to raise awareness of the risk of breast cancer in men. The main symptoms to look for are:

- Painless lump or thickening of the skin on the chest or armpit
- Changes to the nipple or skin covering the chest, such as dimpling, puckering, scaling or changes in colour
- Change in the shape or look of your nipple, such as it turning inwards or a rash (which may look like eczema)
- Discharge or bleeding from the nipple
- Changes in the size or shape of either side of your chest
- Sores or ulcers on your chest

The medical advice is to check your chest regularly, so you know what's normal for you.

This makes it easier to notice any changes in the size, look or feel of your chest or nipples.

It's important to note that lumps and some other symptoms are common and don't necessarily mean you have breast cancer. What's important, Peter emphasises, is to get any potential symptoms checked by a GP early, just in case. Finding any cancer early may mean it's easier to treat. A few months ago, one of Peter's neighbours discovered a lump in his chest. He had it tested, and the lump was found to be harmless.

Peter feels he will have achieved something if he encourages just one person to have a breast cancer check that catches a tumour early. *"Hopefully, no-one will find anything wrong, but you need to keep checking, just in case,"* he says.

More worrying for Peter was taking a test for the harmful BRCA gene. This significantly raises the chance of contracting breast or ovarian cancer and can be hereditary. This means Peter could have passed to any of his five children a heightened risk of contracting cancer. Happily, this test came back all clear.

A beacon of light that Peter recalls fondly from the dark days of the cancer is the supportiveness of his Lodge and wider Freemasonry fraternity. Peter feared he would have to postpone his term as Master, but senior Lodge members asked Grand Lodge for permission to defer the Installation.

Grand Lodge agreed to a deferral to give Peter time to have his surgery. The Provincial Representative also made himself available for a revised date. Peter duly took the Chair on 7th November 2019 and, because of restrictions on meetings during Covid, remained Master until October 2021.



Peter Swinbourne

He feels the support he received during the cancer brought the Lodge closer together. *"An event such as this is when the brotherly love all comes together. It shows what Freemasonry is all about,"* he says.

Treatment for breast cancer typically involves surgery to remove the breast tissue (mastectomy), possibly with chemotherapy and radiation therapy.

Although Peter's surgery was successful and the cancer is hopefully at bay, he continues to take a cocktail of drugs and have regular check-ups.

He also experiences shooting pains in his arm. The drugs can have a range of side effects too, including hot/cold flushes, anxiety, weight gain, brain fog, fatigue and blood clots. However, Peter remains upbeat. *'At least I'm still here, and that's the main thing,'* he says.

For more information, please look at Cancer Research's Website

www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/breast-cancer/types/male-breast-cancer

Around the Province

Group 3 *Group Cycle Ride*

Report by David Mantle



The MAMILS waiting to start at the Wigmore Centre

On the 8th September, fifteen middle-aged men in lycra (MAMILS) from Group 3 took part in the first Group Cycle Ride from Wigmore Masonic Centre through the beautiful Kentish countryside to Sittingbourne Masonic Centre, and then on to Sheerness Masonic Centre where they took refreshments.

The ride, organised by Cymon Williams of Gore Court Lodge, was a huge success and with the pledges received, they hope to present the East Kent 2025 Festival with a donation of £1,000 on behalf of Group 3.

Group 5 *£10,000 Donation to Maidstone Hospital's Paediatric Resus' Unit*

Report by Paul Routley

It was during a routine visit to Maidstone Hospital's Riverbank Unit to deliver a box of TLC Bears that Paul Routley got talking to a Paediatric Senior Sister. He asked if local Freemasons could assist with fundraising for some improvements needed at the Paediatric Resus' area at Maidstone Hospital's Emergency Department. Paul engaged Group 5 Charity Co-ordinator (and Chairman) Julian Friel – and an appeal was made to Group 5 Lodges and Chapters to see what could be raised. In addition, local DJ, Chris Byrom – a Past Master of Bearsted Lodge – offered to put on a "Soul on the Square" event, which was held at the Maidstone Masonic Centre, with all proceeds going to the appeal.

Thanks to the generous support of Group 5 Lodges and Chapters, Chris Byrom, and some "match funding" from the Cornwallis East Kent Freemasons' Charity, a total of nearly £10,000 was raised.

The photo shows Mr Miles Scott, Chief Executive of Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, receiving the cheque from Group 5 Chairman, Julian Friel. Also in the picture are Lucy Andrews, Paediatric Senior Sister, and Paul Routley, Secretary, Teddies for Loving Care, East Kent.



After receiving the cheque, Claire Ashby, Head of Charity and Fundraising at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust said, "This incredible donation will make such a difference to the area and improve the lives of some of the sickest children that we care for and the staff that care for them".

The funds will be used to purchase some much needed specialised room dividers and equipment trolleys, which will improve privacy for the children and their families in the Resus' area, and mean that the emergency staff will have the equipment required to hand.

Riverbank Children's Unit is a paediatric (children's) ward with twelve beds located at Maidstone Hospital. Children and young people are admitted to Riverbank for day-case surgery or if they have been referred to paediatrics from the Emergency Department or by GPs for further investigations.

CHARITY MATTERS



Two recent grants awarded by the
Cornwallis East Kent Freemasons' Charity (CEKFC)

Wheelchair for Liam Newton

The CEKFC was pleased to contribute £5,000 towards the cost of a Permobil MVS mid-wheel Vertical Stand Powerchair, costing over £23,000.

A fifteen-year-old boy from the Sittingbourne area, Liam Newton, had been diagnosed with HPDL gene mutation. Only three other people are known to have this condition in the UK.

His mother Stephanie said: *"Liam was a healthy eight-year-old and, out of the blue, he started to drag his foot and [began] tripping. I took him to the GP, but they said there wasn't anything wrong. Within three months Liam was completely unbalanced, and we were referred to a paediatrician. After three years of tests Liam was diagnosed with HPDL gene mutation, one of only three people to have it in the UK".*

The wheelchair will allow Liam to lead as normal a life as a wheelchair user can. It will bring him a degree of independence; it will also assist him to engage with his peers by raising him to a similar height. He will be able to do everyday activities which we all take for granted, such as using the bathroom unaided – which makes a huge difference to a young man in his teenage years. He will also be able to make his own way around school as he enters his GCSE years.

With help from the charity 'Donations with a Difference', local businesses and the CEKFC, the wheelchair was purchased and delivered to Liam in September 2024.



Demelza Children's Hospice



Members of Chillington Manor Lodge No. 4649 are to be congratulated for their generous donation of £750 in support of the vital work carried out by the Demelza Children's Hospice. An application for match funding was submitted to the trustees of the Cornwallis East Kent Freemasons Charity by the Lodge Charity Steward Reinhard Stille. The trustees, keen to support the Lodge initiative, provided an additional £500 in match funding.

A cheque for £1,250 was presented to the Hospice by representatives of the Lodge during the summer period. Unfortunately, the Master, Oliver Henderson, was unable to be present but his father Paul Henderson, a Past Master of the Lodge, stepped in to present the cheque.

Paul is pictured on the left, supported by Reinhard Stille. The two ladies in the centre are members of the Demelza Children's Hospice fundraising team.

Provincial Grand Master's Charity Awards

Over £45K made in grants since January 2023, supported by over thirty-five Lodges and Chapters

Photos: Peter Floyd

This year's Provincial Grand Master's Charity Awards ceremony took place at the Cathedral Lodge in the precincts of Canterbury Cathedral on Saturday 2nd November.

Provincial Grand Master, Neil Hamilton Johnstone, was joined by representatives of over thirteen different charities and individual good causes who have been supported by our Lodges, Chapters and of course the Cornwallis East Kent Freemasons' Charity (CEKFC). He was also joined by the Lord Mayor of Canterbury, Cllr Jean Butcher, and The Reverend Wendy Dalrymple, Canon Designate, who was representing the Dean.

The event was supported by over 130 East Kent Freemasons including members of their families. They were able to hear first-hand some of the sad but ultimately inspiring presentations which demonstrated how the generosity of Freemasons across East Kent benefits others.

The event was opened by the Chairman of Trustees of the CEKFC, Peter Rodd, who handed over to the Provincial Grand Master. Neil Johnstone said, *'It is truly humbling to meet representatives of the various charities we have supported, and those less fortunate in our community who have directly benefited from our grants.'*

He then introduced each of the beneficiaries and invited them, in turn, to talk about their good cause.

The Award Recipients



The East Kent Multiple Sclerosis Group (Whitstable), to develop and maintain exercise classes.



The Provincial Grand Master, Neil Hamilton Johnstone, introducing the Awards



Caring Altogether in Romney Marsh, to help support older people in rural communities.



Painters Forstal Community Hall, to improve the hall's kitchen and make it wheelchair-friendly.



Macmillan Nurses Cancer Support, to provide health care, counselling and support in Kent.



RNLI Sheerness, to help equip and train new recruits (which costs approximately £5,000 per recruit).



Widowed and Young, to help provide access to this support group for those that are recently bereaved.



Demelza Hospice, to provide specialist care and emotional support for babies, young children and their families.



Masonic Fishing Charity (East Kent Branch), see their report on page 29.



KSS Air Ambulance, to help purchase a new helicopter.



Oliver Steeper Foundation, to help them deliver infant anti-choking devices.



Evie Dove Foundation, sponsoring enhanced medical training for clinicians.



Kent Association for the Blind, help to furnish a new counselling room.



Step and Learn, to fund a training course in Dynamic Movement Intervention (DMI).

Following the formal presentations, a donation was given to the Lord Mayor of Canterbury for her chosen charity, The Strode Park Foundation.



Another donation was given to the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral. Receiving it on behalf of the Dean, The Reverend Wendy Dalrymple, said, *'I have been inspired by the goodness of humanity and the countless volunteer hours given in the community'.*



The CEKFC Trustees have recently doubled, from £250 to £500, the total match funding that can be made for each application submitted by Lodges and Chapters. In practice the charity is now able to match any pledge up to £500 with a like-for-like contribution.

The charity aims to help a diverse range of good causes, providing speedy relief to individuals and charities in East Kent. The type of applications they may support includes providing additional resource to local food banks, grants to provide specialist mobility equipment, learning equipment, furniture and IT hardware. They have also part-met the costs of building projects commissioned to improve community facilities, particularly those aimed at making a building suitable for wider community use, especially people who are impaired or disadvantaged.

As a registered charity they are legally bound to follow their published constitution. They are a small charity too which means they are not able to make grants to every type of organisation. Those they are unable to assist include applications made on behalf of limited companies, or public sector organisations, or to assist with overseas travel costs, wages including overtime, or fuel and energy costs.

By working collaboratively with other Lodges and Chapters you can arrange a modest contribution from each, which they will match fund up to £500 for each Lodge or Chapter. This can lead to a significant grant being made to your chosen local charity. The CEKFC are always pleased to provide help and advice if you are developing an initiative prior to submitting your application.

A recent example of how this approach can benefit all concerned, without placing a heavy financial burden on the Lodges involved, is shown by a group of Maidstone Lodges, as reported on page 22 of this magazine.

The Chairman of Trustees, Peter Rodd said, *'We are very conscious of the fact that some Lodges and Chapters are struggling to reach their 2025 Festival target and are conflicted by wanting to do so, but also wanting to help a local charity. By making use of 'Match Funding' you have the opportunity to help both. If you were going to give £500 to a local charity, you can now split that by giving £250 to both the 2025 Festival and £250 to your charity, which can be made up to £500 by CEKFC. Please check the CEKFC website to make sure that it is a charity which they are able to support or, if in doubt, contact the CEKFC office'.*

HEARING LOSS – Can you help?

HEARING LOSS AFFECTS ONE IN THREE ADULTS IN THE UK

Paddy Langdown, a Past Master of the Dane John Lodge No. 8810 and East Kent Masters' Lodge No. 3931 in Canterbury, a Past First Principal of Bertha Chapter No. 31 and a member of many other Companion Orders, is well known throughout East Kent and beyond.

He has raised over £20,000 for charity from his talks on the Vulcan

Bomber and, being closely involved with the Masonic Museum and Library for many years, is a former coordinator of the Cornwallis Lectures.

Paddy suffers from hearing loss and recently submitted an appeal, shown below, which was included in September's 2nd Rising.



Paddy Langdown

An appeal that costs absolutely nothing!

As most Freemasons realise, we are part of an ageing community. One of the disadvantages of growing old is that one tends to lose one's faculties and usually the first of these is hearing! Those who do not suffer from this problem do not realise just how lonely and isolating the inability to hear makes you feel. You can feel alone in a room full of people if you cannot hear what people are saying. Many Lodge rooms have a loop system, but it doesn't always work or is not switched on, and never extends to the dining room meaning one can easily feel left out of a conversation.

During a ceremony many Brethren speak loudly enough for the Candidate to hear and sometimes even the Master but, please, Brethren, we all want to feel part of the proceedings and we all want to hear the ceremony and the Lodge reports from those giving them. How often has the Brother sitting next to you said, "What was that date?" or "What did he say?"

**PLEASE, BROTHERN, GIVE A THOUGHT TO THOSE A BIT HARD OF HEARING!
SPEAK TO THE WHOLE ROOM WHEN TAKING PART IN A CEREMONY OR ADDRESSING THE LODGE.
MAKE SURE THAT EVERY BROTHER ENJOYS THE MEETING AND DOESN'T FEEL LEFT OUT AND
ISOLATED IN A ROOM FULL OF PEOPLE! IT COSTS NOTHING BUT A LITTLE THOUGHT!**

18 million people in the UK are deaf, or have hearing loss or tinnitus. Hearing loss affects one in three adults. There are different causes of hearing loss, including ageing, exposure to loud noise, genetics and ear conditions. Tinnitus is the name for hearing noises that are not caused by an outside source. It's quite common – around one in seven adults have tinnitus all the time or regularly. Most often tinnitus is linked to hearing loss or other ear conditions. It's rarely a sign of a serious condition. (Source: RNID).

Considering the age profile of our membership, it's likely that more than one in three Freemasons will be hard-of-hearing and may suffer from the feelings of isolation that Paddy has highlighted. It follows that there is a risk of a drop off in attendance or, worse still, permanent absence.

Many people become more softly spoken as they get older, making it harder for those with hearing loss. Quite often, when giving a report, members turn their face to the

Master or the Principals, so their voice is directed away from those behind.

Many of our Lodge and Chapter meeting rooms have soft furnishings and carpets which tend to soak up voice sounds. Some have hearing-loop systems, but often they are noisy and ineffective. Speakers at very large gatherings will not be heard by the hard-of-hearing if there is no effective public address (PA) system.

Expert Advice

James Owen, a Past Master of Chillington Manor Lodge No. 4649 in Maidstone and a Past First Principal of Montreal Chapter No. 2046, is a Hearing Aid Audiologist. James is well known for his charitable services to people with hearing loss. He made four trips to Armenia to supply recycled hearing aids to 1,600 people. In 2023, along with a number of other volunteers, he went to the Special Olympics in Berlin where hearing aids were supplied to 244 young people with hearing impairments.

James read Paddy's appeal and offered the following advice:-

- Within the Temple, all should enunciate as well as possible (appreciating that this may be a problem brought on by nerves!).
- Any background sounds may disadvantage those struggling to hear – (not too many prompts or tuts from the back rows!) It's always best to have one designated prompter who can speak clearly, especially if the speaker is hard-of-hearing.
- Be aware that if a brother is wearing hearing aids, they are an aid to hearing. Under no circumstances do they give back the hearing from when he was eighteen years old.
- If a lecture has taken place and questions are posed afterwards it can be helpful if the lecturer (who no doubt has a very clear speaking voice) repeats the question so that all can hear.
- Committee meetings can also be a problem as (particularly in some lodges I know) some talk over each other and can get quite passionate! Once again, be aware that everyone talking at once is difficult for the hard-of-hearing and this should be managed by whoever is chairing the meeting.



- The Bar and the Festive Board pose the most difficulty for the hard-of-hearing due to background noise. The most common type of age-related hearing loss is where we lose the high frequencies which are the consonants and clarity in speech. Examples would be "Brother, can you pass the fish?" – "Which dish"!
- To help those that struggle with this please face the person so that they can lip-read (we all do this naturally) and speak slowly and clearly.
- If you see a brother who may be sat away from the crowd due to hearing difficulties please go and involve him – hearing loss is isolating and has many other repercussions in life: balance problems, onset of tinnitus (which can be very depressing), a lack of confidence and a higher risk of dementia if untreated.

James is happy to give advice on hearing needs and can be reached on james@owenhearing.com

How to Help

- **Be aware that at least one-third of those present may be hard-of-hearing.**
- **Speak up, enunciate well but don't yell or shout. Address the whole room.**
- **One voice at a time, particularly in committee meetings.**
- **Circulate reports in advance of the meeting.**
- **Face the person where possible so they can lip-read. Don't cover your mouth.**
- **Ensure that loop systems are switched on and are regularly maintained.**
- **Use a good microphone and PA system in large gatherings.**

For further information and advice on hearing loss, please visit the RNID website: <https://rnid.org.uk>

Kent Museum of Freemasonry

Contributor

Richard Wingett

Imagine stepping into a world shrouded in mystery and tradition at the Kent Masonic Museum and Library in Canterbury. This fascinating museum, nestled within the historic UNESCO world heritage city, offers a captivating journey through 300 years of Masonic history.

As you wander through the exhibits, you will encounter an extraordinary array of artefacts, from intricate ceremonial objects and regalia to stunning jewellery and silverware. The museum's collection is so significant that it is an Accredited Museum with the Arts Council England, highlighting its national and international importance.

Whether you're a history buff, a curious visitor, or a Freemason, the Museum offers a unique and enriching experience that unveils

the cultural richness and enduring legacy of Freemasonry. Plus, with free entry, it's an accessible and must-visit destination for anyone intrigued by the story of Freemasonry and its history.

Becoming a patron of the Museum and Library is like unlocking a treasure chest of exclusive experiences and privileges! As a patron, you are able to dive deeper into the world of art, history and culture, enjoying behind-the-scenes access to collections and exhibitions such as the Library that the general public rarely sees.

As a patron, you're not just supporting a museum, you're becoming part of a vibrant community that values and celebrates the arts and heritage. It's a rewarding way to make a lasting impact while enjoying a host of unique and enriching experiences, including a twice-yearly newsletter called Museum Matters bringing you all the latest news. You can view the Autumn edition by scanning the Patrons' magazine QR code.



Patrons' magazine

Would you like to be a Patron?
Please visit the Museum website.



Museum Website

The Dr Teddy Church Bursary

In the Summer 2024 edition of *Provincial Lite* we reported that the University of Kent, in collaboration with Kent Scouts and Kent Museum of Freemasonry, established the Dr Teddy Church Bursary Fund.

On October 22nd, the University proudly presented the first annual bursary to two students, Lukas Kumin and Josh Skeete. This momentous occasion marked the inaugural presentation of the Dr. Teddy Church Prize in History, a significant milestone for the University of Kent. Richard Wingett and Peter Hazelwood from the Kent Museum of Freemasonry were present to celebrate the achievements of these two outstanding first-year students from the School of History.



In keeping with Dr. Church's passion for education and history, this distinguished award aims to inspire and motivate future historians. Today, we extend our warmest congratulations to Lukas Kumin and Josh Skeete, who achieved the highest and second-highest overall performances in their year.

Prize winner Lukas said, 'I am truly honoured to be the first recipient of the Dr. Teddy Church Prize. This award not only acknowledges my efforts but also motivates me to continue excelling in my studies. I am deeply grateful to the Kent Museum of Freemasonry for their generosity, which has made this opportunity possible for students like me. This recognition inspires me to keep pursuing my academic goals in history.'

The Masonic Fishing Charity

Article by Richard Dixey

What another fabulous year for the East Kent Branch of the Masonic Fishing Charity!

This year we helped over seventy-two young students and adults with learning difficulties spread across seven schools/centres. The first of the events was "cast off" at Horsham Lakes in Upchurch, followed by Cottington Fishery in Deal, Chart Hills in Chart Sutton and the last event at Longshaw Fishery in Sturry.

But the events are far more than a day's fishing! They enable people with life challenges to gain in confidence, meet new challenges and achieve tangible results, as well as meeting new people and interacting with adults and children from outside their spheres.

Many of the schools and centres also use the day as a basis for a project or scheme, creating IT projects, models and wall displays.

The day starts with the students being paired off with the anglers, then on to the main event. This is followed by lunch and a little more fishing before the highlight of the day for many, the presentation of certificates and medals for angling proficiency.

These are events which everyone benefits from. Whilst this charity is a Masonic initiative, many of our volunteers are not Freemasons and there is no need to be one to join in.

Many of us have not witnessed first-hand the problems that some of our participants face in their everyday lives. The short time we spend with them can be a real education and makes us more aware of their needs.

It also provides a great opportunity to share our sport with those to whom it would be normally unavailable and to give something back to the community. Ask any of the volunteers involved in this great charity just how enjoyable the days are.

One-to-one time is one of the greatest charitable gifts we can give. Please come and join us.

And finally, to everyone involved in the Masonic Fishing Charity, the Chairman, the Committee, the Anglers and the Helpers -

Thank You One and All!



Around the Province

Group 6 *Combined Services Lodge's first Installation Meeting*

Report by John Ray

How, you might ask, can a Lodge be holding its first Installation Meeting a year AFTER it was formed?

Simple, really: the very first meeting of a Lodge is its CONSECRATION, at which the Provincial Grand Master or his Deputy will appoint the first or Primus Officers. The second annual meeting is the first at which the outgoing Master INSTALLS his successor.

So it was that, on Saturday 5th October, the first Installation Meeting of the East Kent Combined Services Lodge No. 10038 was held in Gillingham. The lodge is exclusively for Freemasons who have "served the Crown" – including the armed services and the police. Its motto, "*Est Vinculum Sicut Alius*", means "*A Bond Like No Other*". The Lodge is based at Ashford and had to obtain special dispensation to meet in Gillingham, which was better able to host the ninety or so who were expected to attend.



The Provincial Grand Master was represented by Assistant Provincial Grand Master Mark Costelloe, an Honorary Member of the Lodge. Mark witnessed Kevin Stones (shown left), one of the Lodge Founders, being installed as Master by Steve Simmons, Primus Master. Steve was presented with a brand new Past Master's jewel (pictured) that was made and donated by a team of Lodge members: Morgan Morey (jewel), Dave Number (ribbon), David Scutts (presentation box) and Mark Darley (dedication plates). Please visit www.eastkentfreemasons.org for a more detailed report.

Group 3 *New Motorcycle Lodge*

Report by John Sampson

The newly formed East Kent Motorcycle Lodge No. 10048 was consecrated on the 22nd June 2024 at the Franklin Rooms Masonic Centre in Gillingham. Though it was consecrated there, the Lodge's home is at the Sittingbourne Masonic Centre which is a good central base for ride-outs.



There are many to thank for its creation, but none more so than Colin Tunbridge and Melvin Hopper, Primus Immediate Past Master and Primus Worshipful Master respectively. Colin and Melvin have the eternal gratitude of all the founding members for their efforts in establishing the new Lodge.

The Lodge motto is '*EQUITARE AD VITAM*' which translates as '*RIDE FOR LIFE*'. Its aim is to promote motorcycling and Freemasonry throughout East Kent, and to visit and support other motorcycling Lodges. If you ride, you know the freedom it gives and the camaraderie to be found. Combine that with brotherly love, relief, truth and all that is to be found in Freemasonry – what more could you ask for?

The Lodge is open to everyone with an interest in motorcycles, or scooters; you don't have to own one. Join in our adventure and become part of it. We look forward to you sharing your Masonic journey with us!

To know more, contact us by email at: ekmlsec@gmail.com



Companion Orders

The Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner

*Here we continue
with our series
on Companion
Orders*

*Contributor:
Robin Evans*



More commonly referred to as R.A.M., the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner stands alone and is entirely unrelated to any other Masonic Degree. It is undoubtedly one of the most inspiring and beautiful Degrees that we find in Freemasonry.

There is only one ceremony of "Elevation", and this is relatively short, of some forty-five minutes. As its name suggests it has a nautical flavour, with the "Elevation" of a candidate into the Degree commemorating the providence and mercy of God, with regard to the legend of the Deluge as recorded in Genesis.

During the ceremony, analogies are drawn between the dangers of the flood and the dangers of life. How we should strive to reach the "Ark", the haven of rest, just as Noah's family and the other occupants of his Ark did. The subject matter, being taken directly from the Volume of the Sacred Law, is therefore both beautiful and instructive, guaranteed to make a lasting impression on every candidate.

Upon entering the Temple the attention of the Candidate is directed to three points and at a certain stage the Ark is symbolised in terms similar to the ark of salvation.

The candidate is finally instructed to advance in the spirit of the cardinal virtues.

The Officers of a Royal Ark Mariner Lodge represent Noah and two of his sons, Japheth and Shem. A particularly interesting aspect of this Degree is the position of the two Wardens, as in an old Craft Lodge.

The first authentic record of the Degree appears in the minutes of a meeting held in Bath in 1790. Interest in the Degree increased in the early 1800s and eventually the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England and Wales placed the Degree under its protection. A Grand Master's Royal Ark Council was subsequently formed to regulate the Degree and since then the fraternity has grown apace. Today there are some 850 R.A.M. Lodges working under the English Constitution, with forty-five Lodges in the Province of Kent.

The Royal Ark Mariner Degree does not have a Provincial structure of Officers, but is governed by the respective administration controlling the Mark Lodges within a particular Province. This ensures that R.A.M. Lodge subscriptions are kept to a minimum.

Each R.A.M. Lodge is attached to its sponsoring Mark Lodge, similar in some respects to the way a Royal Arch Chapter is associated with its sponsoring Craft Lodge.

You may not be surprised to hear that in other Constitutions the organisation of R.A.M. Lodges can be very different: for example, in Scotland, Royal Ark Mariner Lodges come under the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter, (as indeed do Councils of Red Cross Knights and Councils of Royal and Select Masters!)

In England the qualification for membership of a Royal Ark Mariner Lodge is, perhaps not surprisingly, being a Mark Master Mason. Brethren can also attain the Chair of their R.A.M. Lodge (by Dispensation) without having first been installed as Master of a Mark Lodge, or indeed of their Craft Lodge.



White Ensign Chapter's 100th

Report: Paul Goodwin

Photos: Mark Howell

White Ensign Chapter No. 4180 meeting in Gillingham was consecrated in 1923 and, on the 21st October 2024, it celebrated its centenary. The occasion was marked by a deputation from the Provincial Grand Chapter of East Kent, led by the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent, Neil Hamilton Johnstone. Neil was accompanied by the Second and Third Provincial Grand Principals, Ian White and Graeme Wyles, the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, Paul Pavitt, and nineteen other active Provincial Officers.

The Chapter Principals vacated their chairs in favour of the Grand Superintendent and the Second and Third Provincial Grand Principals. Once everyone was seated the Grand Superintendent gave his opening remarks, then invited the Chapter Treasurer, Norman Sams, to give a brief history of White Ensign Chapter.

It was founded by twenty-three serving Naval Officers and Ratings who wanted a Chapter which would be solely for Naval and Merchant Seamen – both serving and retired. The name, White Ensign, resonates with the Royal Navy connection, it being the ensign used to distinguish Royal Navy vessels from all other shipping.



The Provincial Grand Principals with the Chapter Principals and Companions

The Chapter was consecrated at the Masonic Centre in Franklin Road, Gillingham, just a few months after the Centre was opened. It has continued to meet there for 101 years, though its meeting night has changed from Friday to Monday.

At that time three other Chapters met at Franklin Road, one with seventy-two members, another with 125 and a third with 159 members. White Ensign's membership peaked at seventy-one in the 1950's, all of this against a backdrop of the Great Depression, the Second World War, the closure of the Dockyard at Chatham and, more recently, COVID.

On each such occasion, Members re-grouped, re-set the direction of the Chapter and secured its future; thus continuing the legacy of its Founders.

On completion of the brief history, everyone stood while the Provincial Grand Scribe Ezra, David Graeme, read the Centenary Warrant which was then presented to the Chapter's First Principal, Derek Chapman, by the Grand Superintendent.

This was followed by an interesting Oration, given by the Third Provincial Grand Principal, Graeme Wyles. It again touched on the Chapter's history and the significance of what the Founders had created and the role of present day members to build on those foundations.

The Centenary formalities having been completed, the Provincial Officers vacated their positions in favour of the White Ensign Chapter officers.

October being their Installation night, the Chapter then conducted its Installation Ceremony in which the most notable appointment was that of Derek Gardner who was installed as Third Principal, having stepped down as Scribe Ezra after holding the office for a whopping seventeen years!

Norman Sams is in the process of finalising a detailed history of the Chapter which will be published soon.

Following the convocation, the Provincial Officers and Companions shared a very enjoyable Festive Board.



The three Provincial Grand Principals with the three Chapter Principals

Around the Province

Group 2 *Fundraising walk from London to Chatham*

Report by Andrew Berry



The Soup to Soup 55 km Ultra Walk, stretching from London Victoria to Chatham, has been a heartfelt initiative supporting **One Big Family Medway**, a local homeless charity, for the past eight years. What began as a modest group of six volunteers has blossomed into a dedicated family of over fifty participants.

On Saturday 5th October 2024, Fraternitas Lodge No. 6046 proudly fielded a team of ten, including members, partners and family, ranging in age from twenty-two to sixty-four. Among the participants was Naushabah Khan, MP for Gillingham and Rainham, showing her support for the cause.

The journey kicked off at 9 pm and, after pushing through the night, we crossed the finish line in Chatham by midday the following day. It was physically painful, mentally exhausting, and truly challenging. Yet, in spite of the hardships, we all crossed the finish line in high spirits, sharing a profound sense of achievement, both individually and as a team. The unity and support among us was unwavering, as we stuck together, encouraging each other to the very end.

As it turned out, the total distance covered was 61 km, not 55 km, and we collectively raised over £3,000 for One Big Family Medway—an accomplishment that fills us with immense pride.



Group 4 *Simon Langton Lodge supports a local charity*

Report by Keith Jarrett

Keith Jarrett, Past Master and Secretary of the Simon Langton Lodge No. 7586 in Canterbury, is a part-time volunteer at the White Mill Rural Heritage Centre (WMRHC) in Sandwich, where a group of volunteers are restoring the Windmill, the Miller's Cottage and a whole number of other historic buildings.

In September, Keith and his wife, Kay, held a family and friends BBQ in their garden and the Simon Langton Lodge Master, David Lees, proposed that the Lodge should donate to the WMRHC.

Earlier in the year, Keith and Kay's eldest granddaughter, Isabelle – a member of the 6th Canterbury Brownies – was working on her Charity Brownie badge. Kay helped Isabelle bake a variety of cakes which were sold at a WMRHC open / craft day in May. Combined with the Lodge donation, over £350 was raised and given to the WMRHC. The photo shows Keith and Isabelle by the mill. This was the second time the Lodge has supported the WMRHC, the first being in 2023 following another family and friends BBQ in Keith and Kay's garden.

The WMRHC also received a £250 donation from the Lord Warden Lodge in Deal following the death of one of their Past Masters, Ray Horton, earlier this year. Ray volunteered at the WMRHC for over thirty years.



Do you have anything to report?

East Kent Provincial Clay Shooting Club

Report by Roger Wilkes



As we approached our sixteenth year as a club many of our members were busy preparing their equipment for the new season. We had continued to attend clay shoots during the winter, but these are a little less frequent than those held during the warmer months and, in some cases, limited to just our monthly club shoot and the traditional Boxing Day shoot.

Beginning in January we all ventured to Dartford Clay Shooting ground as they have the opportunity to shoot from under cover in case of inclement weather. February and March saw us visit grounds at Tenterden and Detling in preparation for the competition season just around the corner. In April we welcomed our colleagues from Essex to Hawley Clay Ground and our first one hundred clay competition of the year which, I'm pleased to say, we won.



In May we staged three events. First was our internal club competition which we call "Freddy with a Gun" as the trophy resembles Freddy Mercury with a shotgun.

The second was our annual visit to Sussex and our colleagues there where, I regret to announce, we came a gallant second.

The third event was our annual "Come and Try It Day", also at Hawley, near Dartford, where we invited Brethren and their families to come along and try our sport. A busy morning but very satisfying.



June saw the National Masonic Annual Clay Championship as the next event on our calendar, which was hosted by the Province of Cornwall, although held at Ashcombe in Devon. Eight hardy souls from East Kent attended this shoot where we achieved a creditable fifth place out of nineteen.

In July we visited West Kent Shooting School at Paddock Wood for the annual Kent Police Shoot which was followed by visits to East Sussex and Middlesex, both of which saw us come home with creditable wins. Lastly on our list of Provincial visits was our return match with Essex. This is always popular with the members as it begins with a very hearty breakfast at the 'Black Bull' public house in Fyfield, Essex, close to their shooting ground.

Unfortunately breakfast was the only thing we were able to bring home with us as we lost by just three clays.

Shoots and competitions are less common in the Autumn and Winter. However we still meet for our monthly club excursions at one of the Province's clay grounds.

Autumn also provided us with a first as we were invited to include a table at the Wigmore Centre's "Open Day" where we promoted the sport to prospective candidates.



The year has seen the club press on with its Provincial, inter-Provincial and charity events. 2024 has been a great year for the club and its members and we are now enjoying our Lodge meetings which resumed in September and our monthly club meet-ups.

New members continue to join us and this will ensure the continuation of the Provincial team for many years to come.

To contact Roger please email him at **eastkentclays@gmail.com**

East Kent Masonic Golf Association

Report by Paul McGuirk

With the 2024 golfing season now over, we reflect on what has been another successful year. When booking the calendar, there was a noticeable increase in costs at a number of clubs and so a few fixtures offered the usual lunch as an option.

April saw a busy month with inter-provincial games against both Metropolitan Golf Society and West Kent. The first fixture was an away fixture for the Russell Race Claret Jug and set at Northwood Golf club near Rickmansworth.



As a result of the distance, finding a team willing to travel that far was a challenge but was worth the journey with East Kent retaining the trophy, winning the match 4-1.

The West Kent Silver Salver was also an away fixture but set at Redlibbets near Sevenoaks. East Kent fielded many more players and so we had the opportunity to select our best team. The result was to be settled by a total number of points from the twelve selected players from each side.



There were massive nerves as West Kent's early players were scoring well. Relief came as better scores from East Kent came from the later players and we eventually won the game by 373 points to West Kent's 339.

In May the annual William Blay inter-Lodge tournament was held at West Malling. To make it as inclusive as possible, the number of subscribing members for a Lodge team was reduced to two. Each team would then be made up from a random draw of the remaining single players.



After a horrendous mistake by the Secretary resulting in a Stewards' enquiry, Malling Centenary came home as victors with Richard Watts B Team coming runner up. Having made the error, the Secretary offered to fall on his sword, but this was laughed off by the members.

Julian Friel enjoyed two wins this summer. The first was at Etchinghill at what was meant to be an inter-Provincial match with Surrey. However, with Surrey unable to field a team, we reverted to a social Stableford.



Julian's second victory was at the Geoffrey Gordon Dearing Bowl at Kings Hill in July, where he was honoured to be presented with the coveted trophy by our former Provincial Grand Master.

August saw the rescheduled match versus the Province of Surrey. This time we were joined by six members from Surrey and the result was a victory of two games to one.



Postscript :The David Graeme Trophy match between the Light and Dark Blues was held on the 25th October with the Light Blues winning for a fourth time.

Like all Masonic sports associations, we welcome all Freemasons and their guests through their love of golf. It's a relaxed fun environment welcoming all standards of golfer. How to book? Email golf@ekprovince.co.uk.

Supporting The 2025 Festival



East Kent Freemasons

Province of East Kent
11 Estuary View Business Park
Boorman Way
Whitstable, Kent CT5 3SE

THE PROVINCIAL



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The Light Blues Club

What a couple of months they've had!

Charity Matters

Find out how Freemasons in East Kent are supporting their local communities

The Not Forgotten

A great day out for Veterans and their families

Male Breast Cancer

Navigating the journey of male breast cancer



TNF's Drive-In at Quex Park

THE DAY HELPED ME FEEL SOCIALLY INCLUDED, I FELT THAT I FITTED IN.

Covid lockdowns were challenging for many people, but many military Veterans who were already struggling with issues, found it devastating to be confined to their homes for a year. Many lost the confidence to go out.

TNF's Chief Executive, Colonel (retired) Richard Walker, referenced one such veteran who hadn't left his home in three or four years until he attended an event like this. Colonel Richards explained that it can take Veterans one or two years to build enough confidence to start re-engaging with the outside world. One attending Veteran in his forties suffers from PTSD and is housebound. His Veterans' association persuaded him to come to the Quex Park concert, which the Veteran described as a "safe space" for him.

Neil Hamilton Johnstone, Head of East Kent Freemasons, said, *'The Not Forgotten Association is a fantastic organisation that provides vital support to ex-service personnel, Veterans, and their families. They offer a range of activities and services to help those who have served their country to rebuild their lives and overcome the challenges they may face. We are wholeheartedly dedicated to upholding the Armed Forces Covenant. Our aim is to ensure that all individuals who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, as well as their families, are treated equitably and with the utmost respect.'*



Extract of a letter from the TNF Chief Executive

Dear Provincial Grand Master,

Please find attached a heartfelt thank you from The Not Forgotten and Jamie Gwatkin for the exceptional co-delivered event at Quex Park on 19th September. I thoroughly enjoyed the day so much and it was a great pleasure to meet you and the team. I smiled all the way home, as I am sure you did too!

Please also take a moment to ponder the impact communicated so powerfully by one of our new guests here:

"The day made me feel socially included, and I felt that I fitted in. As a disabled Veteran, my injuries make it very difficult to get out and about doing things that normal people do. After time this chips away at your mental health and it has done so for me, until I discovered The Not Forgotten and attended your Drive-In. I was feeling very isolated, completely ignored, and frankly left to rot by the country I was injured in serving. I came home from the Drive-In absolutely beaming with positivity and since that day my mental health and outlook on life has improved dramatically and I have not stopped talking about it since. I now feel strongly that my service to my country was not all one-sided, and it is The Not Forgotten Team I must thank, from the bottom of my heart."

We do hope we can remain connected and deliver more community focussed impact together in the future too. The delivery of these events fundamentally depends upon partnership and sponsorship.

Respectfully, Richard Walker OBE
Chief Executive, The Not Forgotten

For more information please visit www.thenotforgotten.org

CHARITY

Assistant Provincial Grand Master, Peter Rhodes



Brethren and Companions, as 2024 draws to a close it is a good time to look back and reflect on the past year. For me personally, being invested as an Assistant Provincial Grand Master in April was a particular highlight, despite the investiture taking slightly longer than planned!

Editor's postscript - One of the Festival guests was taken ill and proceedings were delayed for a short while.

Prior to my promotion I was the Provincial Grand Charity Steward for six years, and in that role I experienced first-hand the fantastic work of the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) and the positive impact its support has made on many charities in East Kent and the communities they serve. This of course would not be possible without the generosity of our members, for which I offer my sincere thanks.

As we look forward to next year, we will of course see the conclusion of our Festival in support of the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF). The closing event will be held at the Leas Cliff Hall in Folkestone on Saturday **29th November 2025**. Please look out for booking details.

Over the past two 'post-Covid' years we have gained significant momentum in our endeavours to achieve our £3.5 million objective. With a concerted effort over the remaining Festival period, I am confident we will achieve our aim.

Regular payment plans in support of the 2025 Festival will be allowed to run until the end of 2026, with those pledges being included in the final total announced at the end of November. I would therefore strongly encourage everyone to consider extending their existing plan or commencing a new one.

Together, we will change lives.

I wish you and your families a peaceful Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

A message from Mark Bassant, Chairman of the 2025 Festival Committee

"With the end of the 2025 Festival now firmly in sight, we have a narrowing window of opportunity to reach our objective, so I would personally like to thank you for your wonderful efforts to date and encourage everyone to make that final push to get us over the line. Please look out for and support the forthcoming Festival Events, which provide the chance to have a great deal of fun and raise valuable funds at the same time"



Your Lodge or Chapter Charity Steward should by now have received one or two copies of '**In Search of the Lost Note**', the last album from the Cymbolick Penalties. It features the band along with contributions from a number of other East Kent Freemasons.

Please use it in a raffle or auction with the aim of raising at least £50 per CD for the 2025 Festival.

With 400 copies altogether, the Festival would benefit by at least £20,000, hopefully more.

CHARITY

Assistant Provincial Grand Master, Peter Rhodes



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Prior to my promotion I was the Provincial Grand Charity Steward for six years, and in that role I experienced first-hand the fantastic work of the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) and the positive impact its support has made on many charities in East Kent and the communities they serve. This of course would not be possible without the generosity of our members, for which I offer my sincere thanks.

As we look forward to next year, we will of course see the conclusion of our Festival in support of the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF). The closing event will be held at the Leas Cliff Hall in Folkestone on Saturday **29th November 2025**. Please look out for booking details.

Over the past two 'post-Covid' years we have gained significant momentum in our endeavours to achieve our £3.5 million objective. With a concerted effort over the remaining Festival period, I am confident we will achieve our aim.

Regular payment plans in support of the 2025 Festival will be allowed to run until the end of 2026, with those pledges being included in the final total announced at the end of November. I would therefore strongly encourage everyone to consider extending their existing plan or commencing a new one.

Together, we will change lives.

I wish you and your families a peaceful Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

A message from Mark Bassant, Chairman of the 2025 Festival Committee

"With the end of the 2025 Festival now firmly in sight, we have a narrowing window of opportunity to reach our objective, so I would personally like to thank you for your wonderful efforts to date and encourage everyone to make that final push to get us over the line. Please look out for and support the forthcoming Festival Events, which provide the chance to have a great deal of fun and raise valuable funds at the same time"



Your Lodge or Chapter Charity Steward should by now have received one or two copies of '**In Search of the Lost Note**', the last album from the Cymbolick Penalties. It features the band along with contributions from a number of other East Kent Freemasons.

Please use it in a raffle or auction with the aim of raising at least £50 per CD for the 2025 Festival.

With 400 copies altogether, the Festival would benefit by at least £20,000, hopefully more.

CHARITY

Assistant Provincial Grand Master, Peter Rhodes



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VISITING VOLUNTEERS

Assistant Provincial Grand Master, Duncan Rouse



It is often said that the role of the Almoner is one of the most important in Freemasonry and I for one, having had the honour to serve as a Lodge Almoner and Provincial Grand Almoner, would not disagree.

The role of the Lodge Almoner underwent an important change in 2017 because of improvements that the newly amalgamated Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) wanted to implement in dealing with applications for support. It was felt that the application process would be more efficient and effective if each Masonic Province identified a small number of brethren who would act on behalf of the MCF in carrying out visits to those wishing to make an application for support. They would help in completing application forms and collecting supporting documentation to help the MCF in carrying out its assessment of such applications. These brethren were to be known as **Visiting Volunteers** (VVs), and part of their remit was also to help those brethren and families who were already beneficiaries of ongoing support from the MCF.

The Province of East Kent decided that it would look for a brother with Almoner experience in each of its eight regions and have one additional brother to act as cover for holidays, etc.

Each of those brethren received formal training from the MCF to prepare them for the role they were taking on. The VVs also work closely with the MCF's Advice and Support Team (AST) member responsible for our Province, who also carries out some of the more complex and challenging visits.

We have seen a few changes in the VV team over the years and our current team members are pictured below.



Group 1
David Barden



Group 2
Mark Treadwell



Group 3
Eddie Halpin



Group 4
Headley Grace



Group 5
Mark Poddington



Group 6
Richard Dixey



Group 7
Kevin Kemp



Group 8
Phil Hadden



Holiday Cover
Neville Morris

Since the launch of the VV scheme in East Kent, our VVs have carried out over 400 visits and, together with the AST member, have been responsible for helping secure over 1,250 grants totalling over £3 million.

This milestone underscores the commitment of the MCF to supporting our brethren and their families in time of need and underlines the importance of the 2025 Festival where we are raising much needed funds to enable the MCF to continue its work.

I am very grateful to all those VVs, the MCF AST member and the Provincial Grand Almoner who, over the years, have dedicated time and made a commitment to carry out this important and often rewarding job.



Provincial Grand Almoner
Nigel Fitz



MCF AST member for East Kent
Linda Valevous

Subject to meeting the eligibility criteria the MCF is able to provide support in the form of grants for Daily Living Costs, Health Care and Wellbeing, and Children, Young People and Education.

The MCF helpline is 0800 035 6090.

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CHARITY MATTERS



Two recent grants awarded by the
Cornwallis East Kent Freemasons' Charity (CEKFC)

Wheelchair for Liam Newton

The CEKFC was pleased to contribute £5,000 towards the cost of a Permobil MVS mid-wheel Vertical Stand Powerchair, costing over £23,000.

A fifteen-year-old boy from the Sittingbourne area, Liam Newton, had been diagnosed with HPDL gene mutation. Only three other people are known to have this condition in the UK.

His mother Stephanie said: *"Liam was a healthy eight-year-old and, out of the blue, he started to drag his foot and [began] tripping. I took him to the GP, but they said there wasn't anything wrong. Within three months Liam was completely unbalanced, and we were referred to a paediatrician. After three years of tests Liam was diagnosed with HPDL gene mutation, one of only three people to have it in the UK".*

The wheelchair will allow Liam to lead as normal a life as a wheelchair user can. It will bring him a degree of independence; it will also assist him to engage with his peers by raising him to a similar height. He will be able to do everyday activities which we all take for granted, such as using the bathroom unaided – which makes a huge difference to a young man in his teenage years. He will also be able to make his own way around school as he enters his GCSE years.

With help from the charity 'Donations with a Difference', local businesses and the CEKFC, the wheelchair was purchased and delivered to Liam in September 2024.



Demelza Children's Hospice



Members of Chillington Manor Lodge No. 4649 are to be congratulated for their generous donation of £750 in support of the vital work carried out by the Demelza Children's Hospice. An application for match funding was submitted to the trustees of the Cornwallis East Kent Freemasons Charity by the Lodge Charity Steward Reinhard Stille. The trustees, keen to support the Lodge initiative, provided an additional £500 in match funding.

A cheque for £1,250 was presented to the Hospice by representatives of the Lodge during the summer period. Unfortunately, the Master, Oliver Henderson, was unable to be present but his father Paul Henderson, a Past Master of the Lodge, stepped in to present the cheque.

Paul is pictured on the left, supported by Reinhard Stille. The two ladies in the centre are members of the Demelza Children's Hospice fundraising team.

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