

The PROVINCIAL Lite

Spring 2025



THE ONLINE MAGAZINE FOR THE MASONIC PROVINCE OF
EAST KENT

COMPANION ORDERS,
DO YOU KNOW WHAT
THEY ARE?

DO YOU THINK YOU
COULD PLAY THE
ORGAN?

AROUND
THE
PROVINCE

The Provincial Lite

ISSUE 13

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**Jon “Busta” Howe, Kemsley Whittlesea and Neil Thomas
competing in the 2025 Invictus Games (see pages 52 & 53)**

Front Cover: Kemsley Whittlesea winning Gold at the Invictus Games (See article on page 52)

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

A Season of Renewal and Celebration

Welcome to the latest edition of The Provincial Lite, the official online magazine of the Province of East Kent Freemasons. As Spring breathes new life into the world around us, it also serves as a perfect metaphor for the growth, renewal, and fellowship that define our Province.

In this issue, we are proud to share stories that illustrate just how impactful our collective efforts can be. The recent Provincial Royal Arch and Craft Annual Festivals, held on 11th April, brought together brethren from across East Kent in a celebration of achievement and recognition. Many were honoured with promotions and awards. A testament to their dedication, integrity, and service to Freemasonry and the wider community.



Another highlight is our feature on the Almoners' Breakfast Meeting, a gathering that underscored the vital role our Almoners play in supporting the health and wellbeing of our members. Their compassionate service ensures that no member walks alone, and their work exemplifies the heart of what Freemasonry stands for. We also shine a light on the charitable endeavours carried out in partnership with the Cornwallis Foundation. From community projects to personal assistance for those in need, the Foundation continues to be a beacon of hope and support throughout East Kent. Their work, and the generosity behind it, reflects the Masonic principle of relief in action.

Among the most inspiring stories in this edition is our focus on the armed forces veterans within our Province. In particular, we celebrate three brethren who recently competed in the Invictus Games, with special congratulations to Kemsley Whittlesea on his gold medal win in snowboarding. Their courage and perseverance uplift us all.

As we reflect on these moments and milestones, we are reminded of the strength we find in unity and purpose. Freemasonry in East Kent continues to thrive because of individuals and Lodges working hand-in-hand to support, uplift, and serve. Whether you are a newly initiated brother or have journeyed with us for decades, this edition of The Provincial Lite is for you - a celebration of who we are and all that we continue to strive for.

EDITOR

Derek Lindars

Upcoming Events

Full details and to book all events visit the Provincial Website

www.eastkentfreemasons.org/events/

3rd may	PSA Testing Sittingbourne MAsonic Centre
8th May	ARCHWAY WORKSHOP Margate Masonic Centre
30th May	East Kent Golf East Kent take on West Kent
31st May	Light Blues at Grand Lodge Join the light blues for the Quartly Comms UGLE.
21st June	2025 Festival Ball Ashford Int Hotel
5th July	Provincial garden Party Godmersham Park
26th July	Bat n Trap Backby popular demand
17th October	David Graeme Cup Light Blues V Dark Blues Golf
25th October	Trafalgar Night Dinner In aid of the 2025 Festival and RN RM Charities
29th November	2025 Closing Festival Ball Leas Cliffe Hall Folkestone.

Provincial Royal Arch and Craft Annual Festivals

11th April 2025
Detling

On a bright spring morning, a sense of joy and anticipation filled the Clive Emson Conference Centre at the Kent Showground in Detling, as around 600 Freemasons from across East Kent gathered for the Provincial Grand Lodge of East Kent's Annual Festival. The event, held on Friday 11th April 2025, was a day of celebration, recognition, and heartfelt fraternity, highlighting both the Provincial Royal Arch Chapter in the morning and the Provincial Grand Lodge in the afternoon.

The day began at 10:30 am with the Provincial Grand Chapter of East Kent Director of Ceremonies, Paul Pavitt, setting the tone by outlining the morning's events. As the choir's anthem sounded through the marquee, visiting dignitaries and guests from other Provinces, and the Provincial Executive, were warmly welcomed with applause. The head of East Kent Freemasons, Neil Hamilton Johnstone, then formally opened the meeting, extending a heartfelt welcome to all present.

Following formalities including the confirmation of minutes and reports, the spotlight turned to the investiture of 87 Companions receiving Provincial honours and promotions. Each name read aloud by Secretary, David Graeme, was met with enthusiastic applause, as the audience celebrated the achievements and dedication of their peers.



Special recognition was then given to two Companions who had gone above and beyond in their service. With moving citations read by David Graeme, the recipients received their awards to warm applause. In his closing address, Neil Hamilton Johnstone reflected on a year of progress and unity, citing the success of their recruitment and retention efforts. "Enjoy Freemasonry, enjoy the Royal Arch Chapter, and I wish you and your families health and happiness," he said, leaving the audience uplifted and inspired.



EAST KENT
FREEMASONS

Provincial Royal Arch and Craft Annual Festivals

11th April 2025
Detling



After a lively and enjoyable lunch, filled with camaraderie and reconnection, the members returned to the Conference Room for the Provincial Grand Lodge meeting. With the same dignified energy as the morning, the Provincial Director of Ceremonies, Graham Cuthbert, guided the proceedings. Once again, guests and officers processed in and then Neil Hamilton Johnstone opened the session.

A moment of quiet reflection was observed for over 70 Freemasons who had passed away over the last year. Their memory was honoured with respect, a poignant reminder of the enduring brotherhood within Freemasonry.

The business of the meeting swiftly followed, including the highlight of the afternoon, the investiture of approximately 270 members to various ranks and positions. Though the numbers were large, the proceedings were carried out with precision and dignity, each award a testament to the service, spirit, and good humour of its recipient. Two additional awards for outstanding service to Freemasonry and the wider community were presented with heartfelt applause and admiration.

Tributes were also paid to those stepping down from their roles, with particular thanks given to the Provincial Grand Secretary, David Graeme, whose four years of dedicated service were marked by exceptional leadership.

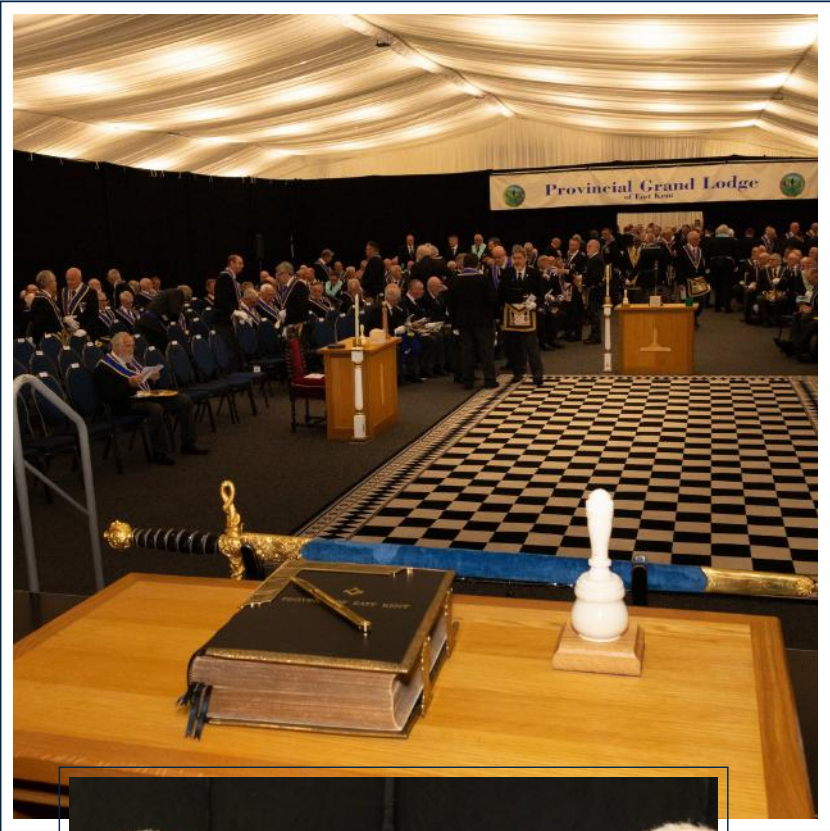
In his concluding remarks, Neil Hamilton Johnstone celebrated the power of Freemasonry to change lives, pointing to the charitable work made possible through the 2025 Festival's efforts. He encouraged continued generosity and highlighted the need to keep momentum going in recruitment and community engagement. Special thanks went to Sam Watson for the development of the East Kent Province members' App, a modern step forward in connecting and informing members.

The meeting closed with a stirring rendition of Jerusalem and a collection for charity, marking the end of a day filled with pride, friendship, and gratitude.

As the members departed, there was a sense of renewal in the air. For those honoured, it was a day of recognition. For all, it was a reminder of the shared values and fellowship that define Freemasonry - integrity, service, friendship, respect and community.



Provincial Royal Arch and Craft Annual Festivals



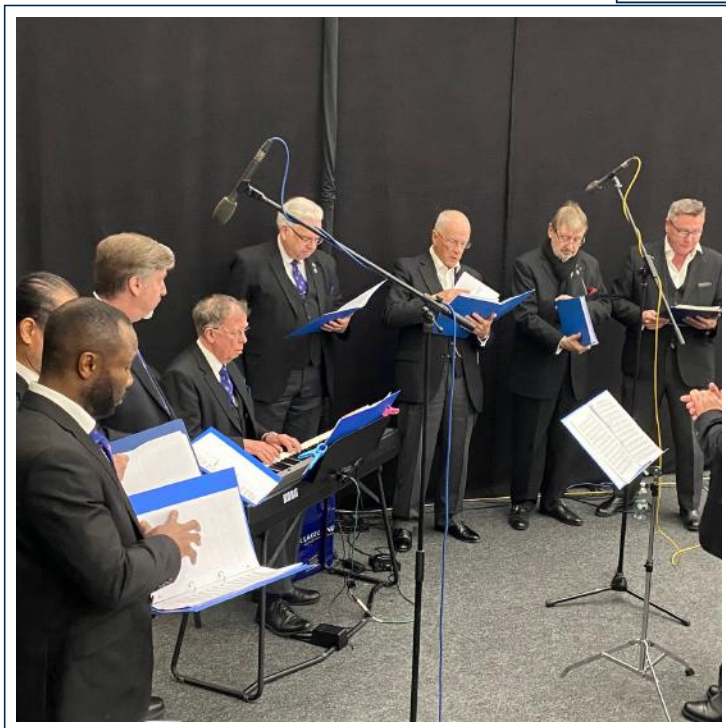
Provincial Royal Arch and Craft Annual Festivals



Provincial Royal Arch and Craft Annual Festivals



Images:
Mark Howells, Paul Goodwin,
Sam Watson



Visit the Provincial website for
more images from the day.



**21st
JUNE
2025**



2025 FESTIVAL BALL



3 Course Meal

Entertainment by Acoustic Rain and
Supersonic Queen



Ashford International Hotel
Simone Well Avenue
Ashford Kent

17:00 Arrival - Carriages at Midnight

£60 per person

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



The Cornwallis Foundation and its “Ripple Effect”

A heart warming tale of hope, healing and kindness

In a fast-paced, often disconnected world, even the smallest acts of kindness can shine brightly, guiding and inspiring others. Here are three powerful examples that remind us of the profound impact human compassion can have and that the kindness of a few can still light the way for many.

These heart warming stories revolve around the extraordinary work of the Cornwallis East Kent Freemasons Charity and its far-reaching support of remarkable individuals and causes.



Evie Dove with her mum, Katie

Evie Dove Foundation

On a bright spring morning, the Sandgate Masonic Centre opened its doors to the trustees of the Evie Dove Foundation, a charity born from love and loss. Howard and Katie Dove, parents of the late Evie, have turned their grief into purpose by supporting NHS clinicians, or as they call them, “Heroes.”

With the help of local Freemasons, they sponsored Dr Humphrey Nyambe, a paediatrician at William Harvey Hospital, through advanced allergy training that will help countless children. Thanks to the heartfelt efforts of WBro Peter Hagger and support from Castle Lodge 1436 and others, an initial donation grew with match funding from Cornwallis and the Masonic Charitable Foundation to a staggering £6,400.

But, the surprises didn’t end there. The generosity continued with an unexpected £700 gift during the event, bringing the total to £7,100. Dr Nyambe’s quiet humility and passion for helping children moved everyone present, as he spoke of his journey and the real difference this training would make.

Remembering Stefan

Stefan’s story is a tale that begins in heartbreak but grows into a beacon of hope. Stefan, a 15-year-old boy with autism, was tragically lost to the world due to bullying and a lack of support. His parents, Tristan and Emma Kluibenschadl, turned their grief into a force for change by founding STAK.life – Stefan’s Acts of Kindness. Their mission is to build more inclusive, understanding communities for neurodivergent individuals.

What started with a simple magazine article moved Worshipful Brother David Grayling of Dover Castle Lodge 7202 so deeply that he rallied support. The Lodge’s donation, matched by Cornwallis, helped fund parenting workshops for families like Stefan’s. In a serendipitous twist, Tristan had just joined Trinity Lodge, whose current Master also chose STAK.life as his charity of the year.

Through compassion, collaboration, and a belief that ‘we are all partakers of the same nature and sharers of the same hope’, these stories remind us that even small acts of kindness can ripple outward, changing lives forever. In the hands of caring hearts, charity isn’t just a word – it’s a lifeline.



*Tristan Kluibenschadl
with David Grayling*

Sydney Cooke

In another touching example, the Foundation helped bring joy and independence to three-year-old Sidney Cooke, born with Spinal Muscular Atrophy.

With funding from Paddock Wood Lodge 4291 and matched support from Cornwallis, Sidney’s family was finally able to purchase a Tiny Trax power chair.

His mother, Sophie, shared how Sidney now speeds down the path to school, proudly showing his friends his newfound mobility. “His face says it all,” she wrote gratefully, “You’ve helped make a little boy very, very happy.”



Sydney Cooke

The Cornwallis Foundation and its “Ripple Effect”

61st Coastwatch Lookout Station

With community safety at heart, members of the Royal Military Lodge No. 1449, with support from the Cornwallis East Kent Freemasons Charity, proudly helped fund the 61st Coastwatch Look Out Station in Ramsgate. This vital new station will help protect swimmers, boaters, and all who enjoy the sea.

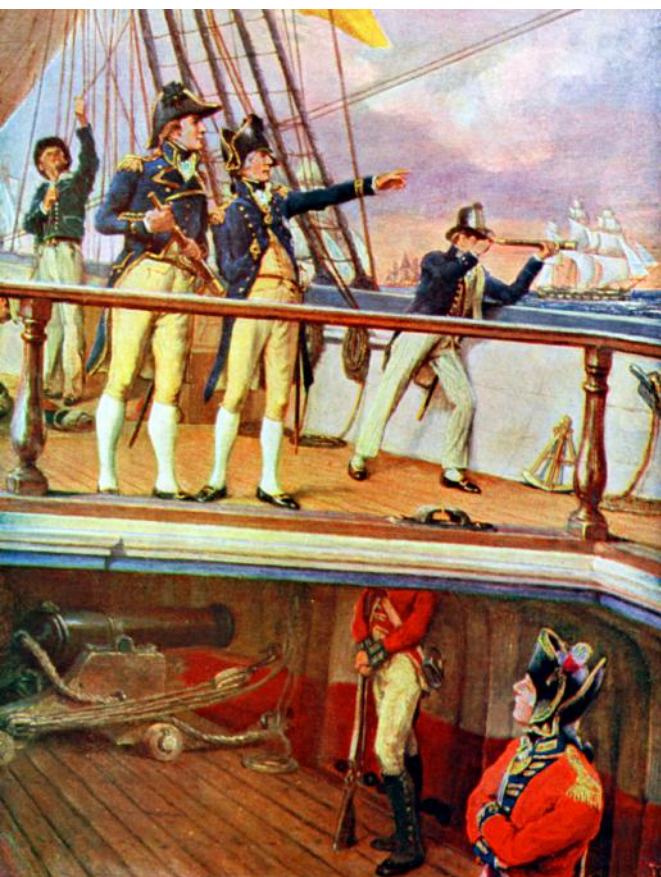
Paul Waterman, Station Manager for the National Coastwatch Institution at Ramsgate, shared the importance of their mission: “Our purpose is the preservation of lives in, on, or near the sea. This generous donation will allow us to purchase a Wireless Communication System—essential for both mobile and internet communication, and key to keeping our coastline safe.”

The moment was marked with a heartfelt cheque presentation at the new Look Out Station, symbolizing a community coming together for a brighter, safer future. Thanks to this support, watchful eyes will continue to stand guard along Ramsgate’s shores



presentation of the cheque at the new Lookout Station

Join Us for the Inaugural Trafalgar Night Dinner!



Mark your calendars for the enchanting evening of Saturday, 25th October 2025, as we gather to enjoy an Inaugural Trafalgar Night Dinner! Embracing the cherished spirit of “Pickle Night,” this affair promises a night brimming with merriment and celebration in tribute to Admiral Nelson and the gallant Royal Navy.

The evening's bounty will benefit the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity, and the 2025 Festival.

Immerse in Naval Tradition: Relish a sumptuous feast accompanied by spirited sea shanties and the revered "Passing of the Port" ceremony.

Event Details:

Date: Saturday, 25th October 2025

Betteshanger Country Park, near Deal

£55 per person free welcome drink

Do not let this extraordinary celebration slip away!

To reserve your spot, kindly send your details to Paul Gear

treasurer@lwl1096.org.uk.

Join us for an unforgettable evening steeped in tradition and community spirit!

We eagerly await your presence!

For further details, visit: <https://lord-warden-lodge-1096.sumupstore.com>

We are very grateful to Betteshanger Country Park for providing the venue for free.



East Kent Freemasonry: A Blooming Membership

By Paul Gear

Freemasonry in East Kent is experiencing a period of significant growth, attracting a diverse range of men seeking personal development, camaraderie, and service. This resurgence isn't merely about increasing numbers; it's about fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for new members. The Lodges and Chapters across East Kent are actively working to ensure a smooth and enriching onboarding experience. With the Royal Arch now in positive territory and the Craft not far behind.

A Flourishing Fraternity:

Several factors contribute to East Kent's expanding membership. Firstly, a renewed focus on community engagement and charitable works resonates strongly with potential members. The Lodges actively participate in local initiatives, supporting various charities and contributing to the well-being of their communities. All part of "Service" one of the key values held by all Freemasons, the others being Integrity, Friendship and Respect. This visible commitment to social responsibility appeals to individuals who wish to make a positive impact.

Secondly, the emphasis on personal growth and self-improvement within Freemasonry is a powerful draw. The structured system of learning, reflection, and fraternal support provides a framework for personal development that appeals to men seeking meaning and purpose. The rituals and ceremonies, often misunderstood, are viewed by many as opportunities for profound self-reflection and spiritual exploration.

Support for New Members:

Joining Freemasonry in East Kent isn't simply about attending meetings; it's about becoming part of a supportive network. New members receive comprehensive guidance and mentoring throughout their Masonic journey. Each new member is paired with an experienced Freemason who acts as a guide and mentor. Think of it as having a buddy system on steroids!

Structured Learning: New members follow a clear pathway of learning, ensuring they understand the history, ceremonies, and principles of Freemasonry. It's like a personalised crash course in ancient wisdom and modern brotherhood.

Social Events: Plenty of social events help new members integrate into the lodge and get to know their fellow brothers. Think BBQs, Quizzes, and charity events – it's a chance to bond and build friendships outside the formal lodge meetings.

Ongoing Support: The support doesn't end after the initial induction. Experienced members are always available to offer guidance and advice as new members progress on their Masonic journey. It's a community that truly values lifelong learning and mutual support.

Looking Ahead: The future of Freemasonry in East Kent looks bright. The continued focus on welcoming new members, providing comprehensive support, and engaging actively in the community ensures that the fraternity will continue to thrive for many years to come. The Lodges are not merely preserving tradition; they are adapting and evolving to meet the needs of a modern world, attracting individuals who seek meaning, purpose, and a strong sense of service.

East Kent lodges are doing an amazing job of outreach. They're actively engaging with the local community, hosting events, and sharing their values of Integrity, Service, Friendship and Respect. This transparency and proactive approach are drawing in more people curious about what Freemasonry is all about.

Ready to explore?

If you're intrigued by the idea of joining Freemasonry, dedicated to personal growth, service, and community, East Kent Freemasonry is definitely worth exploring. It's a chance to meet fascinating people, learn valuable skills, and make a difference in the world. Plus, the support system is second to none! So, ditch the preconceptions, and discover the modern face of Freemasonry in East Kent. You might just surprise yourself! Head over to www.justaskone.org for more information.



In memory of David Roff

A Charity Dinner and Dance

*Article and Photos:
Jerry Knott*



Jai Roff and Michael Hunter presenting the cheque to
Kate Harrison and Adam Smith from 'Abigail's Footsteps'

Following the sudden death of the Master Elect, David Roff, it was a bittersweet moment, offering a happy conclusion to a deeply sad chapter, when Dickens Lodge presented a cheque for £2,000 to Abigail's Footsteps, a Medway based national charity offering support to parents following the loss of a baby.

In December 2023, just weeks before he was set to be installed as Master of Dickens Lodge 8047, the Master Elect, David Roff, tragically suffered a heart attack while returning home from a Lodge of Instruction meeting and passed away later that evening.

This was a devastating blow to the Lodge, especially to his son Jai, who was then serving as the Lodge's Junior Warden.

In light of this, the Worshipful Master at the time, Michael Hunter, graciously agreed to extend his term as Master for an additional year, allowing Jai to progress and become Senior Warden.

In honour of David's memory, Michael and Jai decided to organise a Charity Dinner and Dance. The event took place the following summer at the Museum of Kent Life, near Maidstone, and was well-supported.

Jai selected Abigail's Footsteps as the beneficiary of the event. Abigail's Footsteps is a wonderful, Medway-based national charity that offers support and counselling for bereaved parents, as well as specialist bereavement training for healthcare professionals. More information about the charity can be found on their website: www.abigailsfootsteps.co.uk.

Over £1,300 was raised through a charity raffle, with the Lodge contributing an additional £700, bringing the total to £2,000. A cheque for this amount was recently presented to the charity in David's memory by Jai, now the Master of the Lodge, at Mote Park in Maidstone.

The Royal Arch: Are you missing out?

Why more and more of us are completing our Masonic Journey

Article: Paul Goodwin Provincial Communication Officer (RA)

Sir David Wootton, Second Grand Principal, recently stated he had often heard it said that The Royal Arch is the Cinderella of Freemasonry, to which he replied, 'but who had the best time at the ball?'

Those who have taken their fourth step in Freemasonry will know that The Royal Arch has the wow factor, it has theatre, drama and fun. In recent years in East Kent we have seen a high level of growth both in new, joining and re-joining members.

Largest number of Exaltees for over 12 years

In his Annual Report the Provincial Deputy Grand Superintendent, John Baker, reported that the last year had been a good one for the Royal Arch in East Kent, during 2024 our chapters carried out 86 exaltations, which is the largest annual total for over ten years and in addition they attracted 65 joining members and 13 re-joiners. He noted that a significant number of these exaltations were carried out as double and treble ceremonies; 2025 has also begun well with 37 exaltees in the first three months of the year with at least a further 25 in the pipeline.

To find out more about the Royal Arch, speak with your Lodge Chapter Liaison Officer or any brother wearing a chapter Jewel.



What's behind the renewed interest in the Royal Arch?

There are many reasons, but there is no doubt that the mantra of 'One journey, One Organisation' has resonated with many people. The recent introduction of a single UGLE registration fee when a candidate joins Freemasonry, which includes exaltation into the RA, has also been a significant contributory factor.

Then there is the work that has been going on in our own Province to raise awareness, including poster campaigns, Visiting Officers promoting the message that after four weeks as a Master Mason a brother can complete his journey in Masonry by joining the Royal Arch (something that may have been frowned upon by some in the past). 'Discover More' events, and combining the Craft and RA facebook groups further

demonstrates that we are all part of one organisation.

In addition, the Chapter Liaison Officers have played their part by using Royal Arch epilogues in Lodges and directing brethren to the most suitable chapter for them to join.

We spoke with a number of new companions and here is what some of them told us:

"Like the Third Degree on steroids".

Is how one newly exalted companion described his experience of the exaltation ceremony.

Whilst others said ***"Thoroughly enjoying the experience so far, would encourage all master masons to join."***

And ***"The intrigue of a 'whisky' speciality chapter as well as the completion of the craft journey"***.

"I had a thoroughly enjoyable exalting ceremony. I deliberately did very little research beforehand, so I had no preconceived expectations..."

I was genuinely surprised and impressed. The ceremony was beautifully conducted, and the festive board that followed was just as enjoyable.

Peter Smoothy, D-Day veteran, celebrates his 100th birthday and 60 years in Freemasonry

*Article and Photo:
Reg Millsom*

On Tuesday the 19th of November 2025, Peter Smoothy, an honorary member of Ethelbert Lodge 2099, achieved the remarkable milestone of celebrating his 100th birthday and 60 years in Freemasonry.

Peter's achievements are truly inspiring not only for his contribution to Freemasonry over 60 years, but as Royal Navy veteran who saw action during D-Day. Peter was just 19 in June 1944 when he was one of 156,00 allied servicemen taking part in Operation Overlord, the largest amphibious landing in military history. Peter was deployed to serve on the Landing Ship Tank 215. He was among a crew of 99 carrying 30 tanks, 45 lorries, ammunition, food, and the 200 soldiers who manned those vehicles, to land at Juno beach.

Peter reflected on his experience saying, "We loaded at Gosport 8 days before D-Day and on 5th June 1944 we sailed out of the Solent with hundreds of other Landing Craft of one sort or another. At 2am on 6th June (D-Day), half way across the Channel, we were called to Action Stations. We got on to Juno Beach at about 7.30am on D-Day. It took three to four hours to unload with shells whizzing overhead and when we were ready to leave, the tide had ebbed and we couldn't get off".

In June 2024, Peter returned to Juno beach to remember his fallen comrades during the 80th anniversary commemorations. He reflected on that fateful day saying, "We were all very young men and those that survived were lucky".

After the War, Peter was the Landlord of the 'Four Fathoms' pub in Herne Bay, for more than 40 years before retiring and continuing his passion for Freemasonry.



Peter Smoothy receiving his 100th birthday card from the King and Queen

Unfortunately, a party organised to celebrate Peter's 100th birthday had to be postponed due to his ill health. But, despite the setback he displayed the indomitable spirit of his generation and brushed his illness to one side. For the camera, he gave smile from his hospital bed and proudly displayed the card he received from the King and Queen.

Peter Smoothy is one of the last of his generation and a remarkable person with a rich history. Over his long life, Peter made significant contributions, both during his military service at such a pivotal moment in history, but also throughout his 60 years in Freemasonry when he helped so many in his community through charitable work.

Could You Be Your Lodge or Chapter Organist?

Article: John Ray, Organist Belvedere Lodge

Our Lodge Organist fell seriously ill and suddenly, the once familiar organ music that enriched our meetings vanished. The silence felt oddly empty. That's when I decided to step up, despite my complete lack of musical ability.

I started at home, practising on our electronic piano in Church Organ mode. At first, it was all wrong notes and fumbled rhythms, but I stuck with it. Slowly, I taught myself to play by ear, read music, and understand the beauty of harmony.

When I finally felt just brave enough, I asked if I could give it a shot during a meeting. I didn't play perfectly, but my fellow members were encouraging and genuinely grateful to have live music again. Their support meant the world to me. Eventually, I was officially appointed as the Lodge Organist, and the Master even presented me with a pair of "P" plates as a fun reminder that I was still learning!

Just a few years ago, I never imagined I'd be the Lodge Organist. Having already gone through the Chair, I was quite happy serving as Lodge Secretary and Director of Ceremonies. My wife was the musical one in the family, effortlessly playing the piano, while I couldn't even manage playing "Chopsticks". Becoming the Organist wasn't on my radar - until circumstances changed.



John Ray with his organist's P Plates

One of the best pieces of advice I received came from a professional musician and singer in our Lodge who said, "For incidental music, just play the black notes—you'll never hit a discord." It was simple but transformative. It gave me the confidence to improvise and explore different styles. Now, I occasionally mix in snippets of pop and classical tunes—maybe even a bit of Beethoven or Elvis if you listen closely.

More than just music, it's the atmosphere that's changed. The organ has brought back a sense of purpose and depth to our meetings. Singing the Odes now feels more powerful, and even the ceremonial movements seem more graceful.

If you've ever thought about it, even just a little, I truly encourage you to give it a try. You don't have to be an expert. Like me, you might discover a hidden talent and, in doing so, breathe new life into the traditions of your Lodge.



Reculvers Chapter – a story of triumph

A little over 18 months ago, Reculvers Chapter 4123 was on the verge of collapse

Article: Steve Wyatt

Reculvers Chapter 4123 was literally on its knees, with a membership of 15 and only a handful of active members. The situation was dire with meetings relying heavily on visitors taking offices, they were considering their future, indeed considering surrendering their Warrant.

The Chapter thought they had considered every available option but the Second Provincial Grand Principal Ian White was not going to give up just yet. He sought the advice of the Craft Provincial Membership Officer, Steve Wyatt, indeed he set Steve a challenge, could he turn the Chapter around? The rest, as they say is history!

Reculvers Chapter 4123, is now a dynamic, and forward thinking Chapter. Growth has continued unabated and with multiple exaltations at each meeting, its membership has more than doubled in the last year; indeed at its next meeting in June a further three Brethren will join the Royal Arch.

There are regular visitors, from across the Province, and as far afield as Southampton, there is even talk of visitors from the Supreme Grand Chapter of Ireland.

Companion Steve Wyatt explained how it was done, saying “Its about communication,



nurturing prospective membership, forward thinking and planning. Once we had decided on what the Special Interest Chapter would look like, and adopting the principals of Archway (The Chapter was an early adopter of the principles of Archway) we spoke to as many Brethren as we could; some were instantly onboard as the concept of something new and interesting appealed to them. We continued to speak with others over a period of weeks, even months to nurture their interest”.

Steve went on to say “The use of the Epilogues in our Lodge meetings has also been a key feature; as the Secretary of my Lodge, I read these after every Ceremony, but we do not leave it there, we speak to the Brother afterwards and ensure he understands what has been said, meaning the Royal Arch is discussed as soon as a person joins Freemasonry.

We do not leave it until the third degree, in fact I cannot remember the last time a Grand Lodge Certificate was presented in my Lodge where the recipient is not already in Chapter or has not applied for or is not considering membership in a Chapter.” Steve Continued “Lastly it is about membership buy in, every member of Reculvers Chapter works hard for the Chapter and is encouraged to speak to their Brethren about the Chapter, you just have to find that little ‘nugget’ to pique interest, and talk openly about what the Royal Arch really is about”.

From a bleak past, to a positive future, Reculvers Chapter is now looking forward to celebrating its Centenary in 2026, something a little over 12 months ago did not seem possible.

Here’s what one new member said:

“The intrigue of a ‘whisky’ speciality chapter as well as the completion of the craft journey...”

“Thoroughly enjoying the experience so far, would encourage all Master Masons to join.”

To find out more about the Royal Arch, speak with your Lodge Chapter Liaison Officer or any brother wearing a chapter Jewel.

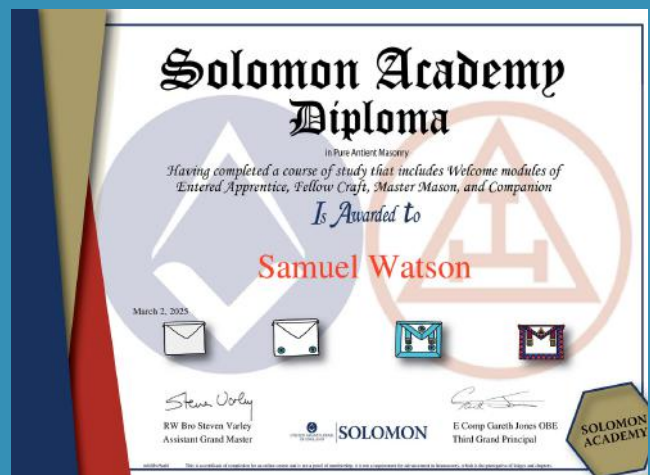
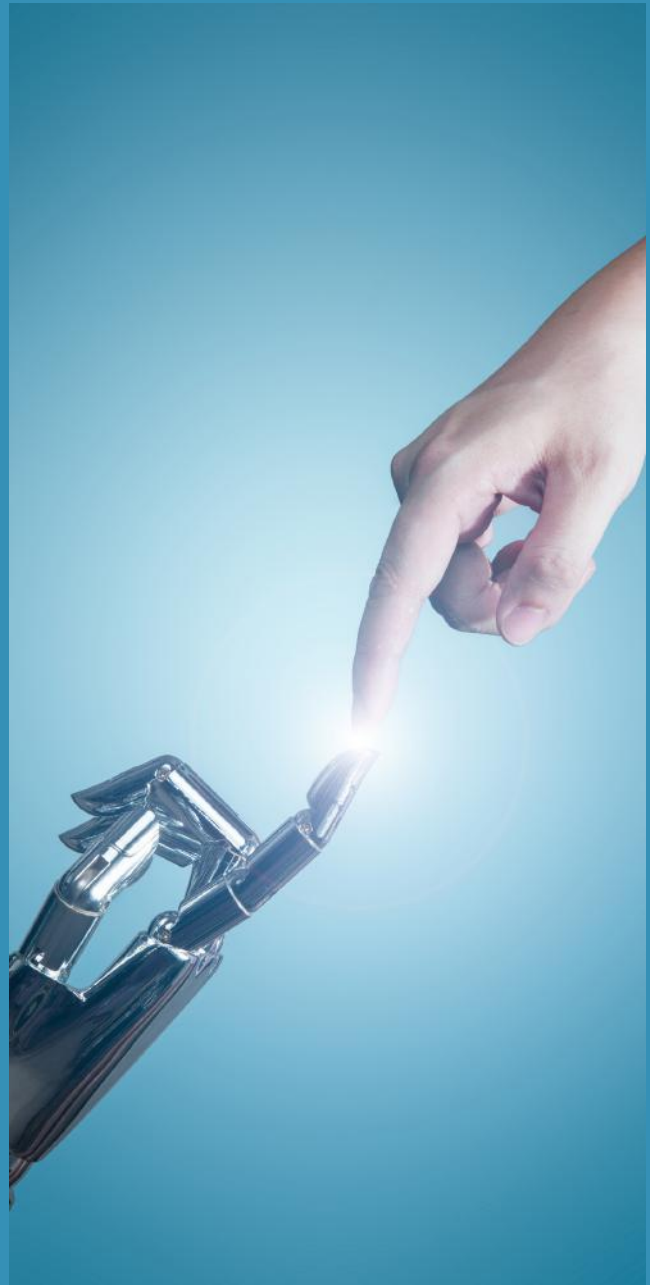
WHEN FREEMASONRY MEETS TECHNOLOGY

Article by Sam Watson

When my Director of Ceremonies, Graham Chisnell, threw down the gauntlet early in 2025 and challenged the Brethren of United Industrious Lodge 31 to take on the Solomon VLE modules, I did what any respectable, keen Freemason would do— I nodded politely, pretended to think about it, and then went full speed ahead in to the unknown.

For those who haven't dipped their toes into the UGLE Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) yet, Solomon is a online platform created by the United Grand Lodge of England. It's packed with learning modules, quizzes, and resources for Freemasons of all stages. It takes you on from Entered Apprentice all the way to Companion in Royal Arch. In short, it's a digital temple of knowledge—minus the lodge room and glare from the Director of Ceremonies.

I started logging in to it in late 2024, thinking I'd just take a peek and, really to be nosy. But by early 2025, and thanks to that challenge by the DC, I found myself genuinely hooked. It's not just dry text and pictures; these modules are designed to be engaging, informative, and—dare I say—fun. The quizzes are clever, a couple are timed (yes, timed!), and require a perfect 100% to pass.



Solomon

Honestly, on parts it was tougher than I expected on some of the modules. The platform doesn't just hand out diplomas like raffle tickets at a festive board. You need to earn every badge and every award. And when you finally do? There's a genuine sense of accomplishment—like cracking a ritual line on the first accompanied by the mutter of approval and cheer from the old guard and backbenchers.

That's not to say it didn't drive me mad once or twice. A tiny slip-up could mean starting all over again. But I'll confess—one of the most unexpectedly thrilling parts was the timed "match the jewels to the officers" quiz. You get 30 seconds, and it's surprisingly intense. My heart was racing. Does that make me sound sad? Probably. But it was genuinely fun and weirdly satisfying.

One thing I will say: use a desktop. Solomon might be accessible on mobile, but it clearly prefers the roomy comfort of a full screen. Trying to complete a timed quiz on a phone is like trying to deliver a tracing board with a mouth full of marshmallows.

Something that really surprised me along the way was how much a non-Freemason could access. At first, I was shocked; I had that moment of "Wait, is this allowed?" But after asking its AI bot (yes, Solomon has one of those too), it all clicked. UGLE isn't hiding behind mystery and myth, it's trying to be open and honest about what we do and why we do it. Solomon helps bust some of the wilder conspiracy theories floating around out there, and presents Freemasonry for what it really is: a system of moral and spiritual development, built on tradition, community, and personal growth—not lizard people and world domination.

But the real magic of Solomon isn't just in the quizzes or the certificates—it's in the way it connects the timeless wisdom of the Craft with the tools of today. Freemasonry, with all its tradition and symbolism, meeting the internet age? It sounds like the start of a bad joke: "A DC, EA and a PM walks into a website..." But somehow, it works. Beautifully.

So does Freemasonry meet technology? Yes, it does. And not just for the sake of convenience, but to deepen our understanding, to challenge our minds, and—if you're a little competitive like me—to prove to your DC that you're up for the challenge.

Now that I've completed all the modules, earned every award, and proudly earned my Solomon Diploma, I can say this: Solomon isn't just a platform. It's a journey. And one that I'd recommend to every Brother and Companion who wants to explore the Craft and Chapter beyond the Tracing Boards and into the digital age. Its an eye opener and a good friend now calls me his very Learned Brother.

So, should you do it?

Absolutely. Yes. Not only is it a journey of enlightenment, but it helps make sense of the why and how of Freemasonry in ways that even the best DC (sorry Graham) can't fully cover. It's like going to university for Freemasonry. I learned so much—and honestly, I'd even do some of it again.

And hey—it's got quizzes. What more do you need?

You can have a go yourself by simply visiting the EK Members app and scrolling down until you find the Solomon link or visit

www.solomon.ugle.org.uk

Thoughts about a Soldier

By Kevin D Stones, East Kent Combined Services Lodge

The first time I met Master Mason, Brother Jon Peter Howe, better known as "Busta", was at a gathering in Ashford for potential Founders of the East Kent Combined Services Lodge. My first impression of him was that he was a pleasant guy who'd fit in well. I was told he was ex-Army, and although he seemed quiet, there was a calm confidence about him. I later learned he'd lost a leg on active duty, and my respect for him only deepened.

A couple of months later, I was invited to the Queensman Lodge at Great Queen Street, London, where I again found myself in Busta's company. Over a few drinks, we got chatting, and I felt an instant connection with him. He told me he was born in 1987 and joined the Army at just 15 years and 9 months old, proudly calling it his "family regiment." He'd been deployed on several UN peacekeeping tours and had reached the rank of Corporal before being medically discharged in 2015 after a serious incident while training local soldiers. That incident cost him his leg. He spoke about it with such resilience, saying, "I just get on with it and push myself to do more than two-legged people can."

By way of an example of pushing himself, Busta competed in the Invictus games and he features in the photograph on the second page of this magazine.

Busta told me he's now a professional deer stalker and also works part-time as a training aid for NATO Special Forces. As an amputee with combat experience, he plays the role of a live casualty, giving realistic feedback to improve medical training. He explained how they use full makeup and prosthetics to simulate battlefield injuries. For him, it's about giving back and ensuring that others are as prepared as possible.



Jon "Busta" Howe

After leaving the military, Busta missed the sense of camaraderie and community, so his father introduced him to the Queensman Lodge, his regiment's Masonic Lodge, where he was initiated in 2018. He spoke passionately about the strong parallels between military life and Freemasonry, especially the sense of brotherhood and support, which have been key to his mental well-being.

Since then, he's joined his local Services Lodge in Brighton and is eagerly awaiting membership in the East Kent Combined Services Lodge. Although he couldn't be a Founder, he's proud to support it as the first joining member. Currently serving as Senior Deacon of his Lodge, Busta is determined to reach the Master's Chair, driven by a desire for personal growth and dedication to learning the ritual.

To Busta, Freemasonry is about mystique, tradition, and self-betterment. It's also about rediscovering bonds with fellow soldiers who are now his Brothers in Masonry. And as a final memory, at a festive board, he playfully thumped his prosthetic leg on the table in time with the clapping. It was eccentric, unexpected, and hilarious. And I liked that.

AROUND THE PROVINCE

Contributor: Paul Gear

Lodge St George Bahrain Celebrates 25 Years of Burns Night Tradition

Lodge St George Bahrain recently marked a momentous occasion by hosting their 25th annual Burns Night Dinner and Ceilidh on Saturday, January 25th. This year's celebration took place in the stunning Lympe Castle, a venue that perfectly complements the spirit of the evening. Guests were welcomed by the friendly faces of Worshipful Brother Dave Hart and the beloved piper, Cynthia Fuller, setting the tone for an evening filled with joy, camaraderie, and celebration.

The Great Hall, adorned in its historic elegance, was brimming with energy as brethren and guests from various Lodges across Ashford and East Kent came together. The evening began with Worshipful Brother Gordon Brown delivering the Selkirk Grace, a beautiful homage to the tradition of Burns Night. Guests were also treated to an inspiring Address to the Haggis by Worshipful Brother Chris McNeilly of White Rose Lodge, adding a special touch to the occasion.



This year marked not only the 25th Burns Night Dinner but also a milestone for the event's musical component. For the past quarter-century, the band "Rejigged" has been delighting attendees with their vibrant tunes.

The event was not only a night of merriment but also a powerful reminder of the Lodge's commitment to charity. Thanks to the generosity of attendees and the support of local businesses, the charity event raised over £1000. This sum will be split between Pilgrims Hospices in Ashford and Canterbury, as well as the 2025 Festival. The incredible donations and prizes from local restaurants and businesses contributed to making the night a resounding success.

Lympe Castle, known for its excellent hospitality, provided an outstanding catering experience, ensuring that guests were treated to a delicious and memorable meal. We are excited to announce that

Lodge St George Bahrain is proud of its ongoing tradition and the bonds it fosters within the community and is proud to announce the Burns Night Dinner and Ceilidh will return on 24th January 2026, with the venue, band, and piper all secured for another spectacular event.



The Burns' Supper at The Downs Lodge

In 1999, a wonderful idea was born thanks to Worshipful Brother Robbie Adamson, a proud Scottish native, who envisioned bringing the warmth and spirit of a Burns' Supper to Deal. His vision took shape at Sondes Road and has since blossomed into a beloved annual tradition, hosted by The Downs Lodge 6855.

The event, which brings people together to enjoy a traditional Scottish meal, has grown to not only celebrate Scotland's literary icon, Robert Burns, but also to support local charities through the generous contributions of its attendees. Over the years, the Burns' Supper has been graced by memorable speakers, one of whom is the esteemed Dr. Alex Penrose. He delivers the iconic "Address to the Haggis" each year, adding a special touch to this event that is eagerly anticipated by all.

This year, the celebration took place on 14th January, on Burns' birthday, and drew attendees from five local lodges. The hall was beautifully adorned, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. The haggis was proudly piped in and Dr Penrose delivered the famous address, a moment that always stirs the crowd.

The evening was full of highlights, with heartfelt contributions from Worshipful Brother James Chenery and Worshipful Brother David Hawkes, whose lively Immortal Memory brought the audience to their feet. A delightful dessert followed, along with several toasts, making for a truly memorable evening. As the night wound down, traditional Scottish songs filled the air, including a particularly moving rendition of "My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose," beautifully performed by Mrs Joyce Lambert.

This year's event held even greater significance, as it stood as a testament to the strength of community and resilience.



Dr Alex Penrose addresses the Haggis

Thanks to the dedication of the team from The Downs Lodge, including Worshipful Brothers David Hawkes, Ivor Winham, James Chenery, and Adrian Friend, the event raised an impressive £500 for charity.

The success of the evening was especially meaningful as it offered support to Robbie, who had recently completed a challenging round of radio and chemotherapy.

It was a beautiful reminder of the power of togetherness, tradition, and the difference a dedicated community can make. Here's to many more years of this heartwarming tradition!

AROUND THE PROVINCE

Group 7 Charity Fun Run



On 21st September 2025, the scenic Betteshanger Park in Deal, Kent, will host a vibrant and inspiring fundraising event: the Group 7 Province of East Kent Freemasons Charity Fun-Run.

The event offers three race options to suit varying levels of fitness and experience - a half marathon, 10K, and 5K.

This initiative is part of the East Kent Freemasons' long-standing tradition of community service and charitable giving supporting a wide range of causes, including assistance for vulnerable children and adults, and medical research. This charity run continues their mission, providing an opportunity to raise crucial funds for both local and national charities.

Set against the beautiful backdrop of Betteshanger Park, the event promises a memorable and enjoyable experience being in the scenic countryside.

The park is celebrated for its wide open spaces, natural trails, and woodland areas, offering participants a picturesque and peaceful setting as they make their way along the course. Volunteer Marshalls will be present throughout the route to provide guidance, hydration, and support, ensuring a safe and motivating environment for everyone involved.

Beyond the races, the event aims to be a community celebration, welcoming families, friends, and supporters. Attendees can look forward to entertainment, food stalls, and the chance to learn more about the charitable work of the Freemasons. This inclusive atmosphere encourages not just runners, but also volunteers and spectators to take part in the day's activities.

Registration details will be released soon, with a straightforward process planned for all entrants. Registered participants will receive a race pack containing a race number and commemorative items.

Finishers will be awarded a special medal to mark their achievement and contribution to charity. For those unable to run, alternative ways to get involved include making a donation or volunteering on race day (further information will follow).



The event also welcomes support from local businesses and organisations through corporate sponsorships. These partnerships offer businesses an opportunity to align with a respected charitable causes while enhancing their community presence.

The Group 7 East Kent Province Freemasons Charity Run is more than just a race, it represents a collective effort to make a positive difference, fostering community spirit while supporting important charitable initiatives. Whether running, walking, volunteering, or simply cheering on participants, everyone has a role to play in making the event a success.

Save the date, get ready to lace up your running shoes to support those in need through a day of purpose, passion, and positivity.

Event Details:

Registration details to follow

Date: Sunday 21st September 2025

Location: Betteshanger Park, near Deal, Kent

First runners begin at 10:00 AM

The Tea Company: A Heartwarming First Anniversary Celebration

In the winter of 2024, Jeff Knight, the Worshipful Master of Globe and Laurel Lodge 4657, had a vision that was as warm and comforting as a cup of tea. He wanted to create a space where the community could come together in the spirit of kindness, share a friendly chat, and enjoy a cup of tea, coffee or chocolate with a slice of cake.

Jeff's idea was simple yet powerful: an open-afternoon every month at the Sondes Road Masonic Hall in Deal, where people could gather for tea, conversation, and connection. This initiative wasn't just about tea; it was about building bridges, breaking barriers, and fighting loneliness. Jeff also hoped it would help dispel some of the myths about Freemasonry by inviting everyone in, regardless of background.



Jeff and Emma Knight

Over the months, "The Tea Company" grew in size and spirit. It attracted an eclectic group of people. Some were widows of Masons, seeking to connect with old friends; others were Masons themselves who found it difficult to attend evening meetings, but still enjoyed the company and the opportunity to keep in touch. And then there were those who had no masonic connection, but came for the sense of belonging, the friendly conversation, and the welcoming atmosphere.

On Monday, March 31st 2025, the Tea Company celebrated its first year with an afternoon full of laughter, nostalgia, and heartfelt connections.



Rena Walters and Barbara Walker

The sense of community was evident in every smile, every conversation, every gesture of kindness. Mrs. Rena Walters, whose late husband 'Wally' Walters had twice been Worshipful Master of the Globe and Laurel Lodge, shared her thoughts with a beaming smile, "It is a wonderful idea and it's so nice to know we are not forgotten."

Many echoed Rena's sentiment, sharing how much they appreciated the regular gathering. It wasn't just the tea that made it special, but the fact that it was a safe space to meet friends and catch up, especially for those who may not have seen another person all week. The warmth of the atmosphere, the familiar faces, and the gentle greetings created a sense of belonging that was hard to match. It was clear that The Tea Company had become more than just an event; it had become a reminder that no one is ever truly alone.

Over the months, "The Tea Company" grew in size and spirit. It attracted an eclectic group of people. Some were widows of Masons, seeking to connect with old friends; others were Masons themselves who found it difficult to attend evening meetings, but still enjoyed the company and the opportunity to keep in touch. And then there were those who had no masonic connection, but came for the sense of belonging, the friendly conversation, and the welcoming atmosphere.

AROUND THE PROVINCE

The Tea Company continued ...

The anniversary celebration was a beautiful reflection of the warmth, kindness, and friendships that had flourished over the past year. The Tea Company had not only brought together people from different walks of life but had created a space where joy, laughter, and connection could thrive. The success of the venture was evident in the smiles and stories shared that afternoon, and it was clear that this was just the beginning.

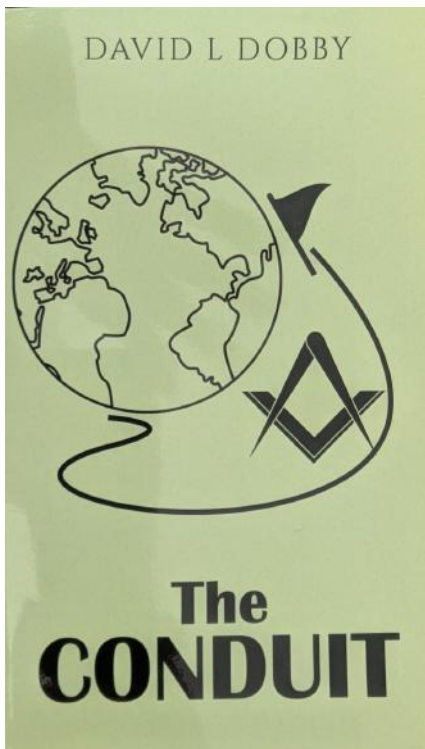
As the day drew to a close, the guests left with full hearts, knowing they had been part of something special. Jeff and Emma stood at the door, waving goodbye to the last of the guests, their hearts full of gratitude for the wonderful journey they had embarked upon.



Emma Knight serving a guest

And with the warm glow of the first anniversary still lingering in the air, one thing was certain: The Tea Company was here to stay, continuing to offer warmth, friendship, and a sense of belonging to all who walked through its doors. Here's to many more years of laughter, tea, and connection.

Long may The Tea Company continue to flourish!



THE CONDUIT

A book by David Dobby, member of George Hamilton Lodge Deal

This book was conceived to establish a relationship between Freemasonry and the foundation of Golf clubs., but my research became much extended, causing me to examine the influence of the military in relation to both.

It is well know that both Freemasonry and golf have expanded their tentacles to most parts of the world, and it is the military who have provided the conduit for this expansion. It is to them that we owe the dissemination of golf and Freemasonry around the world. The book covers the history of both over a 300-year period from 1600 to 1900. It was remarkable how often the same names appeared in all three disciplines.

Without doubt a relationship has been established and long may it continue.

To purchase the book, visit Austin Macauley Publishers.

<https://www.austinmacauley.com/book/the-conduit>

AROUND THE PROVINCE

Stanley Wykeham Lodge Food Bank Initiative

In the spirit of brotherhood and community, Stanley Wykeham Lodge 6599 has proudly joined the Paddock Wood Masonic Hall foodbank initiative, a heartwarming collaboration that demonstrates the power of giving. This charitable effort is a beautiful example of how Masonic lodges come together to support those in need, embodying the values of charity, compassion, and service.

Two of our generous brethren stepped forward, contributing not only two boxes filled with 48 essential grocery items but also a cash donation to help further the initiative's cause. In addition, the proceeds from the Lodge's December raffle were donated, bolstering the foodbank's ability to continue supporting local families and individuals who are facing difficult times.



The Paddock Wood Masonic Hall foodbank initiative, coordinated by Worshipful Brother Dave Parker from Paddock Wood Lodge, has already made a significant impact. As part of the initiative, many Masonic brethren across various lodges have come together to provide vital resources, demonstrating the fraternity's commitment to making a tangible difference in our communities.

Reverend Tony Miller: 60 years in Freemasonry



Rev Tony Miller receiving his 60th anniversary certificate

On March 14, 2025, Reverend Tony Miller was honoured for his 60 years of service to Freemasonry at Simon Langton Lodge in Canterbury. The Deputy Grand Master, Philip Neil South, presented him with a certificate recognising his remarkable dedication to Freemasonry's values of charity and community service.

Tony's Masonic journey began on 6th February 1965, and over the years, he became a respected figure, contributing to charitable initiatives and strengthening brotherhood across several Lodges in London, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, and Leicester and Rutland.

Beyond Freemasonry, Tony had a varied career, starting at Handley Page, a British aerospace manufacturer, then moving to the Patent Office. He later became a Curate, embracing a spiritual path. Tony's charity work, especially supporting orphaned children in Uganda, has made a lasting impact both in the UK and abroad.

Tony has served as Master of Simon Langton Lodge twice and will take the Chair again in May. His leadership and dedication to Freemasonry, charity, and community have inspired many. As he celebrates 60 years of service, Tony's kindness, generosity, and influence continue to resonate, exemplifying the true spirit of brotherhood and service.

AROUND THE PROVINCE

Invicta Chapter support The Friends of the William Harvey Hospital

Having achieved the very prestigious East Kent 2025 Festival Gold Award the companions of the Invicta Chapter 709 voted overwhelmingly to make a small donation of £100 to a local charity "The Friends of the William Harvey Hospital".

It was for this reason that Companions Clive Manuel and Brian Ward met in the foyer of the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford to keep an appointment with Kimberly the shop manager and Darren the charity manager. The Friends of the William Harvey Hospital is a charitable organisation led by a board of volunteer trustees who operate a well-stocked shop in the foyer of the Ashford hospital.

The shop is run by a small group of staff ably assisted by a large group of volunteers (Margaret, Clive's wife being one of them). In 2024 the shop had a turnover of over £1m and donated approximately £350k to the hospital to purchase medical equipment and other things which could not be funded by the NHS.



Darren receiving the cheques from Brian Ward and Clive Manuel

Hurrah! for the companions of the Invicta Chapter 709 for supporting this local charity who offer an invaluable service to those visiting the hospital and providing much needed funds to the hospital. To find out more about The Friends of William Harvey Hospital visit their [website](#).

Monckton Chapter: A small chapter with a huge heart

On the 4th March The Deputy Grand Superintendent, John Baker, presented Monckton Chapter with a Platinum Award for their fantastic contribution to the 2025 Festival. John Baker congratulated the Chapter for their contribution to The Festival, commenting that the Chapter had, "punched above its weight". The First Principal the presented John with a further £500 towards the Festival.

At the same meeting £500 was donated to the Mariners of Bewl, an inclusive sailing club where members with physical impairments and non disabled sail together on an equal basis in an adaptive fleet of dinghies.



John Baker, Eric Head and Mick Smith

The Chapter passed propositions to donate £100 to the Air Ambulance and £500 to Smile Train, a global charity that provides repairing surgery for clefts. Since then the chapter has achieved a Diamond Award - Congratulations Companions!

AROUND THE PROVINCE

Celebration of the Master Mason Degree at Wellington Lodge

On Thursday 10th April 2025, Wellington Lodge 784 in Deal celebrated a momentous evening in true Masonic spirit. Under the steady guidance of Worshipful Master Brian Wash, Brother Mike Drane was Raised to the Degree of a Master Mason - a key milestone in every Freemason's journey. The evening also honoured Brother Carl Janssen, recently Raised, with both Brethren celebrated together in a heartfelt joint recognition.

The ceremony, marked by dignity and tradition, was enriched by the warm support of nine visiting Brethren. Following the ceremony, a festive Masonic banquet brought Brethren together in joyful fellowship. With a spirit of camaraderie and reflection, Wellington Lodge continues to nurture its members' growth. The future shines bright for Brothers Mike and Carl as they advance on their Masonic journeys.



*Brothers Mike Dane and Carl Janssen
with Lodge Officers*

A DOUBLE-DOUBLE SPECIAL EVENING FOR AGRICOLA!



A proud father and two sons.

It was a doubly special evening at a recent meeting of Agricola Lodge at the Maidstone Masonic Centre.

The first special part of the meeting was shortly after the Lodge was opened by the Worshipful Master, Dr. David Penman. There was a report and the Deputy Provincial Director of Ceremonies, James Close, was admitted. He announced that Assistant Provincial Grand Master, Duncan Rouse, accompanied by a significant retinue of Active Provincial Grand Officers, awaited admittance. This alone marked the occasion as special.

Yet, the true highlight was deeply personal. A double Initiation is special in itself but, add to that the fact that they were brothers AND that they were the sons of the Lodge's Assistant Director of Ceremonies, Ian Packer, and you get not just a double, but a very special double! You'd think that was sufficiently amazing for the history books, but Dad himself then proceeded to take the Chair and Initiate both sons, Toby and Matthew!

And it being a special evening doesn't end there because Duncan Rouse presented the Worshipful Master with a Platinum Certificate to mark the Lodge's considerable support of the 2025 Festival, saying, *"It is rare to be able to present this level of award and the Lodge's exceptional endeavours are very gratefully acknowledged"*.

So, a Double Initiation, for a father and his two sons, the visit of an Assistant Provincial Grand Master and the presentation of a very special Platinum Award Certificate. It was indeed a double-double special evening for Agricola!

AROUND THE PROVINCE

Travelling Gavel

On 24th March The Shorncliffe Lodge 4330 held their meeting. This was to be a very special and poignant meeting. In 2023 Brother Eric Futchter made and presented his Lodge with a Gavel which would be used by Group Six to initiate a Travelling Gavel.

In order to win, a lodge must outnumber the other lodge, members must include the worshipful Master and Wardens.

Commemoration Lodge 5329, led by Worshipful Master Colin Mackenzie, claimed the gavel. The evening included a ceremony conducted by Worshipful Brother Richard Alldridge, featuring Brother Terry Ormiston's elevation to the degree of a Fellow Craft. Following a celebratory Festive Board, Worshipful Brother Steven Carpenter presented the gavel to Colin Mackenzie, cheered on by his fellow lodge members.

Sadly, Brother Futchter passed away on July 19th, 2024, before witnessing the gavel's transfer; it will now be known as the Eric Futchter Travelling Gavel.



Artifex Lodge Multiple Raisings



Artifex lodge 4555, a closing lodge two years ago, now a thriving lodge that has conducted FIVE Raising and Passing. A milestone for the lodge that reflects the vibrancy and active engagement of its new members. It demonstrates the smooth and well rehearsed ceremony by the senior deacon Bro Ray Sarabia showcasing the lodge's growth and education towards its membership.

Brothers: Jose Jocom, Edward Macapagal, Richard D'Rosario, Nilo Delos Reyes and Jay Reynald Tan where passed on the 13 February 2025 and Raised on 3rd April 2025. pictured below.

The event was filled with self achievement, joy and significant meaning. It not only marks individual turning point for the new master masons but also highlights the lodge's collective strength and commitments to the Province of East Kent. These experiences help preserve the rich traditions of the fraternity and ensure that its values are passed on to future generations.

Contribution by Vincent Geluz - Bustos



AROUND THE PROVINCE

Presentation of 50 year certificate

A heartwarming celebration lit up Norman Lodge No. 3502 as Worshipful Brother Cecil James “Dick” Barton was honoured for an extraordinary 50 years of Masonic service. The Head of Freemasonry in East Kent, Provincial Grand Master Neil Hamilton Johnstone, presented Dick with a special Certificate, surrounded by warm smiles and proud applause. Escorted by the Provincial Director of Ceremonies, Graham Cuthbert and other Provincial Grand Lodge Officers, the evening radiated respect and admiration.

The enjoyment continued at the Festive Board, where Dick was surprised with a bouquet for his wife and a fine bottle of malt whisky. It was a moving tribute to dedication, friendship, and tradition, an evening that truly celebrated the spirit of Freemasonry and the bonds it creates.



The Provincial Grand Master presenting Dick Barton with his 50 year certificate

Gillingham

An Uplifting Tale of Brotherhood and Bravery

Still glowing with joy the morning after, one brother reflected on the unforgettable gathering of the East Kent Combined Services Lodge held on April 12th at the Franklin Rooms, Gillingham. It wasn't just another meeting, it was a celebration of unity, courage, and shared purpose. With over 85 brethren in attendance, the atmosphere was rich with camaraderie and pride.

This special event had been long in the making. After a whirlwind first year led by Worshipful Brother Steve Simmons, filled with new initiates and growth, he handed over the reins in October 2024. Unbeknownst to his successor, Steve had secretly planned a spectacular highlight: a lecture on the Victoria Cross.



Johnson Beharry VC with Kevin Stones

And what a highlight it was. The presence of Worshipful Brother Johnson Beharry VC, a living hero, alongside military historian and BBC's Antiques Roadshow, Mark Smith, made the event extraordinary. Worshipful Brother Mark captivated the room with gripping stories of heroism, while Johnson's heartfelt recollection of his experiences in Iraq brought a powerful hush over the audience.

The Festive Board that followed was a joyous feast - laughter, fellowship, and generosity filled the air. Johnson, ever humble, warmly engaged with everyone, selfies and all! An auction of his book raised £500, part of an incredible £1,200 total for charity that day, supporting causes like the JBVC Foundation and Combat Stress. As the Worshipful Master, Kevin Stones, said, "I am so fortunate to be part of this magnificent new Lodge." It was a day to remember, where valour met fellowship and hearts were truly full.

Ashford

CEREMONY OF VEILS

An historic ceremony that once formed an integral part of a Freemasons' Masonic experience.

On the 7th March 2025 Mid Kent First Principals Chapter presented a demonstration of Passing the Veils. Companions were treated to an excellent and informative demonstration of the Ceremony of Veils, a historic ceremony that once formed an integral part of a Freemasons' Masonic experience.

Today in England the ceremony is solely authorised for use in Chapters in Bristol but it is still very much part of the Royal Arch system in Ireland, the United States of America and in Scotland.

Over 80 Companions attended the presentation at The Franklin Rooms in Gillingham which was followed by an enjoyable festive board. The Deputy Provincial Grand Superintendent John Kennett Baker attended as well as Past Grand Superintendent Geoffrey Gordon Dearing.

A booklet to accompany the presentation was presented to the Companions. If you were unable to attend all is not lost as arrangements for the next presentation in 2026 are already being made. Watch this space!



Image: The ceremony of veils demonstration team



BEYOND THE CRAFT

THE MILITARY AND MASONIC ORDER OF THE RED CROSS OF CONSTANTINE

BY NICK ALDER

The Order is based on the legend behind the conversion of the Roman Emperor, Constantine, to the Christian Faith whilst he was fighting against his rival Roman Emperors. It has often been said that by becoming a Knight of the Order, it will help to explain the allegories of Craft and Chapter in its original Christian context and should be a must for anyone who wants to better understand the underlying importance of the basic building blocks of Masonry.

Whilst Constantine was not born in England, he was the first person to be crowned as a Roman Emperor in England, by the soldiers of the army at Eboracum, better known to us as York, where there is a statue of him outside York Minster, paid for by the Order.

The only requirement to join this Christian Order is that you must be a Royal Arch Mason and believe in the Holy Trinity.

There are two ceremonies a candidate will enjoy. The first, in a Conclave (equivalent to a Lodge), confers the rank of Knight of Constantine. The second, undertaken under the auspices of one of the two special Conclaves in the Division of Kent, elevates you to Knight of St. John the Evangelist and Knight of the Holy Sepulchre.

This is one of the most impressive ceremonies in Freemasonry, involving a team of over 25 knights and lasting approximately two hours.

The sash and jewels worn after this second ceremony are shown below. All meetings conclude with a Festive Board, similar to Craft & Chapter. The Order is considered one of the happiest in Freemasonry, renowned for its unique camaraderie.



The Division of Kent encompasses both the Craft Provinces of East & West Kent, and as every knight can get involved in the ceremonial and ritual of the Order once they have become a Knight of St. John the Evangelist and a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre, it will give you the opportunity to visit Masonic Centres in West Kent.

The Order has Conclaves based in the following Masonic Centres in East Kent:-

Pentangle Conclave	Rochester
Durovernon Conclave	Dover
Christ Church Conclave	Faversham
Ancient College Gateway Conclave	Maidstone
Ebbsfleet Conclave	Ramsgate
Crane Conclave	Dymchurch
St. Sexburga Conclave	Sheerness
St. Mary in Ashford Conclave	Ashford
Byzantium Conclave	Chatham

All of the above Conclaves meet only three times a year, and the Divisional Recorder, Clive Watling, will be delighted to provide you with more information about the Order, and who to contact at one of the above Conclaves, and Clive can be contacted at clive@redcross@btinternet.com

Breast Jewels and Sash of the Red Cross of Constantine





ARTICLE BY MARK
LAWSON

The Spirit of Rugby Lodge



The Spirit of Rugby lodge kicked off their new season with a bang last weekend. Less than a week after the installation of their new Master, Mark Lawson, nearly 50 members and guests met up in a private room above the Shozna, Rochester, having first sunk a few pints in the Granville just along the road. They were there to enjoy the hospitality of one of the finest Indian restaurants in the country – and to watch Wales v Ireland in the 6 Nations on their big screen.

The food did not disappoint, and neither did the game. Against all odds Wales were three points ahead when the half time raffle was drawn, and a certain APMG was looking decidedly nervous. The excitement only built in the second half in what was arguably one of the best games of the tournament so far. It was certainly noisy at the Shozna as Ireland prevailed 18-27 over the hosts - and took the triple crown to boot.

After finishing their drinks and showing their appreciation for the staff, the crowd set off on an epic 200 yard journey back to the Granville and to a private room upstairs to prepare for the second match of the day – England v Scotland. It's fair to say that this wasn't a game that will live long in the memory, but England came away with the Calcutta Cup on the back of a very lucky 16-15 victory.

There was a short awards ceremony recognising those lodge members that had distinguished themselves in the previous season;

Best Newcomer – Matt Fothergill

Pathfinder – Matt Mitchell

Sh*tthouse – Garrie Owens

Camera Whore – Andy Stevens

Lodge secretary and England fan Andy Stevens is to be commended for completing his punishment with good humour. He was sentenced to wear a Wales hat all day, having been convicted of negligence and hypocrisy at a kangaroo court held at the installation meeting festive board. It added to the colour of the day along with the numerous rugby shirts on display and a good number of lodge blazers too.

All that was left to do now was to tuck into the buffet, dissect the match over another beer, and consider fines for the next lodge meeting...

All in all, it was a successful day. The banter flowed as freely as the beer, and fun and laughter ensued. £775 was raised for charity along the way, and enquiries for membership were received. Here's hoping the rest of the year goes just as well.

ALMONERS' BREAKFAST

Article and Photos: Derek Lindars and Matt Steel

Celebrating the vital role of Almoners

On the morning of Saturday 8th March 2025, a vibrant sense of anticipation filled the air as over 110 Almoners and guests from across the Province of East Kent gathered at the Tovil Masonic Centre in Maidstone for the Annual Almoners' Breakfast Meeting. The event provided an inspiring opportunity for Masonic brothers to come together, share insights, and reflect on the significant role they play in supporting their communities.

The meeting began with a warm welcome from the Provincial Grand Almoner, Nigel Fitz, who set the tone for the day. After introducing the agenda, he invited the Provincial Grand Master (PGM), Neil Hamilton Johnstone, to share his thoughts. The PGM underscored the importance of the gathering, saying, *"It is my pleasure to be here, and there will be much of great importance discussed today."* He highlighted the essential work that Almoners carry out within Lodges and Chapters and also in their communities.



The PGM and PGA share their thoughts

The meeting also emphasised the crucial role Almoners have in re-engaging members and fostering a happy, healthy Masonic community to create a continued improvement in membership and retention across the Province. Nigel took the opportunity to remind everyone about the incredible work of the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF), one of the largest grant-making charities in the country.



The MCF offers vital support to Freemasons and their families in times of need and extends help to the most vulnerable in society through four key areas:

Early Years Children (Aged 0 to 5) – Focusing on addressing poverty and neglect.

Children Affected by Domestic Abuse – Providing support to children facing adversity.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – Offering specialised help to those with unique challenges.

People Living with Dementia and their Carers – Supporting those affected by dementia and their loved ones.

Lynda Valerou, from the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF), also spoke about the many ways Almoners can assist Freemasons and their dependents in accessing MCF services, offering crucial information and contact numbers for support.

One particularly inspiring highlight of the meeting was the presentation by Dr. Leanne Flux, a Business Psychologist and NHS Practice Manager.

who spoke about "Supporting and Understanding Bereavement."

Her compassionate guidance on helping those navigating grief provided Almoners with practical tools to support members and their families during difficult times.



Dr Leanne Flux

The meeting featured several heartwarming and emotional stories from Almoners and Visiting Officers, who shared anonymised examples of their vital work in supporting individuals and families during times of acute distress. These stories highlighted the profound impact that Almoners can have in helping people through some of life's most challenging moments.

As the morning came to a close, Nigel Fitz expressed his deep gratitude to the guest speakers, Almoners, and attendees for their contributions. He offered a special acknowledgment work that Almoners do on behalf of their Lodges and Chapters, reinforcing how essential their roles are in creating strong, supportive communities.

A successful meeting ended and the Almoners returned to their Lodges, with a greater understanding of the impact they can make in the lives of their brothers and the communities they serve.

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

*Paul Gear, Provincial Grand Communications Officer
and an Armed Forces Veteran, writes:*



Dedicated Team Works Tirelessly to Support East Kent Veterans

It is been some time since we set out to support local Freemasons who have served their Country, and provide guidance and sign posting to various support networks.

So what have we been doing?

Well we haven't sat on our hands, under the new guidance of Peter Marno, we have reached out to organisations to seek partnerships with them, and to work with them in providing support and help for us veterans. One major appointment onto the team, has been the recruitment of Brother Tony Finch. Tony has just left the Army having served more years than I bet he can remember!

Tony has a background in working with the NHS to support veterans, one key area is the registering of those leaving the armed forces with a local GP. With only about 15% having signed up, (this doesn't include spouses, partners and dedicated carers that should register under the Systemized Nomenclature of Medicine (SNOMED) they are missing out on a vital service, one that every GP has a legal duty to provide. When signing up, mention that you are a veteran. Another area that Tony has really raised the game for East Kent, is the training for Almoners and Visiting Volunteers (VV), providing a toolbox or resources, this training is nationally recognised and will prove invaluable to those who have undertaken the training. service champion thrive together, already undertaken by some of the VV's and Almoners.

Peter has been in touch with various groups around Kent, in particular, the RBLI Village in Aylesford, Kent County Council and associated bodies who organise regular events, Armed Forces Days across Kent and VE Day celebrations.

As a Province, we mustn't forget that the reason for setting up the Armed Forces Team in East Kent, is to reach out to those of us who are on the ground, the members who sit in all lodges and chapters, who sometimes have nowhere to go, or don't know where to find out important information. The Provincial Website has an Armed Forces Section, this has a number of websites that can be used to help you and support you in a variety of situations. Don't forget, your Almoners are an essential resource and can help point you in the right direction, if they can't they will know someone who can.

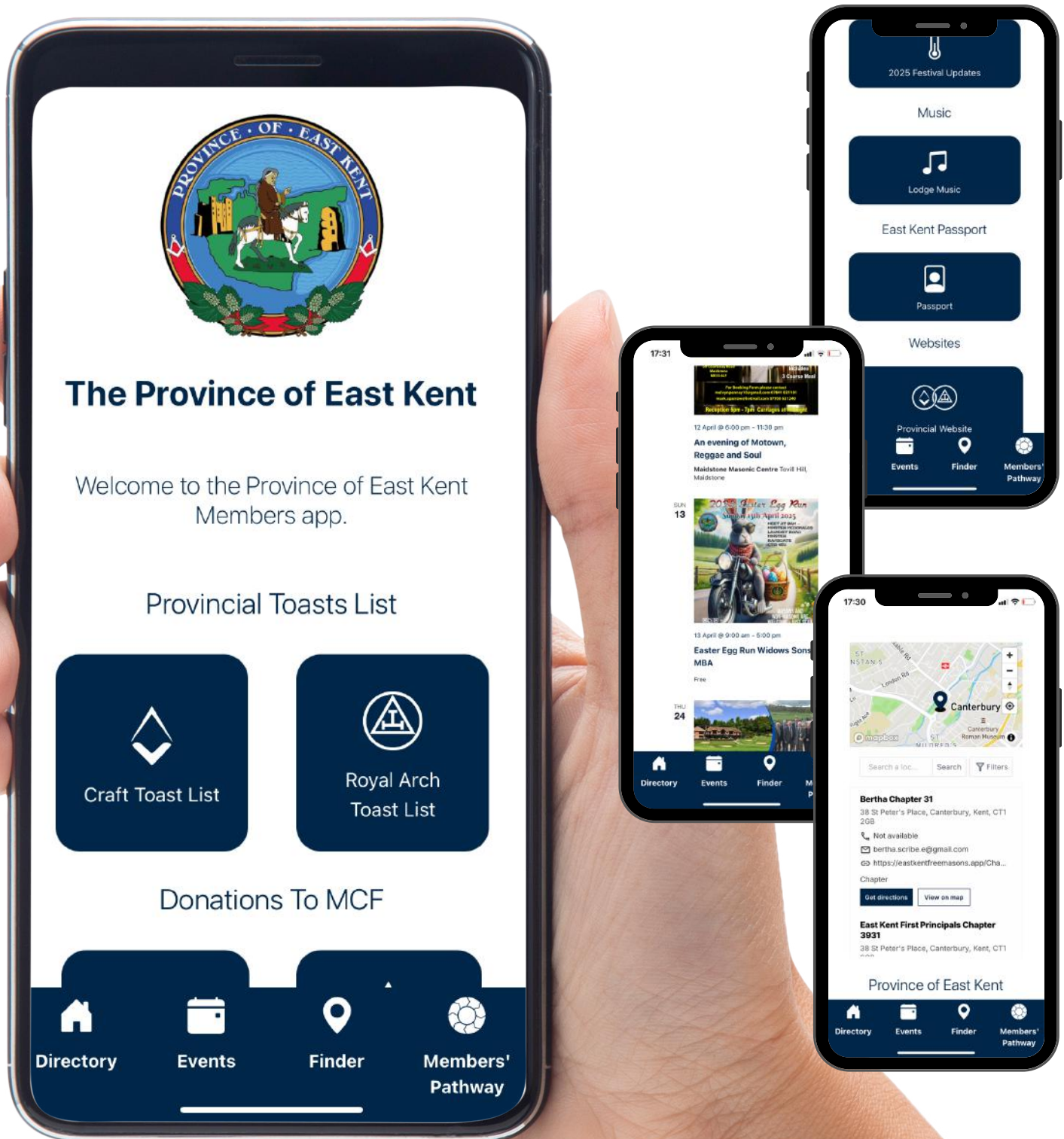
If you have any ideas, would like to plan an event, please let us know on. afc_contact@ekprovince.co.uk

A big thank you goes to: Jim Mason, Tony Finch, Kemsley Whittlesea and Peter Marno for their continued help. We all look forward to working with our new APGM, Wayne Smith who takes over the AFC Covenant, and thank Trevor Carter for his hard work as the previous lead APGM.

We cannot do this without your help and support. Please keep an eye out for future emails, breakfast meetings and trips. Do you have an idea how we can engage our Vets?

The Provincial App

Not only a First for East Kent, but a First for Freemasonry across the UK. The East Kent Provincial App continues to grow, with new features being added monthly. A comprehensive guide for downloading is available on the Provincial Website.



Click here to [Download the App](#)

Brotherhood on Two Wheels: The Widow's Sons East Kent Division

The Widow's Sons East Kent Division is much more than just a motorcycle club; it's a tight-knit community where the bonds of brotherhood are strengthened by the roar of engines and the thrill of the open road. Made up of Freemasons who share a passion for motorcycles, this group is part of the larger Widow's Sons Masonic Bikers Association. The East Kent Division stays true to the core values of Freemasonry, yet their impact goes far beyond the road. Their mission is to provide charitable support to widows and orphans of Freemasons, while also serving the broader community with acts of kindness and generosity.

Their mission is to provide charitable support to widows and orphans of Freemasons, while also serving the broader community with acts of kindness and generosity.

A Family Affair: Welcoming All to the Ride

While deeply rooted in Freemasonry, the Widow's Sons East Kent Division embraces a spirit of inclusivity that extends to family and friends as well. Non-Masons can join as 'Cornerstone' members, participating in the joy of riding and the group's values of kindness and support. This inclusive spirit creates a sense of extended family, where even children and spouses are welcomed with open arms.

A Community Built on Connection

At the heart of the East Kent Division is a strong sense of community, with regular 'meetups' bringing members together each month. The 'Natter Night', held on the last Wednesday of every month, serves as a gathering point to plan upcoming rides, discuss charity events, and simply enjoy the company of like-minded bikers. It's during these moments that the group truly shines, transforming from a motorcycle club into a true family. Throughout the year, the group takes part in a variety of events, but two rides truly stand out:

- **The Easter Toy Run:** A heartwarming event where members ride out to deliver toys and gifts to children facing difficult circumstances, bringing joy and smiles to those who need it most.
- **The Christmas Toy Run:** A festive tradition that spreads holiday cheer by delivering toys to children in hospitals, care homes, or families experiencing hardship, ensuring that every child can have a reason to celebrate.

Brotherhood Without Borders

The Widow's Sons East Kent Division also broadens its horizons with international adventures. In 2024, they set off on an unforgettable trip to France, creating lasting memories and strengthening their mutual bond. This year, the group is preparing for a thrilling ride to Italy, where they'll experience breathtaking routes and build new friendships.



Brotherhood on Two Wheels Continued...

Support Beyond the Road

One of the most profound aspects of the Widow's Sons is the unwavering support they offer one another, both on and off the road. When life throws challenges, members know they can count on each other for encouragement and help. The group has an appointed mental health first aider to ensure no brother ever has to face their struggles alone.

A True Family, Beyond Blood

Members come from all walks of life - different backgrounds, professions, and Masonic Lodges - but they are united by their shared love of motorcycling and the values of Freemasonry. The Widow's Sons fosters a welcoming and inclusive environment where the bonds formed in this group go far beyond mere friendships; they are built on mutual respect, support, and an unbreakable sense of belonging.

Whether it's through charity rides, cross-country journeys, or simply enjoying a good chat at Natter Night, the Widow's Sons East Kent Division exemplifies the incredible power of brotherhood on two wheels. This group is a shining example of how passion, kindness, and community can come together to create something truly special - a family that stretches far beyond blood ties, connected by the shared love of biking and the values that drive them forward.



The East Kent Widows Sons & Cornerstones
Combine your Masonic interest with your Biking interest.
Find out more about us, our rides, meet-ups and charity runs
<https://eastkent.wsmba.uk/>



portal

Your gateway to a more connected
Masonic journey is through Portal.

- **Manage your Masonic Profile**
- **See dates of your next Lodge or Chapter meetings**
- **Find other Lodges and Chapters & get directions**
- **See your Masonic history**
- **Share your skills and interests**
- **Manage your privacy settings**

Scan the QR Code on your
mobile to get started



Or use this link to access
Portal from your desktop
desktop.portal.ugle.org.uk

Three Peaks Challenge for Charity

Article: David Pearson



On 6th and 7th May 2025, David Pearson and members of the Bright Horizons UK Leadership Team, Iain Colledge, Janine Leightley and Harvey Lay, will be taking on the 3 Peaks Challenge. Climbing Scafell Pike, Snowdon and Ben Nevis, in just 24 hours, they are fundraising for the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children to support its Bright Spaces in the UK.

Bright Spaces are sanctuaries for children and young people experiencing trauma and adversity, located in domestic abuse refuges, police child protection suites, courts, prison visiting areas, hospitals and hospitals. They are designed to help children feel safe, and to provide them with the opportunity to play and relax, and receive the help they need from specialist agencies.

So far, over a hundred bright spaces have been established in the UK at a cost of £10,000 each. These spaces are in Police Stations, Sheltered Housing, Council properties etc. But, their location is very secretive for obvious reasons. A Bright Space has just opened in West Kent and it's now hoped that further fund raising will provide enough to open another in East Kent.

Some of our Group 7 Lodges have been kind enough to donate and I am hopeful that others will help by also making a donation, either from Lodges or by making personal donations. If Gift Aid is relevant, please tick the box. Below is the just giving page link which gives more detail of the Charity and a record of monies raised and by whom.

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/directorsontherocks>

Alternatively, donations can be made by cheque payable to Bright Horizons Foundation for Children (the charity number is RCN1115697), but this will not show on the Just Giving page and therefore will not help to keep the momentum of giving going, although it would be gratefully received.

The cheque can be posted to me, David Pearson. Please email me for the postal address at: toastmasterdavidacpearson@gmail.com

Thank you so much in anticipation of helping this very worthy cause.

Lands End to John O Groats

Over 1000 Miles

In June 2024, Worshipful Brother Gary Shirley, a 59-year-old former soldier, and member of Corinthian lodge, embarked on a personal challenge that would test not only his physical endurance but also his spirit and belief in the kindness of others. His goal was simple, yet monumental: cycle from Lands End to John O'Groats, covering over 1,000 miles, all while being entirely self-supported.

With nothing but a one-man tent, his bike, and the gear he needed for the journey, Gary was determined to raise funds for The Veterans Foundation. Little did he know, his journey would turn into a story of resilience, humanity, and unexpected acts of kindness.

On paper, the Lands End to John O'Groats (LEJOG) challenge is not an uncommon one. Every year, around 4,000 cyclists undertake the journey, many facing their own personal battles along the way. But Gary's journey would be different. His path would be fraught with obstacles that tested not only his physical limits but his trust in the goodness of people.

From the outset, things didn't go as planned. Mechanical failures caused Gary to crash three times, and he battled relentless potholes. There were days of torrential rain and poor weather, that added to the struggle. And as if that wasn't enough, he narrowly avoided a collision with a lorry at a junction, only to become a significant witness to a traffic accident caused by a car that narrowly missed him before driving into two stationary vehicles. The dangers were mounting, and yet, Gary pushed on.

But the true test came when Gary, already exhausted from days of gruelling cycling, was struck by a car in the Highlands.



Then, in a cruel twist of fate, his only pair of reading glasses were run over by a car on the English-Scottish border. To top it off, there were the notorious Scottish midges, relentless and unyielding, adding their own brand of misery to an already trying journey.

Despite all the setbacks, it was the people Gary encountered along the way that made his story extraordinary. One of his first moments of kindness came in Truro, where Amelia Macmamara, a waitress at The Cornish Italian, handed him her tips, telling him to put them toward his charity.

At The Watering Hole in Mortimers Cross, a café owner, seeing Gary's determination, opened up his café, which was closed for the day, just to cook him a warm breakfast. In Longdon near Shrewsbury, the staff at 'By The Wood' campsite donated his pitch fee to the charity.

Then came the day Gary lost his wallet. With no money, no bank cards, and no ID, he found himself stranded in the middle of nowhere, with still a week of cycling ahead. His partner posted on Facebook, and what followed was a wave of support from people he didn't even know. A fellow Freemason reached out to another, who then contacted a cousin in Scotland. This stranger, along with her husband, drove a 190-mile round trip to find Gary in a remote car park and bring him food, drink, and cash to keep going.

Lands End to John O Groats continued...

They were moments that showed him the power of community, and how, in times of need, there are people who will go above and beyond to help. The kindness didn't stop there. The only store at Loch Ness re-opened that evening to sell Gary a couple of beers, and in Inverness, a complete stranger offered him money after hearing his story. In his darkest hours, when it felt like he had nothing left to give, others continued to give selflessly. A Scottish postmistress in Fareham even took the time to call the postmaster in Lairg to arrange a money transfer, ensuring Gary had what he needed to finish his challenge.

Gary finally reached John O'Groats after 19 long days, completing the journey that so many would have given up on. His grit and determination were unwavering, and his commitment to raising money for The Veterans Foundation never faltered, despite the odds. His story, shared on Facebook, resonated with countless people. It reminded them that, in a world often filled with bad news and political strife, there is still so much good to be found in humanity.

When Gary returned to Lee on Solent, Hampshire, after an 18-hour train journey, he had not only completed a physical feat but had become a symbol of resilience. He had raised over £10,000 for The Veterans Foundation, but more importantly, he had discovered that in times of hardship, the kindness of strangers can light the way.

In February 2025, at the LEJOG AGM weekend in Torquay, Gary's incredible achievement was recognized. He was awarded the **Chambers/Hume Spry Cup for the standout Self-Supported Cycle of 2024.**

Gary's journey wasn't just about the miles he pedalled. It was about the people he met along the way, the kindness he received, and the unshakable determination to overcome adversity. It's a story that serves as a reminder that, even in the face of life's challenges, the human spirit can persevere. And, sometimes, the kindness of others can make all the difference.





CELEBRATING 5 YEARS OF SUCCESS

THE LIGHT BLUES BROTHERS



Celebrating Five Years of Brotherhood: East Kent Light Blues Brothers' 5th Anniversary

The morning was nothing short of memorable as the East Kent Light Blues Brothers gathered at the Canterbury Masonic Centre to mark their 5th Anniversary in style. With a full house and a palpable sense of camaraderie, the event proved to be a celebration of both tradition and forward-thinking in the Masonic community.

A Warm Welcome and a Hearty Breakfast

The day began with a fantastic breakfast, setting the tone for what was to be an eventful and enriching morning. The Canterbury Masonic Centre buzzed with conversation as members, both old and new, arrived to participate in the milestone event. The atmosphere was electric, filled with excitement, respect, and a shared appreciation for the journey the East Kent Light Blues Brothers had undertaken over the past five years.

It was a sold-out event, underscoring the significance of the occasion and the strong support the group enjoys from its members. The morning was not only about reflecting on the past but also looking ahead to the bright future of the East Kent Light Blues Brothers, Masonic fun and fellowship.



Provincial Mentor Graham Chisnell: The Cypher Expert

A central highlight of the event was the Masonic cypher presentation led by Graham Chisnell. Known for his expertise in the intricate workings of Masonic codes and rituals, the Provincial Mentor captivated the audience with his detailed explanations. The cypher provided a wealth of information, shedding light on the historical and esoteric aspects of Freemasonry. His delivery was engaging and accessible, ensuring that members, regardless of their experience, walked away with a deeper understanding of Masonic practices and symbols.

The Provincial Mentor's session sparked lively discussions among attendees, allowing them to further immerse themselves in the rich tapestry of Masonic tradition. His insights into the cypher were not just informative but also served as a reminder of the commitment to knowledge and self-improvement that defines Freemasonry.

A Thoughtful Q&A Session

Following the cypher presentation, a Q&A session offered members the opportunity to engage directly with the Provincial Mentor and other experienced Masons. The room was filled with thoughtful inquiries, reflecting the members' thirst for knowledge and their dedication to understanding the deeper meanings within Freemasonry.

Questions ranged from practical matters about the daily workings of Masonic rituals to more profound philosophical discussions about the symbolic significance of Masonic teachings. The openness of the session encouraged a sense of collective learning, with answers providing clarity and often sparking further reflection.

The Q&A allowed for the exchange of ideas and experiences, strengthening the sense of unity and shared purpose that the East Kent Light Blues Brothers have cultivated over the years.

A Community That Continues to Grow

As the event came to a close, it was clear that the East Kent Light Blues Brothers are more than just a 'Masonic group'; they are a thriving community. The group's success lies not only in its history but in its dedication to fostering connection and personal development. Over the course of five years, they have created a space where fun, learning, fellowship, and mutual support are paramount.

Reflecting on the event, it's evident that the East Kent Light Blues Brothers will continue to be a driving force in the East Kent community. Their 5th Anniversary wasn't just a celebration of the past but a reaffirmation of their commitment to progress and unity. As they look to the future, the lessons learned, the friendships forged, and the wisdom shared will undoubtedly guide them through the next chapter of their journey, together.





Museum Special Report

By Richard Wingett
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Visit the Museum at St Peter's Pl, Canterbury CT1 2DA (Website <https://www.kentmuseumoffreemasonry.org.uk>)

Every February, the Board of Trustees at the Museum and Library hold a Development Day that sets the agenda for the forthcoming financial year. This, in turn, dovetails with our five year strategic plan.

So what have got planned for this year? First of all, a little recap.

Over the past three years, we've completely transformed the museum, turning it from a traditional Masonic Museum into a dynamic visitor attraction in its own right - while still embracing the fascinating world of Masonry. This shift in approach has made the museum more engaging and dramatically increased its popularity.

We've worked tirelessly to make the museum a true community hub, actively involving the local public and creating a participatory experience like never before. We now hold a permanent seat on Canterbury City Council's 'Business Improvement District Team', ensuring we have a voice in shaping the city's cultural landscape. What's more, both orders of women's Freemasonry are now part of our journey, with members volunteering as well as serving on our Board of Trustees. We even have a member of the public serving on the Board of Trustees, reflecting a broader, more diverse engagement.

Our outreach doesn't stop with Masonry. We're engaging with young, non-Masonic audiences, bringing fresh perspectives into our space. And in a truly historic achievement, we've been honoured with a prestigious Blue Plaque for Lord Cornwallis, a key figure in Freemasonry who served as both the Provincial Grand Master of Kent and served as Pro Grand Master.

Securing the Future of Our Museum

Running the museum requires financial resources, and for many years, our day-to-day operational funding has not been supported by contributions from the provinces. This was a deliberate decision—we committed to standing on our own feet financially.

Our primary funding comes from the Association of Patrons and voluntary donations. However, as we are all aware, the cost of living has risen sharply, and our annual income now falls short of our yearly operating costs. To address this, we must take a proactive approach to reversing this trend.



What We Are Not Doing?

We are not increasing the annual subscription fees for the Association of Patrons. However, we will need to keep this under review.

Why Is This Under Review?

Individual membership remains £25 per year. However, due to inflation, £25 from five years ago is now worth only £20.08 in today's terms, according to the Bank of England calculator. Similarly, Lodge Patronage, which costs £75, now has a real value of just £60.23. This demonstrates how rising costs erode the value of contributions, widening the funding gap.

Key Strategies for 2025

To strengthen our financial position, we are introducing several initiatives:

1. **Rebranding the Patrons Scheme** to the Association of Patrons and Friends Membership to appeal to a broader audience, including non-Masons.
2. **Introducing online direct debit payments**, making it easier for supporters to contribute—starting from just £5/month.
3. **Expanding library access**, opening it to the public for research, offering digital resources through an online shop, and giving a discount on library membership to direct debit supporters.
4. **Enhancing donation options** by installing electronic payment systems within the museum to capture more visitor contributions.
5. **Growing membership** of the Patrons and Friends Association, with a goal of doubling current support levels.
6. **Offering exclusive tours** to both members and the public for a modest fee, adding value while generating income.
7. **Creating exclusive Patrons and Friends** sessions to share updates and collect feedback.

Our Vision

To ensure the Museum's sustainability, we must think creatively about generating income. This will be our key focus for the year ahead. Every contribution, no matter the size, will be gratefully received and faithfully applied to preserving our extraordinary showcase of Freemasonry.

The Facts of Life

The following Association of Patrons numbers may surprise you, but for the wrong reasons.

	All Classes of Patronage	Individual	Lodge	Chapter	Other Units
Total	332	178	101	28	17
West Kent	29	10	14	3	1
East Kent	303	169	87	25	16



Membership Analysis and Strategic Opportunity

Current patronage figures show room for growth, especially when comparing the number of patrons (169 in East Kent) to the provincial membership (around 5,000). West Kent shows similar under-representation. The museum sees a 100% increase in patrons as both realistic and essential. This expansion would not only bridge the funding gap but strengthen engagement with women's Masonic orders.

Conclusion

The Museum serves as an invaluable public-facing representation of Freemasonry, attracting growing interest. By refining our income generation strategy, we can create a substantial and lasting impact.



The Masonic Fishing Charity

Another season gets underway for the Masonic Fishing Charity and the Committee, Anglers and Helpers are all standing by, ready to 'cast off' for 2025 with our first event at Horsham Fisheries, ME9 7AP on Thursday 1st May.



The Charity's aim is to bring an interactive Fishing and Countryside experience to people with additional needs and disabilities. It's not just for the fishing though, as it empowers young people of all abilities to gain in confidence, meet new challenges. and build their confidence. They do this by participating in and experiencing something that may otherwise have been unavailable to them.

We are always looking for more Anglers to join us at these fabulous events. We supply everything from tackle and bait to bacon rolls and a BBQ lunch! You can, of course, bring your own equipment and 'special' baits if you prefer, as many of us do, but your time and help is the most important thing.

You will have a wonderful time knowing you have made a difference to someone's life. You don't have to be a Freemason. We have many non-masonic friends, with equally charitable intentions, that join us too!



Note these dates and venues in your diaries.

Horsham Fisheries, ME9 7AP
Thursday 1 st May 2025

Cottingham Lakes, CT14 0AR
Thursday 12th June 2025

Chart Lakes, ME17 3EZ
Thursday 10th July 2025

Longshaw Fisheries, CT3 4ND
Thursday 11th September 2025

For more information on joining us, please contact Keith Heard at

ekmfc_casters_helpers@outlook.com

Be part of the team to help



EAST KENT BRANCH
MASONIC FISHING
CHARITY

Empowering all abilities

"The Masonic Fishing Charity's aim is to bring an interactive fishing and countryside experience to people with additional needs and disabilities"



Fostering a positive change and interest



Helps build confidence and sense of achievement



Supports disadvantaged young people

FIND OUT MORE:



East Kent Masonic Golf Association

By Paul McGuirk

Fixture List 2025

Thursday 24th April 2025

Westerham Golf Club

East Kent V Met GL for the Russell Race Trophy & Social Stableford

11:00 Coffee & Bacon Rolls, 12:08 First tee. £75.00 Inc Lunch

Friday 30th May 2025

West Malling Golf Club (Hurricane Course)

East Kent V West Kent for the Kent Silver Salver, Social Stableford & Team Event

09:00 Coffee & Bacon Rolls, 09:56 First tee. £72.50 Inc Lunch

Friday 27th June 2025

Sittingbourne & Milton Regis Golf Club

EKMGA V Surrey Masonic Sports Association plus Social Stableford

09:00 Coffee & Bacon Rolls, 10:00 First tee. £65.00 Inc Lunch

Friday 25th July 2025

Chestfield Golf Club

William Blay Trophy & Individual Stableford

10:00 Coffee & Bacon Rolls, 11:16 First tee. £60 Inc Lunch

See Provincial website for more dates and to book.



Enjoy Golf? Enjoy Freemasonry? Come and join in with Likeminded people.

The East Kent Masonic Golf Association (EKMGA) welcomes all Freemasons and their guests, regardless of golfing ability, for fun, friendly events that celebrate the sport and Masonic fellowship. Open to East Kent Freemasons and potential members, the association offers a relaxed atmosphere with prizes for all skill levels - no official handicap required. First-time participants can provide an estimated handicap, which will be adjusted for future events.

There is no membership fee, though a branded EKMGA golf shirt is available for £30. Events are held from April to October and span a variety of courses, from premium to more budget-friendly venues. Each gathering typically begins with breakfast, followed by 18 holes of Stableford-format golf, and concludes with a light lunch and prizegiving. Some events also involve friendly matches against other provinces.

Booking is simple via the website or by emailing golf@ekprovince.co.uk, with advance online payment required to secure your spot. The 2025 season promises a full calendar of events under the new captaincy of Roy Butler (Maeides Stana Lodge, Maidstone), who takes over from Chris Metherell.

Whether you're a low or high handicapper, EKMGA offers a welcoming, sociable way to enjoy golf and Freemasonry.



A Golden Triumph for East Kent Freemason and Veteran, Kemsley Whittlesea, at the Invictus Games



“

THE HARDEST THING ABOUT IT IS THE PERCEPTION OF OTHERS; THEY MAY SEE ME AS ‘FINE’ AND ‘INTACT’ WITHOUT REALISING THE DAILY STRUGGLES I FACE.

”

When Kemsley Whittlesea took his place at the top of the podium at the Invictus Games, gold medal in hand, he wasn’t just celebrating a sporting victory, he was honouring a journey of resilience, adapting to challenges, and the strength of community.

A proud resident of Kent and former member of the Royal Corps of Signals, Kemsley's life changed forever during deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. After sustaining multiple traumatic injuries, particularly to his right shoulder, his military career came to an end with a medical discharge in 2018. For many, such a turning point might mark the end of a chapter. But for Kemsley, it became the beginning of a powerful new story. “I have always managed well with my injury,” he explained. “It does restrict me in day-to-day tasks, but I have always managed to adapt and overcome challenges. The hardest thing about it is the perception of others; they may see me as ‘fine’ and ‘intact’ without realising the daily struggles I face.” And move forward he did, with purpose, drive, and a heart full of determination.

Kemsley found a renewed sense of camaraderie and belonging within the Freemasons. After joining the Lodge of Brothers in Arms in Wiltshire, he later became a member of Chillington Manor Lodge No. 4649 in Kent. There, he found more than fellowship, he found support, understanding, and a community that encouraged his growth beyond the uniform. With his newfound confidence and support system, Kemsley set his sights on the Invictus Games, a global sporting event created by Prince Harry, The Duke of Sussex, to support the recovery of wounded, injured, and ill veterans and service personnel. Competing in the Novice Alpine Snowboarding event, Kemsley had limited access to proper training facilities in the UK. Undeterred, he adapted his training, using indoor rowing to build the strength and endurance he needed.



"I only trained one weekend a month from July," he recalled. "But, I gave it everything I had". And his efforts paid off. Against all odds, Kemsley captured gold in snowboarding, a shining symbol of perseverance and adaptability. He also competed fiercely in skeleton and sitting volleyball, just missing out on a bronze in the latter, but never losing his spirit.

Featured in the photograph on page 2, alongside Kemsley, other Freemason veterans showcased the power of resilience. Jon "Busta" Howe of Queensman Lodge competed in the Biathlon and Wheelchair Rugby, while Neil Thomas of Doric Lodge took home a silver in Wheelchair Curling, while also competing in Alpine Skiing and Indoor Rowing. Their shared bond as servicemen, athletes, and Freemasons spoke volumes about the strength of community and purpose.

The East Kent Freemasons, deeply committed to supporting veterans, played a crucial role in this journey. As signatories of the Armed Forces Covenant, they champion respect, fairness, and opportunity for military personnel and their families. Neil Hamilton Johnstone, Head of East Kent Freemasons, reaffirmed this mission, stating, "We honour the sacrifices made by servicemen and women. Through charitable initiatives and community support, we help ensure they thrive long after their service ends." East Kent Freemasons actively provide financial assistance to veterans, serving personnel, and their families through numerous charitable initiatives, supporting local military charities and projects designed to enhance the lives of those who have served."

Kemsley now looks ahead with excitement. Not only does he hope to compete in future Invictus Games, but he's also eager to give back by volunteering for the Birmingham 2027 event and continuing to uplift fellow veterans on their journeys. His story, like so many others within the Invictus family, is a shining beacon of hope. It reminds us that while the scars of service may remain, so too does the unbreakable spirit of those who wore the uniform and the communities that stand proudly beside them.

In the end, Kemsley Whittlesea's gold medal represents far more than athletic achievement, it stands as a testament to his resilience and the vital support networks available to veterans, ensuring they continue to thrive long after their military service has ended.

Godmersham Park

Provincial Garden Party

A Fun Event For All The Family

Saturday JULY 5th 2025

Gates open at 11:30 for 12 noon to 4pm

Canterbury Rd, Godmersham, Canterbury CT4 7DT

Free Parking on Site

Come along to Godmersham Park and bring all your family
for what promises to be a great AFTERNOON out

There will be:- **Stalls** * **Classic Cars Parade** * **Rides for the Children** * **Live Music**

Children's Entertainment * **Various Food Stalls** * **Licensed Bar**

Motorbike Parade * **Tug Of War** * **Music from the 60's 70s & 80's** * **Plus Lots Lots More**

Tickets

£5 per Adult Ticket

under 16's Free Admission

Scan the QR code to Purchase your Tickets



If you would like to assist on the day or have a stall contact

Mick Smith email: godmersham2025@yahoo.com

Tel 07881 781517

This event is being held in support of the Province of East Kent 2025 Festival

MASONIC CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

supporting Local Charities



GLOSSARY

BRETHREN/BROTHER/BRO

A Freemason becomes known as a Brother on joining, e.g. 'Brother Smith', abbreviated to 'Bro Smith' when written.

LODGE

The basic unit in which Freemasons meet. To be regular it must have a Warrant or Charter from a Grand Lodge. It is sometimes referred to as a Private Lodge.

PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE

The administrative body overseeing Lodges in a particular county or area. It is headed by a Provincial Grand Master (ProvGM).

CHAPTERS

Units in the Royal Arch, Chapters are presided over jointly by three Principals, and are organised as a Metropolitan area or in Provinces (roughly based on the old county boundaries), each with a local Grand Superintendent in charge.

UGLE

An acronym for the 'United Grand Lodge of England' - The governing body of Freemasonry in England, Wales, the Isle of Man & the Channel Islands; Grand Lodge is led by the Grand Master.

SUPREME GRAND CHAPTER

The Supreme Grand Chapter of England is the governing body of Royal Arch Masons in England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Overseas, there are 32 Districts and four Groups.

TEMPLE

This is the lodge room in which we meet, also called the meeting room.

GRAND OFFICERS

Officers in Grand Lodge are called 'Grand', e.g. The Grand Master, the Grand Treasurer. After retiring from active positions they are called 'Past' Grand Treasurer etc.

GRAND MASTER

The most senior Freemason in the constitution, elected annually by Grand Lodge. The Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England is HRH The Duke of Kent.

INITIATION

The ceremony at which a candidate ('Initiate') is made a Freemason.

INSTALLATION

The ceremony at which a Freemason is made the Master of his Lodge.

ENTERED APPRENTICE

When you are first initiated into a lodge, you become an "Entered Apprentice".

FELLOW CRAFT

The next level in advancement, is that of a "Fellow Craft Freemason".

MASTER MASON

The final level is that of a Master Mason, succeeded only by that of the "Worshipful Master", who is in charge of the lodge for normally one year.

COMPANION

This is the name given to those who join the Royal Arch, the fourth step in Freemasonry, which completes a brother's journey.

The Provincial Lite

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