



# Wiltshire Masonic News

The newsletter for Wiltshire Freemasons

Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives



May 2020

Keep safe, Stay well, Remain in touch....



As we are now well into a further extended period of restrictions, self isolation, and social distancing, the severity of this devastating coronavirus pandemic has surely struck home to all of us, not only in the increasing number of deaths and those contracting the disease in this country but worldwide. Staying safe at home is not easy as many are discovering but the alternative does not bear thinking about.

Sadly, the news of those who have succumbed to COVID-19 is now affecting some of our own members and their families, our thoughts and prayers are with those and indeed everyone who has suffered a family loss. I am also aware that many of our Brethren are members of the emergency services and I want to express the thanks and admiration of the Province for the work you do.

I am also very proud to say that Freemasons in Wiltshire are doing marvellous work in ensuring that all our Lodge members are being looked after and kept as safe as possible. In this respect I want to emphasis how communication is so important, no matter how we do it, on the telephone, email, text, various social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp. Some Lodges are also getting together via Zoom to catch up with other members and even holding on-line presentations an discussion groups, mini practices and online raffles.

I want to mention two examples of how Freemasons are supporting local communities. In Corsham, John Deane has enlisted a great team who are delivering food boxes to members and Lodge widows who are self isolating or having to isolate having been identified as being part of a vulnerable group. The delivery process also provides an ideal opportunity for a brief chat (always maintaining social distancing) which is proving to be almost as welcome as the groceries.

Another John, this time John Moorehouse from White Horse Lodge, made contact with the deputy headteacher of St Joseph's RC School in Salisbury who was organising the production of full face visors (PPE) using the school's 3D printers and laser cutter. Working with the Communication Team, John delivered 1,500 visors to Swindon where they were distributed to Care Homes in Purton (Paul Sharp) Wroughton (Ian Priest) and Swindon (Gary Dolphin).

I know there has been superb support in many other areas of the Province; well done to all those involved. This is an opportunity for all those who are able to do so, to show what Freemasons are really all about, particularly when it comes to friendship and charity. I do ask that you let the editor of the Newsletter know what you and your Lodge are doing. The Communication Team is compiling a record to send to UGLE who are looking for good news stories to publish in Freemasonry Today. You can send your story to [pcowiltshire@gmail.com](mailto:pcowiltshire@gmail.com)

Freemasonry is temporarily closed down for four months and perhaps even longer, but that will eventually end, our Masonic Halls will reopen and we will meet up again with each other. My earnest plea is that you continue to keep safe, stay well, and remain in touch with each other. and take care of others you know within the community.

My very best wishes to you all as you travel through these very difficult days

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## Captain Tom Moore



We have all read or heard of the inspirational efforts of Captain Tom Moore who having completed 100 laps of his garden has raised a phenomenal amount of money for NHS Charities Together. His achievement has captured the heart of the nation and Tom has rightly become a 'National Treasure'. I doubt he ever imagined he would be 'Top of the Pops' but now he has a No 1 record duetting with Michael Ball. In all his 100 years of life experiences, like many of our senior members, he will never have witnessed anything quite like what we are experiencing today. We salute his determination

to support others and do what he could, something we as Freemasons appreciate.

## #TimetoToast

Traditionally the nine o'clock toast is "To absent Brethren" whereas the Tyler's toast is to "Poor and distressed Brethren". During this period of Masonic inactivity (is there really such a thing?) the communication team at UGLE has been promoting **#TimetoToast**. Every week Brethren from across the UK (and indeed the world) raise a glass, tankard, and even a cup of tea and toast "Absent Brethren" but with a slight twist. To recognise the amazing people who are working in the NHS, Care Homes, Emergency Services, for the Local Authority and those who are keeping our food shops open, it was decided that each week another name should be joined to the toast. The Provincial Grand Master invites you to join him and the Provincial Team in **#TimetoToast** every Saturday at 9.00pm. If you send a picture of yourself toasting Absent Brethren, the Provincial Communication Team may use it in the montage of Wiltshire Freemasons. Send a picture of you raising a glass to [pcowiltshire@gmail.com](mailto:pcowiltshire@gmail.com)

## Thought For The Day....

The Provincial Grand Chaplain Michael Barratt recognises that some Brethren may be experiencing profound loneliness during this time of isolation when their social network is restricted to an email, phone call or a shouted conversation through an open window. To offer solace and inspiration through a few words may seem like an impossible task, but Michael is producing a "**Thought For The Day**" which will appear on the Provincial website, Facebook page and Twitter account. He trusts you will take time to read his words and that you will be able to take some comfort and encouragement from them.



## Missing Out....

The regular meeting of Moonraker Lodge No.8747 on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April was due to be a very special occasion for Geoff Grant and his good friend Henri Moorcarne of Rowena Lodge. They were going to 'duet' in a presentation of the Third Degree Walking Charge, which as many of you will know is a lovely piece of Masonic ritual, and full of meaning. The link between Moonraker Lodge and Rowena Lodge has been maintained for 35 years, for which Geoff is particularly proud. We cannot say when 'normal Masonic activity' will be allowed, but we do trust that Geoff and Henri will have the opportunity to thrill us all with a word perfect performance.

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## The other Tubal Cain....

Provincial Grand Chaplain Michael Barratt has offered an interesting postscript to Michael Lee's online article "who was Tubal Cain" (go to website and visit Preceptors Notes), and writes how it brought to mind that Grimsby had a trawler by that name sailing out of that port before the First World War. The ST Tubal Cain was registered as GY88. She was built in South Shields at the yard of Smith's Dock Company Limited and competed in 1905 having a gross tonnage of 227. On 7th August 1914, some 50 miles off the west coast of Iceland during a fishing trip, she was stopped by the German armed cruiser Kaiser Wilhelm Der Grosse. The crew were taken on board and then ST Tubal Cain was sunk by gunfire from the German ship. The German vessel later docked at Rio de Oro in Spanish Sahara when HMS Highflier arrived and later engaged the German cruiser which her crew scuttled. Skipper and crew were transferred to the collier Arucas which disembarked them at Las Palmas in the Canaries. HMS Highflier quickly left the scene knowing she had breached Spanish neutrality laws. The Grimsby crew later embarked for London and an eventual return to their home port of Grimsby. A model of ST Tubal Cain can be seen in the Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre in that town. *Editors note: ST is a nautical abbreviation for Steam Trawler.*

## The Peter Winton Trophy....

Is your Lodge doing something 'special' this year and to support or help those affected by Covid-19? Something which promotes Freemasonry in your local community, something which makes your Lodge a contender for **The Peter Winton Trophy**. The Nomination Form is available on-line, visit [www.pglwilts.org.uk](http://www.pglwilts.org.uk) and click on The Peter



## Hearts That Care....



John Moorehouse has a sister, who has done something quite extraordinary. Being very 'artistic' Sheila has created a very special tribute to health care workers and emergency service staff, she has called them 'Hearts That Care'. The 'hearts' are made from two pieces of glass, one white and one clear. The glass is 'fired' in a kiln at a heat of about 820 deg C. for 12 hours This process creates one piece of glass. The hearts are printed and placed on the glass which is returned to the kiln for another 12 hour bake at 720 deg C Each Heart takes 24 hours to produce. What makes it all worthwhile is notes such as this one which we received recently.

*"Thank you so much sending over the "hearts that care". It means so much at the end of a really hard shift to put my hand in my pocket and find that my beautiful heart is there. The kind words show that the community really does care and thinks of us consistently. I have shared your hearts to the control room, Covid19 nurses, and with other ambulance personnel. Thank you so much and thank you to your lodge for supporting and giving these to us. They mean the world. Sometimes we feel very low, overwhelmed and very much on our own ....but your hearts mean we know you are all looking out for us. Thank you."*

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## Making a difference....



One piece of ritual seldom heard in our Lodges is the Long Closing in the First Degree; and it's a great pity as it really is a very special piece and has much to commend it. In particular the words exhort us to "...relieve and befriend with unhesitating cordiality, every Brother who might need your assistance." You will not be surprised to know that we are also expected to "extend these noble and generous sentiments still further, as every human creature has a just claim on your kind offices." What an incredibly important commitment for the Freemason, and it really is what we

'signed up to do' in the obligation we took at the Master's pedestal. As we come to terms with self isolation, social distancing and lockdown; words which we never imagined would enter the Masonic lexicon, we are further enjoined to be good to all; but more particularly to the household of the faithful. In effect what is being said is that while we must be charitable to all, our first duty is towards those who constitute the Masonic family. After all family comes first.

With this in mind, it was good to hear from John Deane the secretary of Corsham Lodge No.6616 of how Brethren from a number of Lodges had come together to provide a food box delivery service for Freemasons and Masonic widows who, for various reasons were unable to shop for themselves. John and the volunteer team wearing their COVID-19 regalia of blue gloves, face mask and baseball cap have widened the area of distribution following requests for support from a number of Lodges. The team is now delivering food parcels to Bath, Chippenham, Melksham, Devizes and Swindon.



## Keeping in touch....



One of the most popular methods of communication between Lodge members is WhatsApp, and we are delighted that a number of Lodges have now formed a WhatsApp group, and are holding social sessions on a regular basis. If your Lodge needs help setting up a WhatsApp group the Provincial website contains an excellent article by Alan Colman which will get you up and running (no pun intended) in no time at all.

Equally popular is Zoom, a free to use online video conferencing facility, and the Provincial Grand Master is particularly pleased to have received reports that Lodges are using Zoom to hold social events, quiz evenings and even Masonic presentations and discussions. However, please do remember the need to comply with UGLE guidelines which prohibits the use of online technology to replicate regular Masonic meetings and Lodges of Instruction. If in any doubt please contact the Communication Officer or the Provincial Secretary.



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## THE WORKING TOOLS OF THE VIRTUAL FREEMASON

The Working Tools of the Virtual Freemason are the iPad or more familiarly the Tablet or PC, The Internet and the App.

The **Internet** is a peculiar system of connectivity, mysteriously expensive and often slow.

The **Tablet** is an implement which acts with the Internet as a portal to the outside world, while the worthy virtual mason is in self isolation.

The **App** is a tool which when conjoined with the Tablet and Internet, allows the skilful virtual mason to communicate with his fellow masons.

But as we are not all IT Experts, but rather regular members of society, we apply these tools to our lives. In this sense,

The **Internet** teaches us reliability, as everything in life does not always work, as we expect it to.

The **Tablet** allows us to virtually visualise our fellow masons to help see them through their daily struggles with self isolation.

The **App**, being at version 4.7, is constantly being updated and is susceptible to viruses, which causes grief and distress to the poor users.

Thus the Virtual Mason **connects** via the internet, **visualises** with the Tablet and **communicates** via the App, such that we can

**Stay at Home, Protect the NHS and Save Lives.**



**DAVE HENERY**

A Wiltshire Freemason

