



# In touch > On line

The newsletter for Wiltshire Freemasons

Freemasons remember the fallen



November 2020

Never forgetting is so important....

Wiltshire Freemasonry



“Be idealistic about the future, be realistic about the present, and never forget the lessons of the past.” I was recently reminded of this excellent quote which I thought particularly relevant to this month, when as a nation we come together to remember the fallen of two world wars and many other conflicts. We must remember. If we do not, the sacrifice of each one of those precious lives will be meaningless. We often hear it said - *They died for us, for their families and friends, for a collection of traditions they cherished and a future they believed in.* The meaning of their sacrifice rests with our collective national consciousness; our future is their monument. Wars touch the lives of all ages, all races, all social classes. Fathers, sons, daughters, sweethearts: they were killed in action, they were wounded, and thousands who returned were forced to live the rest of their lives with the physical and mental scars of war. Many of the people who stayed at home also served - in factories, in voluntary service organisations, in reserved occupations, in fact wherever they were needed.

Yet for many of us, war is a phenomenon seen only through the lens of a television camera or a journalist's account of fighting in distant parts of the world. Our closest physical and emotional experience may be the discovery of wartime memorabilia in a family attic. But even items such as photographs, uniform badges, medals, and diaries can seem vague and unconnected to the life of their owner. For those of us born during peacetime, all wars seem far removed from our daily lives.

We often take for granted our national values and institutions, our freedom to participate in cultural and political events, and our right to live under a government of our choice. The men and women who went off to war in distant lands went in the belief that the values and beliefs enjoyed by 'their countrymen' were being threatened. They truly believed that "Without freedom there can be no ensuring peace and without peace no enduring freedom."

By remembering their service and their sacrifice, we recognize the tradition of freedom these men and women fought to preserve. They believed that their actions in the present would make a significant difference for the future, but it is up to us to ensure that their dream of peace is realized. On Remembrance Day, we acknowledge the courage and sacrifice of those who served their country and acknowledge our responsibility to work for the peace they fought hard to achieve.

Due to the Covid- 19 pandemic it has not been possible for veterans to stand at their post outside shops selling poppies on behalf of The Legion. I am grateful to Bros. Alex Laird and Alan Colman, both keen cyclists, who have formed the Wiltshire Masonic Cycling Club (WMCC). Alan and Alex with assistance from Mitch Bryan have arranged a **Ride To Remember** which will take place on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November. The ride is for anyone who owns a bike, even if its got Sturmey Archer three speed trigger gears. Book your place on the **Ride To Remember** with Alan Colman [alan@alancolman.com](mailto:alan@alancolman.com)

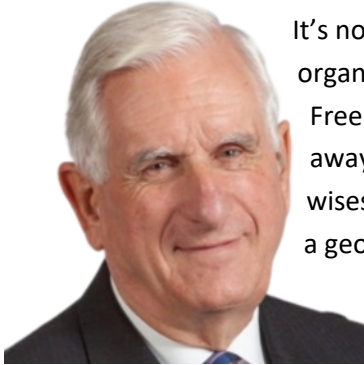




November 2020

## Growing our membership is vital....

Wiltshire Freemasonry



It's no secret that the long term future of any membership dependent organisation is reliant upon a steady stream of new people joining its ranks. Freemasonry is a membership organisation. Sadly some of our members pass away as a result of illness or advancing years and we are reminded that "The wisest among us knows not how soon." Some of our members move away in a geographical sense while others have grown apart in an emotional sense having perhaps become disenchanted with Freemasonry; and a very small number leave our ranks due to economic and social reasons. Every loss is hard to bear and has an affect not only on the Lodge but

also the Province and the wider family of Freemasonry. We need to not only stem the flow, but also take action to grow our total membership. Neither task is easy but if we don't address them of one thing we can certainly be sure, and that is we won't have an organisation on which to build and what remains will become less attractive to join and wither and die away.

In recent years the Province of Wiltshire has bucked the national trend with record numbers of men enquiring about Freemasonry which has resulted in many of our Lodges conducting double (or more) Initiation ceremonies in order to welcome new members. Covid-19 has put an unwelcome brake on matters but I am glad to note that despite only being able to operate with the 'rule of six' Lodges are slowly but surely coming to terms with the UGLE adaptations and putting into place plans to conduct future Initiations. We have 94 candidates allocated to Lodges waiting to be initiated (of which 31 have not yet completed Form Ps with a large number having not yet been interviewed) and 9 waiting to be allocated to a Lodge by the Divisonal Officer, and a further 10 who have made membership enquiries in the last few weeks. It would be good if all the Form Ps could be completed and interviews could be carried out as soon as practicable as we could then more accurately assess the true number of potential initiates.

Part of my role as Divisional Officer Co-ordinator has been to review the way in which the Province manages membership and in particular new and prospective members.

I am sure you will agree that keeping in touch with potential members during these particularly difficult days is very important, and that every effort should be made to maintain close contact and engage in regular communication with every person who has expressed an interest in becoming a Wiltshire Freemason. It is vitally important that we do everything we can to enhance the experience of the applicant, and to make them feel even more 'wanted'.

What I am very aware of is that Covid-19 has created a barrier to meeting new members and the rule of six is not conducive to making a new Brother feel 'at home' in a truncated meeting format. Consequently I am planning to hold a series of open ZOOM meetings for potential and possible candidates (who have completed their Form P) and their partners to meet and **ASK ME ANYTHING**. This forum will enable not only the potential candidate but also his partner to ask any questions they might have, and to receive answers to their questions.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to every secretary who has provided the essential detail which has enabled me to contact and invite potential and possible candidates to attend an **ASK ME ANYTHING** meeting.



November 2020

### Remember the pandemic of 1957?

Wiltshire Freemasonry

Having written about the 1918 Spanish Flu, and the 1968 Hong Kong Flu, it seemed only right to mention a third pandemic which had a significant affect on the lives of people in the UK. it was the Asian Flu of 1957. In the autumn of 1958 Dr Corbett McDonald of the Public Health Laboratory Service wrote to the Director of the College of General Practitioners' Epidemic Observation Unit 'Although we have had 30 years to prepare for what should be done in the event of an influenza pandemic, I think we have all been rushing around trying to improvise investigations with insufficient time to do it properly. We can only hope that people will have taken advantage of their opportunities and at the end it may be possible to construct an adequate explanation of what happened.' He was referring to that year's Asian flu pandemic. In the event, neither the Unit nor the PHLs undertook any large scale research projects during the outbreak and later studies were limited.

In 1957 it had all seemed initially quiet on the UK influenza front with Dr McDonald writing the country was experiencing " a remarkably low level of respiratory illness so far this winter." However, an influenza epidemic that affected thousands of Hong Kong residents heralded the start of rapid movement across the globe with the first cases hitting the UK in August. Asian flu was an entirely new strain, there was no immunity in the populace and the first vaccines were not distributed throughout the UK until October, and then on an extremely limited basis. One GP recalled "we were amazed at the extraordinary infectivity of the disease, and overawed by the suddenness of its outset."

The general feeling among the medical professionals was that "in the end, and in spite of the scare stuff in the lay press, we will have our epidemic of influenza, of a type not very different from what we know already, with complications in the usual age groups."

Symptoms were mostly mild and patients usually recovered after a period of bed rest. There were complications in 3% of cases with 0.3% mortality of which pneumonia and bronchitis accounted for 50% of these, the rest being cerebro and cardiovascular disease brought on by the flu.

In London, 110,000 children were off school suspected of having influenza. With adults there was usually a connection to children; for example, parents, teachers, doctors, or a closed group such as the armed forces and football teams. There was also a rise in related influenza deaths in January 1958 of an older age group but it was not clear how much of this was the usual seasonal deaths attributed to influenza as opposed to Asian flu.

It was estimated that more than 9 million people in Great Britain contracted Asian flu during the 1957 epidemic. About 14,000 people died of the immediate effects of their attack; and with factories, offices and mines closed, the economy was badly hit.

Today, we are ten months into a crisis which has brought much of our country to a halt, which has resulted in Masonic meetings being suspended and then allowed under the rule of six. Just as we came through the 1917 Spanish flu, the 1957 Asian flu, and the 1968 Hong Kong flu, we will emerge into the sunshine of a post Covid-19 era. And who knows, perhaps in 50 years time the editor of the Provincial newsletter will be writing about a new pandemic - we hope not.





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## The rule of six and Lodge of Innocence and Morality No.9587...

Lodge of Innocence and Morality No.9587 meet in the village hall at East Knoyle where they assemble the Lodge Room prior to the meeting. It is without doubt one of the most idyllic of settings for a Masonic meeting and so it required some clever thinking on the part of the Lodge to set up an alternate Lodge Room in order that they could hold their October meeting under the rule of six, and accordance with UGLE and government guidelines.



CONGRATULATIONS TO EVERY LODGE WHICH HAS MET UNDER THE RULE OF SIX

## Time to 'get on your bike'....

Many of our readers will recall that in the Summer edition of Across the Plain we carried a centre fold of pictures from the 'lockdown' cycling exploits of Bros Alex Laird and Alan Colman. Your editor suggested that it would a good idea to form a cycling club; the idea was taken up by Alex and Alan and the Wiltshire Masonic Cycling Club was formed.

Alan and Alex have organised a very special **Riding To Remember** cycle ride to be held on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November in aid of the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. The ride starts and finishes at The Planks, Swindon (but you can join at various points along the route). The event is open to riders of all abilities and ages. The ride will take a break at 11.00am to observe a two minute silence.

To find out more and to sign up for **Riding to Remember** contact joint organiser Alan Colman by email [alan@acolman.com](mailto:alan@acolman.com) and please 'Get on your bike' to support the RBL Poppy Appeal 2020.

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Just Ask One - a new initiative from Wiltshire....

Wiltshire Freemasonry

## JUSTASKONE

"What better way to discover what it really means to be a Freemason than to just ask one."

Philip Bullock  
Head of Freemasonry in Wiltshire



### Horse Brass for Christmas....

Bros Jim Speed and Peter Harper have commissioned this delightful Horse Brass on behalf of Fiat Lux Lodge No 9773 with all profits being given to the Masonic Charitable Foundation. Each brass has a threaded stud and is supplied with a lathe turned polished oak base for display and presentation purposes.

The Horse Brass including base, is supplied boxed together with a copy of the Masonic legendary history for the amazing price of £22.00 plus UK postage £3.00. A special offer is available to a Lodge or Freemason wishing to purchase five or more Horse Brasses at a discounted price of £17.00 per brass plus bulk postage; a saving of £5 per piece.



Overseas orders are welcome and will be posted at the appropriate rate subject to the type of service requested (proof of posting will be provided)

For further enquiries and to place your order contact:-

Jim Speed | 102 Forest Road | Melksham | Wiltshire | SN12 7AE

Email:- jimspeed42@gmail.com Telephone:- 01225 708121



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## Wiltshire Regalia open for business....

After 16 years of trading as Warminster Masonic Regalia, Chris and Debbie Robbins have decided to retire and spend their time doing other activities. Over the years they have supplied a great deal of regalia including Lodge Banners which are on display throughout England. The business was more a cottage industry/serious hobby and it needed new ideas and more technology including a web site and an online presence It's clear that Twitter and Facebook are here to stay!

Chris and Debbie were pleased to find a keen Freemason in Paul Sharp to take over the business and continue to provide Masonic regalia to Brethren in Wiltshire and the surrounding Provinces. From his premises in Cricklade (just north of Swindon) where there is free car parking, a coffee shop and a great product range, Wiltshire Regalia is able to supply a comprehensive range of Masonic items at competitive prices via their online service with next day delivery.\*

You can contact Wiltshire Regalia by email at: [orders@wiltsregalia.co.uk](mailto:orders@wiltsregalia.co.uk) or phone 01793 840073

Wiltshire Freemasonry

GET READY TO STEP OUT IN STYLE

WILTSHIRE  
REGALIA

Masonic offer direct from  
**STEPTRONIC**  
ENGLAND

- Premium polished calf leather upper
  - Super soft sheepskin lining
  - Premium eyelet lace up
  - Cushioned & perforated insoles
  - 100% natural rubber soles
  - Wider G fit
- \*while stocks last

**Factor**

~~£120.00~~

£99.99



**Faro**

~~£120.00~~

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