



In touch > On line

The newsletter for Wiltshire Freemasons



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas

December 2020

I wish it could be Christmas every day....

Wiltshire Freemasonry



In the early December edition of **In touch>On line** I referenced the lyrics of the Band Aid hit single Do They Know It's Christmas released in 1984. In this edition the editor has chosen the opening line to another great Christmas 'hit' which was first sung by Perry Como, although Bing Crosby's recording is probably more widely known. I have chosen a more recent song written by Roy Wood and performed by glam rock group Wizzard in 1973. The opening few lines seem very relevant for this year, especially with the news that we have not one, but potentially three vaccines to combat Covid-19. It isn't the snowman bringing snow, but the scientists bringing a vaccine which has **'put a great big smile on somebody's face.'** It has certainly given me something to smile about after a year of doom and gloom which culminated in unprecedented restrictions being imposed on society, and Masonic meetings being suspended throughout the United Kingdom, and further afield.

Christmas this year will be very different in so many ways, and for some the loss of a loved one from this dreadful virus will be particularly hard felt as an empty chair at the table confirms their absence. For others the 'family bubble' will be very special as it will allow an opportunity to share the joy of Christmas with loved ones and to experience something approaching a traditional Christmas.

The message of the first Christmas was one of hope as angels announced the birth of Jesus, the saviour of the world. This Christmas it is the arrival of a vaccine which offers real hope to the world that sometime next year we may be able to emerge from the darkness and torpor this pandemic has inflicted on much of society, and to make a significant advance in returning to our normal way of life.

For Freemasons this news is the pre-cursor to what we trust will be a return to Masonic activity, in anticipation of which, we can now start to plan for the future. I think we will all be glad to leave the old year well behind us as we enter a new phase of hope and positivity. Your Provincial executive is confident that Wiltshire Freemasons will emerge from the darkness of 2020 into a new and glorious morn - stronger and and more determined to treasure what Freemasonry has to offer.

I am grateful to those Lodges which have advised the Provincial Secretary of their intention to work throughout the summer (Covid-19 rules permitting) and to initiate candidates who have been patiently waiting to be admitted to the Craft. I know that Colin Cheshire has maintained contact with many of the men who have registered an interest in becoming Freemasons, and I am looking forward to meeting them in the very near future. I am also encouraged by the news that even during 'lockdown' expressions of interest continue to be received by the Provincial membership team.

I doubt that anyone in the Province has not seen the wonderful video showing members of Corsham Lodge No.6616 distributing Christmas Cheer. If you haven't viewed the video, please do so by visiting the Provincial YouTube Channel (yes we do have one) I guarantee it will make you smile, and if you like it please subscribe to the channel and click on the little bell symbol. Congratulations to Tom Snell and John Deane, who are key members of the Provincial Communication Team, for their sterling work on this video, and others which will be released over the coming weeks and months.

Finally, on behalf of Sally and myself, we wish that you and your families have yourself a merry little Christmas, and a happy New Year.



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We are keeping in touch....


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The December edition of **In touch > On line** has now been sent to all the gentlemen who are waiting to be Initiated into Freemasonry. Working closely with the Divisional Officers and the Lodge Secretaries, we contacted every single person who had registered their interest and invited them and their partners to a ZOOM meeting. The response was amazing, and we enjoyed meeting them and hearing just how keen they all were to join their chosen Lodge. If their enthusiasm is anything to go by, I can safely say that the future for Wiltshire Freemasonry is very good. I'm equally sure that our Lodges will offer a very warm Wiltshire welcome to each and every candidate.



Provincial YouTube channel....

Have you visited the Province's newest media format, our very own  YouTube Channel?

Tom and John from the Communication Team have been busy putting together a number of videos, including a special Christmas Cheer compilation featuring members of Corsham Lodge No.6616 You can view the video by clicking this link <https://youtu.be/L-XgcWDpxh4> If you like the video please share the link with your friends.

A Freemason and a Stone Mason....

On Monday 14th December the team released a video featuring Neil Gray who is a Wiltshire Freemason and a Master Stonemason. To watch this short promotional video and to see how the Province is promoting the Craft in Wiltshire click onto this link <https://youtu.be/YhNNvebzzyU>

Subscribe to and like us....

Help the Province by subscribing to, and liking our YouTube channel. It's easy to do, just click the subscribe button and click on the bell.



Want to be in a video?

The Communication Team is keen to hear what you think would make a good video to promote Freemasonry in Wiltshire. If you have an idea or would like to be in a video send an email to pcowiltshire@gmail.com Just tell us what you think would make good viewing and what you could do to help us make a better product.



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Dougie Covill celebrates 100....

Bro Dougie Covill, a founder member of Forget Me Not Lodge No.9035, celebrated his 100th birthday on 14th November 2020. He was presented with a framed photograph of the Founder Members who attended the consecration of the Lodge in May 1982, and a specially produced birthday card from the Master, Wardens, and Brethren of the Lodge. He also received a Provincial Grand Master's Certificate of Achievement for having served 65 years in Freemasonry.

Dougie Covill joined the 10th Hussars at Tidworth in April 1937, shortly after the regiment returned from India. He was deployed to Normandy in 1940 and took part in the Battle of Huppy. As a troop sergeant he fought in North Africa and Italy (1941-45). Dougie was twice wounded, Mentioned in Dispatches in January 1944, he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal in April 1945, and received the MBE in the New Year's Honours list of January 1969.

Dougie remained with the Regiment after the war, was commissioned and retired in 1970. Having settled in Alresford he was involved in many organisations and was Mayor of Winchester in 1988. Dougie married Inge in 1947. They had two daughters, Geraldine and Angela, three grandsons and two great grandchildren.

Many congratulations Dougie from the Brethren of the Lodge and the Province of Wiltshire.

Have you signed up to Solomon?



Since its successful launch, some 18 months ago, the world of Freemasonry has moved on considerably and so has Solomon. From its original base of pure written material, it has expanded and now provides new ways of learning with new modules which include sound recordings, interactive and audiovisual content - with more content planned for future release.

Matched Funding to help you increase your Lodge charity giving....

What's not to like about free money? The Provincial Charity Steward Derek Gibbens has advised every Lodge that a Lodge donation to a registered charity may qualify for MCF match Funding - that's simply a case of the Masonic Charitable Foundation paying out a sum equal to what your Lodge has paid out (subject to a few rules...) Everyone wants to increase the amount being given to registered charities and MCF Match Funding is a great way of doubling your money - and it costs you nothing.

A Lodge website must have a Charter Mark....



Provincial Grand Lodge of Wiltshire

Did you know that all Lodge websites must be approved by the Province and be awarded a Charter Mark. A Lodge website which does not have a Provincial Charter Mark cannot use any material, including logos which identify the site with either the province or UGLE and must request permission to use any images which are the intellectual property of the Province or UGLE. Wiltshire's Provincial website has been awarded the prestigious UGLE Charter Mark which is formal recognition that the site meets the exacting standards required by the UGLE digital team.

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The Peter Winton Trophy....

It hardly seems any time at all since we announced the inaugural winner of The Peter Winton Trophy and yet it really is time to ask you to think about what you can do to be a nominee for this prestigious title. What will your Lodge be doing to promote Freemasonry in Wiltshire? Whatever it is please let us know. It could be YOUR Lodge's name on The Peter Winton Trophy for 2021.



Congratulations to Rev. John Hughes....

The Provincial Grand Master has offered his congratulations to Bro John Hughes *MBE* of New temple Lodge No. 8435 who has been re-appointed Metropolitan Grand Chaplain by the Metropolitan Grand Master Sir Michael Snyder.

Are you under 45 and interested in....

Joining The Sarsen Club? The club which was formed in 2015 has a new chairman Mitch Bryan (Royal Sussex Lodge of Emulation No.355) and a new secretary in Alex Corbett (Harry C Preater Lodge No.8204). If you are under 45 years of age, and would like to know more about The Sarsen Club why not contact Alex Corbett email: secretary@sarsenclub.co.uk

Thank you....

To all those Lodges who have committed to do 'whatever it takes' to welcome candidates into Freemasonry during the summer months of 2021 (subject to Covid-19 restrictions having been lifted). With over 100 candidates wanting to be made a Wiltshire Freemason, if your Lodge is planning to hold a meeting outside of their normal dates the Provincial Grand Master has announced that there will be **NO CHARGE** for a dispensation to conduct an Initiation or Passing ceremony at any time while the Covid-19 restrictions are in place. Contact Provincial Secretary Phil Still for further information.

Local Lodges support Swindon Domestic Abuse Support Service....

For the **thirteenth** year running local Freemasons are supporting the Swindon Domestic Abuse Support Service (SDASS) Christmas Appeal. However, due to Covid-19 this year's appeal will be very different. In previous years, members and their families came along to the Swindon Masonic Centre in early December to generously donate various items to bring a little seasonal joy to victims of domestic violence and abuse, and their children.

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions the appeal this year is for cash (monetary) donations to Swindon Women's Aid. A donation for any amount will be extremely welcome either by cheque posted to Swindon Women's Aid or by an online transaction to Swindon Women's Aid bank account. Payment details are as follows;

Payment online:

Name of Bank: Unity Trust Bank
Sort Code: 60-83-01
Account name: Swindon Women's Aid
Account number: 20392442
Reference: SF

Payment by cheque and post:

Cheque to: Swindon Women's Aid
Postal Address: PO Box 3816
Swindon
SN5 1BQ
Reference on reverse of cheque: SF



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A year spent visiting by Paul Robinson....

At my installation in March 2019, the Presiding Officer Bro David Davies suggested that if I was able to, I should visit a few Lodges and carry the good name of Lodge of Fidelity No.663 around the Province. Never being one to shirk a challenge I studied the meetings calendar from the Provincial website and quickly realised that I could actually do a lot more than just a few. In fact, I set myself a target to visit every Craft Lodge in the Province in a period of twelve months. Some meticulous 'military' planning then took place as I aligned the meeting dates against my work roster, which rather fortunately showed that the vast majority of meetings occurred on designated rest days.



Having attended my own installation and that at Fiat Lux Lodge No.9773, my first away visit took place on 4th April 2019 when I attended Clarendon Lodge No.5908 which meets at Trowbridge. Thereafter my visiting schedule covered fifteen visits through April, May and June; and in August and September I made two visits each month.

October was a busy month with fourteen visits; one of which was to Provincial Grand Lodge held at Salisbury. To make so many visits required some logistics planning, not least as I found myself having to attend two Lodges on the same day; Fiat Lux No.9773 in the morning and Vastern Lodge No.8977 in the evening. October also saw eight visits in fourteen days including four on consecutive days. November saw an additional six visits and December one.

The New Year saw two further visits in January, before my last visit to Salisbury in February for the meeting of Stonehenge Lodge No.6114 when I was presented with a specially engraved firing glass by the Brethren of the Lodge. This is a much treasured and very special memento which takes pride of place at home in Devizes.

There were also three visits to Lodges which held their meetings outside of the Province. Henley (Oxfordshire), Round Table Lodge; Havant (Hampshire and Isle of Wight), Master Builders Lodge, and St Columbanus (Gloucestershire) which met at Calne.

The highlight of the year was my first visit to Freemasons' Hall in Great Queen Street for the December Quarterly Communications Meeting. It would not be overstating matters to say the 'Big House' was extremely impressive, as was lunch at Mark Masons Hall in St James.

In Province I attended all 45 Lodges, travelled 1631 miles, witnessed; 17 initiations (2 doubles - 1 being a double Lewis); 9 Passings (4 doubles); 7 Raisings (1 double); 10 Installations of which two were long workings; 2 lectures and Provincial Grand Lodge.

One of the lessons I learned in my visits was that every Lodge offered something special which made each unique. Four Lodges operate in shared buildings and actually have to set up the Lodge Room, and pack it up after the meeting. Now that is a labour of love. Every Lodge received me with warmth and friendliness and I was made to feel very welcome and treated as one of their own on each occasion. I have made so many new friends. Wiltshire Lodges really are the epitome of Freemasonry.

To those wondering - yes, I was still able to wear the same suit throughout my visits, and yes, I'm still married. Kathy was happy to have the TV remote control all to herself.

P.S. Contrary to the calumnies perpetuated elsewhere, I didn't win all the raffles.....