



"Just being there when that's where I needed them to be.
There are no better friends than that."

March 2021

Dydd Gŵyl Dewi Hapus....



Which, as I'm sure everyone knows translates from Welsh into English as 'Happy St David's Day'. As this March edition of **In touch>On line** arrives in your inbox, I trust you will join me in wishing all our friends in the Principality, and those who now reside this side of Offa's Dyke' all the very best for a joyous day of national celebration.

I am intrigued to hear how Bro Andrew Hargreaves deals with the pronunciation in his excellent narration of the popular audio version of **In touch>On line**. I am sure my good friend Martin Hughes, who lives in North Wales, and a supporter of Wiltshire Freemasonry, will let me know if Andrew 'cracks it'.

In a previous edition of the newsletter I mentioned how pleased I was to read that the UK had vaccinated over 15 million people, this figure has substantially increased to over 17 million, and it is anticipated that every adult in the UK will have received their first 'jab' by July. I know that many members of the Wiltshire Masonic family have received the vaccine. Recent media reports suggest that for some, the side effects may be limited to 'just a sore arm' while others have suffered flu like symptoms. I'm glad to say that following the NHS advice to take the normal dose of paracetamol is often sufficient to make you feel better.

Following the most recent announcement of planned changes to the Government's lockdown policy we now await guidance from UGLE as to when the suspension of Masonic activity will be lifted. The Province will communicate that decision in a clear and unambiguous manner as soon as possible. I know there is a huge pent up feeling of wanting to get back to normal, but we have been in and out of lockdown for almost a year, and a few more weeks of restrictions may be just the difference needed to avoid a fourth period.

The Provincial Secretary has sent out a 'call to arms' for a very special day on Monday 5th July which has been designated **NHS Social Care and Frontline Workers' Day**. This is a really fantastic opportunity for all of us to show our appreciation of NHS and Care workers. I'm sure you will seize the day and that Wiltshire will be at the fore in the celebration.

Talking of showing appreciation, I am delighted to join with the Heads of other Orders in congratulating Freemasons from Warminster who provided sixty 'goodie bags' to staff on Longleat Ward at Warminster Hospital. Well done to everyone involved in the process.

Well done to Border Lodge No.3129 members who undertook a litter pick in Ludgershall. I am always delighted when Freemasons demonstrate that charity isn't just about giving money. It's so important that we recognise that giving 'time' is every bit an act of charity.

Our '*Proud to be a Wiltshire Freemason*' is Radnor Lodge member Luke Facey (the man in the paper mask). Luke and his wife Helen are part of an amazing Wiltshire Masonic family team which is supporting the Vaccination team at City Hall, Salisbury. Thank you to them all.

Finally, I'm delighted to announce the appointment of Colin Cheshire to the newly created, and vitally important office of Provincial Grand Membership Officer. I will invest Colin at Provincial Grand Lodge on Thursday 7th October at City Hall, Salisbury.

Wiltshire Freemasons



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NHS Social Care and Frontline Workers' Day...

Freemasons throughout England and Wales are leading the worlds 'first' celebration of NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers Day at 10am on 5 July 2021.

A unique and special day dedicated to the NHS, Social Care and those that work on the frontline who have saved so many lives during the pandemic, and also to remember those workers we sadly lost too.

Wiltshire Freemasons have been given a unique opportunity to start this day on the 5 July with the flying of the flag, and the display of banners. If you do have a flagpole at your Masonic Centre or hall, or space to hang a banner, they are available from the supplier's website <https://www.nhsfrontlineday.org/merchandisers/j-w-plant-co-ltd/> (please note that only official flags, bunting and banners can be used).

This is a fantastic opportunity for you to show your appreciation of NHS and Care workers. If your Lodge or a member of your Lodge is doing something special to mark the occasion, please do let me know, and don't forget a picture paints a thousand words.



Border Lodge litter pick....



We all know how street litter blights neighbourhoods across the county. So it's well done to the Brethren of Border Lodge No.3129 who donned protective equipment including sturdy gloves and, with litter grabbers in hand set out to make a real difference to the local area.

Wearing Hi-Viz jackets with the Lodge name proudly displayed, the team showed that **charity is in a freemason's DNA.**

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Is belonging enough?

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In 1943 Abraham Maslow, a psychologist proposed a theory comprising a five tier model of what he referred to as human needs. The third of the 'needs' he identified as being critical in human development was that of 'belonging'. You might wonder in what context is Maslow's theory connected with the question posed above. During lockdown a few Brethren have queried why annual Lodge subscriptions have not been reduced, and have asked why we are all paying for something we are not getting. One comment in particular struck me: it was that Freemasonry during lockdown was not offering value for money. This got me thinking as to whether being a Freemason is now perceived by some as being on a par with membership of a club, which only has value if it is able to offer a tangible benefit for the subscription fee.

For many of our Lodges the annual subscription is circa £100 to £125 and is made up of three elements. A contribution to Grand Lodge and the MCF; a contribution to Provincial Grand Lodge and the Benevolent Fund; and finally a sum assessed and agreed to by the Lodge which covers administration, the purchase of new regalia, and a contribution to the running costs of the Masonic Centre at which the Lodge meets. Lodges are at liberty to set their own level of annual subscription, and it is well known that every Lodge treasurer has examined, in the greatest detail, the possibility for offering a concession for the current subscription year.

UGLE and the Province have made clear that subscriptions for 2021 will not be increased, even though the work of both units has continued throughout the pandemic. The MCF in particular has been active in assisting Freemasons and their dependents who have been severely affected by a significant reduction in income, or worse the loss of their job.

The Province has also suggested that should a Brother be unable to pay in full their annual subscription, help and assistance should be forthcoming. The relevant Lodge officers are well able to determine the merits of any claim, and the Provincial Almoner stands ready to offer advice should he be required to do so.

Masonic Hall committees (all volunteers) across the Province have had to meet the normal regularly incurred expenses which must be paid irrespective of whether there are any meetings being held. They also have been faced with increased costs linked to the implementation of Covid-19 security measures. For many Masonic halls the loss of bar profit and other rental income has had a serious negative impact on their finances. Despite the difficulties caused by a reduced income stream, the management teams have continued to work on building maintenance and improvement programmes during lockdown. All of the work being undertaken is deemed essential to preserve and improve the fabric of the facility and to provide a safe and pleasant meeting place for members.

To be a Freemason is to belong to one of the most amazing organisations in the world and it is difficult, if not impossible, to use common standards of measurement to define the value of belonging; which can never be determined simply by the cost of an annual subscription, or its perceived value by others. Is there a price that can be placed on the sheer joy of entering into bonds of fraternal friendship with people who sincerely love truth, respect one another and practice that virtue they profess to admire, I mean charity? Perhaps belonging is enough. What do you think?



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Warminster Freemasons boost morale....

Wiltshire Freemasons from each of the Orders which meet in Warminster have donated 60 colourful goodie bags to staff on Longleat Ward of the local hospital in recognition of their hard work, and to boost morale in these challenging times. Each bag was filled with treats, sweets and care products by Alan and Jayne Welch before being delivered to a very appreciative and happy team at Warminster Hospital.



Vastern Lodge discussion group....

Welcome a new speaker to lead the discussion Group on Tuesday 9th March at 7.30pm. Join David Rees who is currently the Junior Deacon of Border Lodge No.3129 as he talks about **The Freemasons' journey from a light blue perspective**. This promises to be a great opportunity to hear one of the Province's new and younger Masons as he highlights his personal experiences. To book your ZOOM connection email pcowiltshire@gmail.com

Vastern Lodge No.8977
Discussion Group

"The Freemasons
journey from
a Light Blue
perspective"



Invite You To Meet

Bro Dave Rees

Border Lodge No. 3129



pcowiltshire@gmail.com



Tuesday 9th March
7.30pm

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Covid Marshalling at Salisbury....

When Provincial Secretary Phil Still asked for volunteers to help with marshalling at the Salisbury City Hall Vaccination Hub he was delighted to receive responses representing all the Lodges in the Southern Division, and expressions of support from farther afield.

Luke Facey a member of Radnor Lodge, and his wife Helen joined the Wiltshire Freemason's team in providing logistical support, including directing attendees to the vaccination teams operating inside City Hall.

Proud to be a
Wiltshire
Freemason

Luke Facey
Radnor Lodge
No. 4451

