

Issue No.11

Message from UGLE

Special message from the
Deputy Grand Master

Royal Arch Incentives

Find out more about the New
Royal Arch Incentive Scheme

To Double or Not

Tony Harvey gives his view on
double initiations

Festival News

An outstanding £1.4m raised for
Charity by West Kent Masons



WEST KENT NEWS



WINTER
EDITION
2023





TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 WELCOME**
A change of editors and a big thank you to Adrian Grant for his outstanding contributions
- 4 PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER**
Updates and news from our Provincial Grand Master and the Provincial Executive Team
- 8 MESSAGE FROM UGLE**
The Deputy Grand Master sends a note to the Freemasons of West Kent in connection with Remembrance Day
- 10 ROYAL ARCH MEMBERSHIP**
Special report revealing the inner workings of the Royal Arch Membership team and what they are working to achieve.
- 14 NEWS FROM THE PROVINCE**
The Provincial Executive provide a summary of activities that have been taking place across the Province.
- 24 LIGHT BLUES UPDATES**
The Chairman of the West Kent Light Blues shares some of the highlights of recent Light Blues Club activities.
- 30 ROCKY THE DONKEY**
Residents of the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution Care Home, Prince George Duke of Kent Court in Chislehurst, were delighted to receive a visit from Rocky the donkey!

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Brethren All,

Adrian Grant who held the role of Editor of West Kent News for a number of years has decided to step down. We wanted to take a moment in this Christmas Edition of our magazine to extend our thanks to Adrian for his years of excellent and committed service delivering in this role. His way with words and general aplomb is second to none and he will be missed by the Communications Team.

Taking over in the role of Editor of West Kent News is Nando Caicedo, a Master Mason, Companion and current holder of the Brian Kenneth Saunders (Royal Arch) Award. Having previously held the role of Secretary of the West Kent Light Blues Club, he is well placed to take on this new duty. We wish him every success in this task and we are sure that he will receive support from our membership in the delivery of this important work.

As always we want to hear from you and your lodges regarding any newsworthy stories or messages you wish to share through the magazine.

You can contact the new editor directly at communications@westkentmasons.org.uk

As your Provincial Communications Team we are here to support all members and ensure you get the most relevant and interesting stories to support your engagement and connection with each other and with our Province.

Kindest and Fraternal regards,

Warren Muckell
Communications Officer
Province of West Kent



Adrian Grant



Nando Caicedo



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**PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE
OF WEST KENT**



A MESSAGE FROM THE PROVINCIAL
GRANDMASTER AND GRAND
SUPERINTENDENT:
MARK DOUGLAS ESTAUGH

Brethren and Companions,

It is once again time for our final edition of West Kent News in 2023, and I wanted to share with you how delighted I have been with the outstanding Lodge and Chapter meetings which I have attended since our season began in September - your obvious enthusiasm for Masonry has been palpable!

As we approach the end of another busy year, it is once again time for me to share some thoughts with you and this has certainly been another challenging year. We can also reflect on a number of "Provincial Highs" during the year and must express my very grateful thanks to the Executive teams in the Craft and Royal Arch, who have supported me loyally and diligently in endeavouring to continue the successful growth and development of our Lodges and Chapters.

Despite the challenges we have faced, you have continued to support our primary objectives – that of growing our membership, increasing funding for our 2026 Festival and ensuring that our profile in the Community remains prominent – and we can confidently say that, once again, we have truly "made a difference" in 2023.

Our appeal for our 2026 Festival continues to be well received and excellently supported and I have had the great pleasure in attending meetings to collect sizeable donations, whilst your ongoing support through the myriad of gift aid pledges has been the underpinning factor for a successful 2023, during very challenging economic times.

After our successful investiture ceremony in the Royal Arch and the Craft earlier in the year, the Provincial Executive and the several teams working on attraction, retention and retrieval of membership has continued its work to further invigorate and grow our numbers and I have been very excited to see how you have responded to our appeal to reach out to your friends and acquaintances that might find membership of our Province of interest.

Many of the Lodge and Chapter summonses I have read recently have shown a healthy number of members either being initiated, exalted or who are joining / re-joining the Province. I very much hope that this trend continues, given the way that more and more Lodges are embracing the Members Pathway, which has ensured the success of many of our Lodges & Chapters that have chosen to take heed of its recommendations.

Since the season began, we have held very successful briefing sessions for our Visiting Officers in the Craft and Royal Arch, and the team are now equipped with a clear understanding of the new UGLE strategic roadmap, our Membership Challenge, and the specific challenges and steps that each of our Lodges and Chapters need embrace to achieve success.

To mark the launch of the second half of our 2026 Festival objective, Roland

Stokes and his team, supported by senior members of the MCF, also held a very well attended and successful briefing session for Charity Stewards, who are now equipped with sophisticated Management Information to enable members to obtain a Festival Jewel and so that Lodges and Chapters can achieve the various gradations of the 2026 Festival awards which have been introduced. Indeed, our success this year enabled us to make a further presentation to the MCF at our Provincial Officers' Mess, taking our contribution to a spectacular £1.4 Million to date.

Early in the new year, following the launch of Archway, we will shortly be holding a briefing session for the new Provincial appointments as Royal Arch Liaison Officers and the Chapter Membership Officers, so that each has a clear understanding of the very important part they have to play in helping us to achieve our immediate aim that 50% of our Craft members be companions of the Royal Arch, which is well within our reach, and 60% by the end of my term of office.

Member welfare continues to be a key concern of mine and I have recently written to each of our Almoners in the Craft and Royal Arch to ensure that every member that does not attend one of our meetings – whether an apology is received or not – is contacted, to ensure that none of our members drift away for feeling neglected or who needs our assistance in these difficult times.

I want to ensure that we meet the membership objectives laid down in UGLE's strategic roadmap for the future, and in order to do so, we must focus ever more closely on decreasing the number of resignations we are seeing year-on-year, which is one of my key priorities for the rest of my term of office, and I am very confident that we will see a return to positive membership growth for our Province in the immediate future.

The Executive teams have worked tirelessly on the list of members who are being individually reviewed for Provincial Honours in June 2024 and who will be receiving letters of appointment in December. I wanted to take this opportunity to remind you of my recent letter to all members and my announcements at our Investiture ceremony that as these are Provincial Honours, we will be taking particular

attention to those who have supported our Provincial objectives before they are bestowed – namely, ensuring membership attraction and retention, membership of the Royal Arch and support for the 2026 Festival.

There has never been a better time to do so and our recently announced Royal Arch incentive scheme has seen a marked increase in the number of Exaltees for the rest of the year and a healthy pipeline for 2024.

I am very much looking forward to hosting an Award ceremony in due course, to present the Grand Superintendent Awards for those who have proposed members who will have joined or been exalted in 2023, and those of Bronze, Silver and Gold

Awards next year to those Chapters who have achieved the required number of new members.

In closing, I would like to appeal to those members whose approach to Freemasonry is one which is based on memories of the past and how things were done back then, rather than to “looking forward to what Freemasonry in West Kent can become” – if we are prepared to embrace change and innovation, rather than reflect on past glories, a new and vibrant future for our Lodges and Chapters will be assured.

May I take this opportunity to wish you, your families, and loved ones – especially those who will be alone – a very merry Christmas and a healthy, happy and peaceful New Year. God Bless you all.

Regular monthly meeting of the Royal Arch Executive - 1st December 2023. As the Craft and Royal Arch operate as one aligned organisation in West Kent, our Deputy Provincial Grand Master is a permanent invitee.



Royal Arch Incentive Scheme

Dear Bro / Comp

Ensuring a thriving Royal Arch in West Kent – new Provincial membership incentive scheme

Over the last two years, we have made major strides to increase the number of West Kent masons who complete their Masonic journey by becoming Companions of the Royal Arch.

At our Provincial Grand Chapter meeting in 2022, I stated that we would aspire to increasing the percentage of Companions in West Kent to 50% of our Craft membership and aim to achieve 60% by the end of my term in office.

The restructure of the functional responsibilities of our Royal Arch Executive, together with the creation of our Royal Arch Membership Development Team and our new Lodge Royal Arch Liaison Officers and Chapter Membership Officers, are working wonders to achieve that aim. However, I now wish to provide an extra incentive to our Companions and Chapters to accelerate that success.

From 1 September 2023, I am introducing two new Provincial Awards

1) Companion Membership Achievement Award – between 1 Sept – 31 Dec 2023

- every companion who proposes a candidate who is Exalted, or a new joiner or re-joiner, into a West Kent Chapter before 31 December 2023 will receive the Membership Achievement Award,
- presentation of the awards will be at a special event to be held in the Province in January 2024.

2) Grand Superintendent’s High Achievement Award – from 1 January 2024 Companions Award

- every Companion proposing candidates who are Exalted, or a new joiner or re-joiner, into a West Kent Chapter will qualify for the High Achievement Award,
- four awards will be available – Bronze (2 candidates) Silver (3 candidates) Gold (4 candidates) and Platinum (5 candidates and above) and members will progress through the awards according to the number of candidates joining their Chapters,
- results will be validated from documentation received at the Provincial Office.

Please note that all candidates exalted in 2023 who qualify for the Membership Achievement Award will count toward a member's total for the four graduations of the Grand Superintendent's High Achievement Award in 2024 and beyond.

3) Chapter Award

- every candidate that is Exalted, or a new joiner or re-joiner, into a West Kent Chapter will enable the Chapter to qualify for the High Achievement Award,
- four awards will be available – Bronze (2 candidates) Silver (3 candidates) Gold (4 candidates) and Platinum (5 candidates and above) and Chapters will receive their awards according to the number of candidates that they attract to their Chapters,
- results will be validated from documentation received at the Provincial Office,

- presentation of the Membership Achievement Awards to Companions and Chapters will be made annually at the Royal Arch Investiture Ceremony.

Please note that all candidates exalted in 2023 who qualify for the Membership Achievement Award will count toward a Chapter's total for the four graduations of the Grand Superintendent's High Achievement Award in 2024 and beyond.

The introduction of new candidates to the Royal Arch – one of our Provincial priorities – will be a significant consideration when allocating Provincial ranks to those members who are under consideration for preferment.

I wish our Companions every success with both these membership attraction initiatives and look forward to presenting the Companion Membership Achievement Awards in January 2024 and, thereafter, the High Achievement Awards to Companions and Chapters at our Investiture.

Yours sincerely and fraternally,

Mark Estaugh
Provincial Grand Master / Grand Superintendent





PROVINCIAL GRAND CHAPTER OF WEST KENT



THE DEPUTY GRAND SUPERINTENDENT: JAMES MARSH

Brethren and Companions,

As we prepare for our Christmas break, I have been reflecting on what has been a particularly busy year for the Royal Arch in West Kent. The 2nd and 3rd Provincial Grand Principals, and the Assistants to the Provincial Grand Principals have been working exceptionally hard in implementing various processes in support of the Grand Superintendent's membership strategy. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work.

Looking forward, I am encouraged by the number of Royal Arch candidates that our Chapters have lined up for Exaltation – I think that 2024 will be a bumper year for the Royal Arch in West Kent. This of course would not be possible without your support in embracing and promoting that Pure Antient Masonry is a single journey from Initiation to Exaltation.

If you do have candidates for the Royal Arch, please bring them into your Chapter as soon as possible so that they may begin to enjoy our wonderful Order; should you have more than one candidate in the pipeline, do not hesitate in performing a double ceremony.

Should your Chapter not have any candidates lined up, actively focus on sourcing one – every Lodge in our Province has at least one Brother who is not yet in the Royal Arch – make it YOUR responsibility to help that Brother discover the fantastic experience of Royal Arch Masonry.

The Royal Arch Membership Development Team have made great strides, not only in putting in place measures to increase our RA membership, they have also built a solid strategy to retain our current members, and to retrieve those who have left the Order. I want to place on record my thanks to the RAMDT and the RA Visiting Officers who are that vital link between our Chapters and the Membership Team for their hard work.

You will all by now be aware that the RA Demonstration Team will be presenting a demonstration of an Exaltation using the 'Savage Chapter Ritual' at Bromley on 30th January 2024. I encourage all West Kent Companions to attend this demonstration – an Exaltation Ceremony unlike any of the 'standard rituals'; it is shorter than the standard ritual Exaltation, but loses none of the splendour.

Regarding the RA Demonstration Team, these Companions are unsung heroes - a real credit to our Province; they give up their spare time (at their own cost) to entertain us in our Chapters. I would like to thank the team for their unstinting and excellent work.

Looking forward to the New Year, the Assistants to the Principals, the Provincial Principals and I have a busy diary of visits planned and we look forward to again seeing you at your various Chapters, but before that, we want to thank you all for the tremendous support you give to our magnificent Province, and we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2024.

James Marsh
Deputy Grand Superintendent





MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY GRAND MASTER: R.W Bro SIR DAVID WOOTON

Sir David Wooton, the Deputy Grand Master attended the Sevenoaks Remembrance Services, in his role as Freeman of the town of Sevenoaks.

During his visit he was impressed by the excellent attendance of Masons of West Kent, wanted the following message to be conveyed to the Brethren of West Kent:

“It was good to see masons, in regalia, joining in such an important act of community engagement, alongside the Mayor, the MP, a Deputy Lieutenant, Town, District and County Councillors and all the Church, Service, Youth and voluntary organisations of Sevenoaks. Wreathes were laid by the Brethren of Amherst No 1223, Peace and Concord No 3947, William Sennocke No 6932, and by the Province itself”.

Sir David reflected on his conversations with the Brethren following the service, and wanted to communicate that he was most grateful, and wished to pass on his congratulations to all those present representing the Province.





IN CONVERSATION WITH THE ROYAL ARCH MEMBERSHIP TEAM

We were privileged to catch up with the Royal Arch Membership Team, hearing about their work and how they hope to achieve their aims and objectives of increasing Royal Arch engagement across the Province of West Kent.

Written by: Adrian Grant

HEAD OF MEMBERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT: VINCE LETHBRIDGE

What's your role in the RAMDT?

I'm the head of the Royal Arch Membership Development Team (RAMDT). My colleagues and I all work in conjunction to achieve the Provincial Grand Master (PGM)/Most Excellent Grand Superintendent (MEGS) increased RA membership objectives.

What's the background and the reason that the RAMDT was created?

UGLE and Supreme Grand Chapter (SGC) now want the Craft and the RA to be viewed as one singular unit as opposed to two separate entities which many of our members still view us as, in order for the RA to be more in alignment with the Craft the PGM/MEGS has instigated a number of new administrative changes to our Chapters. Among these changes are the introduction of Chapter Mentors and Chapter Membership Officers (CMOs) in addition to these new appointments the Craft office of RA Rep or Chapter representative has now been upgraded to a Royal Arch Liaison Officer (RALO) which is a much more membership focused role. In a move to emulate that of

our Craft Lodges, RA Visiting Officers have now been introduced, with the creation of these new positions the Royal Arch in West Kent is now in an ideal position to realise the PGM/MEGS primary objective of increasing the current RA membership from 42% to 50% in the short term and for us to exceed 60% before the PGM/MEGS tenure in office is completed.

Who else in the RAMDT?

Apart from myself our team comprises of James Ashmore, the RA Provincial Membership Officer; Martin Eggleton, the RA Provincial Retrieval Office; Alan Wondzinski, Provincial RA Mentor.

All three of these Companions have a wealth of RA knowledge and experience and I'm very grateful and privileged to be working with such committed and dedicated Companions.

What are the RAMDT doing to achieve these membership objectives?

The Provincial Executive have already carried out extensive research into every Lodge in our Province and they have identified a number of Brethren who would be ideally suited for the role of RALO, these Brethren are now either in

place or they are about to be appointed imminently. Following these appointments every RALO has been contacted by a member of the RA Executive to discuss with them the RA membership objectives unique to their Lodge. Every Lodge RALO will have received a Royal Arch Membership Eligibility Review (RAMER) which is a unique breakdown of the members in the RALO's Lodge who are eligible for Exaltation into the Royal Arch, we have also included details of those Brethren who are currently unattached Companions, I have already received a number of positive responses from our RALO's who have successfully managed to recruit some of the eligible members on the RAMER for Exaltation so this is really a very positive step forward in our overall recruitment endeavours.

What about our new Master Masons?

Four weeks after a Brother has been raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason he then becomes eligible for Exaltation into the RA, he will then receive a personal invitational letter from the PGM/MEGS to join the RA, then our Provincial Membership Officer, James Ashmore will personally contact the Brother in question as a courtesy to then discuss his membership options.

How are you hoping to further establish the link between a RALO and a CMO?

We are currently working on a project document for each Chapter called a Chapter Membership Recruitment Data and Exaltations (COMRADE). This document will provide unique membership information for the CMO, such as data of the last few Exaltations in the Chapter including details of Lodges the new Companions came from and the Lodge RALO's contact details. Apart from Chapters that may already have their historical feeder Lodge's RALO details, the CMO will also have access to other Provincial RALOs as well. A unique Chapter COMRADE report will be circulated to every Chapter CMO in the coming weeks.

What challenges have you faced?

It is always going to be challenging when new initiatives are introduced. To our knowledge there isn't another RAMDT (or indeed similar such unit) anywhere in a Province under the jurisdiction of UGLE so we haven't had a template or anything like an instruction booklet to work with, there has been hours of painstaking meetings between ourselves in order to formulate strategies to address the Membership Challenge. I am delighted to say we have received a lot of positive feedback but this is still a work in progress project, we have been really impressed with the efforts that many of our RALOs and CMOs already have put in and are continuing to do so. These are members who have really embraced the membership challenges we all face and they welcome any help and assistance which we can offer. Statistically, speaking Lodges with a large RA contingent actually safeguard the long term future of

their Lodge, as dual Craft and RA members are much less likely to resign from the Craft. More and more Lodges are now acknowledging this fact.



THE PROVINCIAL GRAND MENTOR: ALAN WONDZINSKI

The office of Provincial Royal Arch Mentor is relatively new. What do you see as your purpose within our Province?

Well, I suppose it's the Royal Arch equivalent of the Craft Provincial Mentor. My primary role as the Royal Arch Provincial Grand Mentor is to promote and maintain interest in the Royal Arch within the Province, and also to assist Chapters, when they have no work, to keep their convocations interesting and attractive to their members so that they will look forward to their next meeting with enthusiasm.

I also work closely with the Royal Arch Membership Development Team in all aspects of recruitment, retention and retrieval.

With regard to recruitment, we have a presentation entitled 'A Glimpse through the Archway' which, as the name suggests, is an introduction to the Royal Arch for presentation in Lodges. The script has been written in such a way that it can be presented to all members of a Lodge, irrespective of grade.

I've also produced a document entitled 'What to do when you have nothing to do', which lists several suggestions for what a Chapter might consider when they have no regular work. It has already been distributed to all Scribes E in the Province, and I hope to distribute it further.

Included in that list are presentations performed by members of the West Kent Provincial Grand Stewards Chapter Demonstration Team, and I'm eternally grateful to the team for their dedication in promoting the Royal Arch in the Province. The Added Theatre Demonstration has been presented 20 times in Chapters across the Province and has proved to be very successful. Several Chapters have advised me they intend to introduce some of the 'Theatre' in their own Chapter ceremonies.

There are several other presentations listed all with the aim of increasing understanding and enjoyment of Royal Arch Masonry.



THE PROVINCIAL ROYAL ARCH MEMBERSHIP OFFICER: JAMES ASHMORE

What are the main routes to achieve the attraction and growth objectives for RA in West Kent?

Firstly, we are now presenting the Royal Arch as the natural fourth element in Freemasonry, as part of the UGLE/SGC strategy of cohesion

and synergy between the Craft and RA. Indeed, candidates for Initiation are now required to sign application forms for both at interview.

Moreover, it is already the case that to be eligible for Active Rank, Craft members must also be in RA. In addition, all new Master Masons receive a personal letter from the PGM inviting them to join RA and we follow this up with a phone call 10 days later.

Second, we have overseen the appointment of Royal Arch Liaison Officers (RALOs) in lodges and Chapter Membership Officers (CMOs) in chapters. These will be key in realising RA membership potential. RALO/CMO network events will follow.

Third, we have produced a colourful and impactful new leaflet setting out the very real benefits of joining RA which is available to all new Master Masons. You will also see our striking pop-up banner at key events "What are you waiting for?" Other key messages from the Grand Superintendent are being communicated directly to members.

Fourth, we will be introducing an incentive scheme to boost recruitment, with a progressive series of awards for high performance.

Fifth, we anticipate the launch of ARCHWAY, the RA equivalent of the Craft Members Pathway.

Many other initiatives will be deployed over the coming months and years to build on the very real progress made to date.

Have you encountered any obstacles in this work?

Inevitably there will be issues, but these can be overcome with constructive dialogue that puts the

benefits of working with the RAMDT at the forefront of the perception of members. All change requires adaptation and time and our lodges and chapters are already on this productive journey.

What is your ideal scenario as a result of all this?

Growth to 60% of take-up of RA by the close of the 2026 Festival!



THE PROVINCIAL ROYAL ARCH RETRIEVAL OFFICER: MARTIN EGGLETON

How do you view your role?

My role is to keep as many Royal Arch Companions active in their Chapters as possible by working in tandem with Chapter Membership Officers (CMOs).

Retention on a day-to-day basis is in the hands of the Almoner, but if a Companion leaves, the Retrieval Officer is able to step in and do their best to not to lose a Companion.

Why do people leave the Royal Arch?

The average age members leave the Royal Arch is 70. This tends to be due to ill health, and to an extent, there has been a struggle to encourage some to return to their Chapters, following the COVID lockdown.

How might you hold on to some who choose to resign?

In some instances, it would be worthwhile for Chapters to give serious consideration to offering honorary membership to those Companions who have served them diligently over the years. It is the responsibility of every member to keep in contact with those who haven't attended for some time, ensure they get anything need and let them know they have been missed, so that they feel valued.

What can be done for a Companion who might feel they are in the wrong Chapter?

If for whatever reason a Companion feels they might be more at home in a different Chapter, they can be introduced to others so that they can choose where they might be more comfortable.



COMPANIONS SAVE THE DATE

The West Kent Provincial Grand Stewards' Chapter will be giving a demonstration of an Exaltation Ceremony using the 'Savage Ritual'. This ritual is designed to deliver the Exaltation experience in a shorter meeting without losing any of its splendour.

This revolutionary ritual, used by very few Chapters, has not been seen in West Kent.

All West Kent Companions will soon receive an invitation to this very special event. Demand is expected to be very high - early booking is therefore highly recommended

DETAILS



30 January 2024



Oakley House, Bromley



17:15



PROVINCIAL GRAND
CHAPTER OF WEST KENT



The Royal Arch Make a difference

Royal Arch Incentive Scheme Companions Award Chapter Award

To support the
Royal Arch Membership
Challenge
Speak to your Lodge
Royal Arch Liaison Officer or
Chapter Membership Officer
or email
ProvRAMO@westkentmasons.org.uk





THE DEPUTY PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER: IAN GALLEHAWK

The summer now seems a long time ago so now would be a good time to engage in a general reflection regarding how well the Province is continuing to move forward. The summer break always sees an understandable lull in initiations and joining members.

Since the lull in activity, anyone following our social media channels will have seen just how firmly the Province has returned to labour. Our performance shows that the focus on addressing the Membership Challenge for each Province and on the ongoing implementation of the Members' Pathway is beginning to make a positive difference to the Province and the Order generally. A challenge for the Province is to ensure that we continue the excellent work of so many individuals and units and see West Kent entering an ongoing period of growth from the beginning of 2024.

Looking at UGLE matters, West Kent was very well represented at Newport as Quarterly Communications were held outside of London for the first time in eighty-five years. Although a long day for the team, it was truly enjoyable to attend such an historic event, meet with some of the High Rulers past and present, and ensure that our Province was well represented.



Since the new season began, we have seen Lodges hit the ground running with joining members, passings and raisings, installations and, crucial to our growth, initiations. Our Facebook page has contained so many reports of enjoyable meetings. Initiations and degree ceremonies are only the beginning. We need to ensure that our members, new and old, receive an excellent masonic experience from the day of initiation forward. Every member of the Executive is on hand to offer advice and help regarding membership, matters of ceremony or any relevant Lodge issue.

As we enter the New Year, we all need to focus on the UGLE 7 Year Strategy. West Kent is now better positioned to grow than it has been for many years. Now is the time to meet the UGLE expectation of a 1% growth in membership over the coming year. This will not be easy but we must remember that it is a challenge that is relevant to all of us.

This doesn't just mean initiating more members, it means initiating the right people and, crucially, looking after the members we have. Year on year our initiation rate remains roughly the same. Unfortunately so does our rate of loss, which exceeds our total of initiates and joiners. If we look after and keep our existing members, we grow in number, it's really that simple.

There is a lot of support and advice available. Let us make our masonic New Year resolution to redouble our efforts to make every member feel welcomed and valued in our Lodges and, critically, wanted and welcome in the Royal Arch. A member leaving our Province really must be seen as an absolute last resort. With thought and appropriate mentoring, we can look to retain so many more of our valued brethren and companions.

Now, for a short period, we rightly put aside the concerns of our masonic lives as we turn our focus to our loved ones at this very special time of the year. I wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and a New Year filled with joy and good health for you, your families and loved ones. I look forward to seeing you all in 2024.



Quarterly Comms in Wales



ASSISTANT PROVINCIAL
GRAND MASTER:
GRAHAM RAVEN

Dear Brethren,

As we approach the festive season it's time to reflect on the success of the first third of this masonic season. I have had some really exciting meetings this year, the first of a very busy season was to attend Walsingham Lodge to see a father initiate his son, Ben Fe of Eltham Palace Lodge initiating Edward in a full temple, what a way to start the season.

This was the first of many initiations in Group One Lodges, with quite a few being external candidates placed via the membership team and the members pathway.

This shows that engaging with the pathway does give the lodges the best chance to grow and of course maintain members.



I have had the chance to see two of the group lodges, Eglantine and Lullingstone really benefit from a new approach, as well as the time served methods, and a substantial increase in membership.

Quite a few visits to present 50 year citations, one of the best jobs of an APM, congratulations to W. Bro's. Vic Ball, Vic Turner, Graham Horton and John Homer on achieving that milestone.



November always brings that time of reflection on those who gave all for our freedom. I was again honored to represent the Province at the Dartford remembrance service with over 20 brethren from the Group One

Lodges and to again be joined by the ladies from the Kent Province of the Order of Women's Freemasons.



As I attend many Christmas meetings I would like to say a big thanks to the brethren of the group one lodges for their continued support, the hard working Lodge secretaries and of course by Visiting Officers.

Let's keep enjoying our freemasonry, engaging with the brethren we haven't seen for a while at this time of year, and encouraging more to join us in the mutual enjoyment of our order.

Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year.





ASSISTANT PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER: ANDREW WADDINGTON

Brethren, it has been a busy few months in Group two with Lodges carrying out their normal business as well as a flurry of Initiations and other degree ceremonies.

For some Lodges, growth is well under way. For others, growth is slower. Membership remains critical for all of us. The future of our Lodges is in our hands.

During September after the Installation Meeting of Ordnance Lodge the newly refurbished bar area at Welling was opened by the Provincial Grand Master and Master of Ordnance Lodge W. Bro. David Huntley, APMG.



It is a fantastic space and I'm sure you will find very appealing. Congratulations to everyone at the Westwood Masonic Centre that worked so hard to achieve the changes.

I would like to welcome Brixton Lodge No. 1949 to West Kent from London and in particular to Group two and to their new home at The Westwood. Their inaugural West Kent meeting was on the 14th October where I was extremely honoured to not only be able to welcome the Lodge officially to this great Province but also to present W. Bro. Kenneth Bull, Lodge Secretary,

with his 50 year Long Service Citation see here pictured with two of his Brethren who received 50 year citations from London previous to joining West Kent.



I am sure that you will all join me in welcoming them to this very special Province. Consider visiting them, their Festive Board was one of the most enjoyable and entertaining that I have been to for a long time. You will not be disappointed.

Lesnes Abbey Lodge welcomed the first batch of Light Blue brethren as joining members. This is part of the ongoing process to repurpose the Lodge as an exciting new and vibrant one for Light Blues where newer brethren will be able to progress at their own pace, enjoy new experiences with streamlined working practices, learning opportunities and lectures as well as streamlined festive boards.

Applications to join are welcome from any Master Mason or above who is Light Blue and wishes to. It is envisaged that it will be in addition to his Mother Lodge. Not instead of. The two experiences of Mother Lodge and Light Blues Lodge should enhance his Masonic journey and add to his understanding of the Craft and Royal Arch in due time.

I was also lucky to attend in November Westwood Lodge where I witnessed a first class initiation of an external candidate. Bro. 'Dutch' Oberia and present a 50th Long Service Citation to Bro. Geoffrey Wakem. One the longest subscribing members of Westwood Lodge the other, the newest. Congratulations both of you.



On the 11th December I was again honoured to present a 50th Citation. This time to W. Bro. Gael Lewis of New Ash Green Lodge in the presence of his Wife Gillie.



For myself, following the success of the Pilgrims Way walk that I undertook with my Son. W. Bro. James Waddington in 2021, we will be kayaking the Thames for 200 miles from Cricklade to Greenhithe in May 2024 in aid of the 2026 Festival. Look out for the details and please, if you can, consider supporting this endeavour. Your personal and Lodge totals will get the credit. I will get the blisters...

As ever I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible as I continue to serve as your Assistant Provincial Grand Master into 2024. I wish you and your loved ones a Happy Christmas, compliments of the season and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Best wishes, **Andrew**



**ASSISTANT PROVINCIAL
GRAND MASTER:
PETER BROOKER**

Group Three is made up of the Lodges meeting at Sidcup, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and the one Lodge meeting in Edenbridge. The group consists of 45 Lodges with 1,138 members.

In this edition of the West Kent News, I have chosen to feature one particular Lodge that has successfully overcome many of the membership and retention challenges currently faced by other Lodges in our Province.

Burnt Ash Lodge No.6285 currently has 22 members and I am most grateful to W.Bro Charles Clark, Provincial Grand Stewart, for providing the following information

The Lodge has met at the Shirley Woolmer Masonic Hall, Sidcup ever since it's consecration in 1946. The lodge was formed by a group of Air-Raid Precautions (ARP) Wardens, who at the end of WWII, created a Lodge of Instruction to be held on Monday evenings to continue the comradery they had built up together during the war effort.

Today's successors of those lodge founders attribute the Lodge's longevity to the regular meeting of the Lodge of Instruction, which is still held weekly on Monday evenings. It is at the L of I that life-long friendships have been formed and the lodge's strong tradition of Taylor's workings are taught by the senior brethren. The L of I also

regularly meets for social evenings, often followed by a meal in a nearby restaurant.

The Lodge has harnessed the benefits of social media by running Facebook and Twitter accounts to promote its activities, as well as having a WhatsApp group, where all of its members can keep in touch to maintain and strengthen those friendships.

The key to their success has been the hard work and dedication of the members, working together and embracing modern working practices, at the same time maintaining long held traditions.

Membership of the Royal Arch through the Burnt Ash Chapter has also played a significant part in the Lodge's success, particularly relating to the retention of members.

In common with many other Lodges, Burnt Ash has gone through tough times and has faced the usual challenges of finding new members and retaining existing members. Today, Burnt Ash is a modern, thriving and diverse Lodge of West Kent Freemasons.

Brethren, I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Peter Brooker

Burnt Ash Lodge No.6285

Motto: Facta Non Verba - Deeds, Not Words.





ASSISTANT PROVINCIAL
GRAND MASTER:
DAVID HUNTLEY

Dear Brethren,

Given the festive season, it was very heart warming to watch the hundreds of toys purchased by the Widows Sons with your generous donations, being distributed to the various charities a week ago.

In front of lots of members of the public at Bromley football club and the Mayor of Bromley, it shows everyone the fantastic work we do in the community but more importantly, there will be lots of children who will now receive a present at a difficult time for their families, when they would not have received anything at all otherwise.



As an APGM, I get to undertake some very humbling duties such as the recent 50th year long service citation to W.Bro Graham Collet.



I didn't know Graham particularly well until I read his history. He was enormously influential in setting up the Greenwich and Bexley Cottage Hospice and became their CEO, there is far too much to say about him for this article but it just shows you, don't judge or assume anything about your fellow brethren, we really do have some wonderful members of our Province and all the executive thank you for the wonderful work you do in our community, most of which is unnoticed but greatly appreciated.

When visiting lodges, I always talk about membership, it is the priority topic for us all and retention of existing members is just as important as bringing in new members.



My 3 tips for retention are:

- **Hold social functions**, they are key in keeping members engaged and bringing family, partners and spouses together and making one feel included.
- **Listen to your members**, my mother lodge recently held a social evening for our younger/newer members in an Indian restaurant, when we encouraged them to speak honestly and freely as to why many didn't make a lot of the meetings, they all said that our start time made it difficult to attend, we've taken this onboard and are now planning a later start and encouraging the second entrance initiative.
- **Pick up the phone**. When a members hasn't been seen for 1 or 2 meetings, he is a resignation waiting to happen, a simple phone call -not just from the Almoner, can make all the difference and make a member feel less isolated, more inclined to re-attend and feel wanted. It's a very simple thing to do and it works!



I wish everyone a happy Christmas, a healthy and prosperous New Year, look after one and another. We are all Brothers.



A CHAT WITH THE DEPUTY PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER

The West Kent Communications team had the opportunity and pleasure to chat with our Deputy Provincial Grand Master (DepProvGM), Ian Gallehawk, during which we explored the role of Deputy in our Province, enabling a better understanding of this important position. Here is what he had to say...

1. What are the duties of a Deputy Provincial Grand Master?

The primary duty is explained in the opening ceremony at Provincial Grand Lodge, that is, “to assist the Provincial Grand Master in the execution of the work”. Of course, that provides a very far reaching remit. The Deputy, therefore, has a responsibility right across every section of the Province. Very few members outside of Executive groups will ever realise just how busy a Provincial Grand Master actually is. The Deputy is there to take some of the burden and to assist in implementing provincial strategy. Additionally, the Deputy has to be ready to assist and support the APGMs when circumstances require.

Of course, the Deputy has to be prepared to stand in for the PGM in case of emergency, but hope this will never be needed.

In short, it is a diverse and very interesting role.

2. After your first year in Office, what are your thoughts on the health of the Craft in West Kent?

The whole of the Constitution has faced a really significant challenge as regards attraction and retention. We are really fortunate that UGLE is providing Provinces and Districts with some clear, helpful guidance and advice. We all know that, over many years, West Kent has seen a decline in member numbers. We have ever evolving processes in place to assist Lodges and individual office holders to embrace and implement the Members’ Pathway and grow their Lodges.

Following tremendous effort by so many Lodges and individuals, the Province is looking at achieving a flat line in number reduction for the first time in many years. This hasn’t just happened, it reflects the amazing commitment and sense of purpose we see right across the Province. The Craft is in great health and spirit in West Kent and we are poised to deliver the growth required by the UGLE strategy. It’s our Province and our future!

3. What are your aspirations for your tenure?

This is really simple. I joined the Executive as Head of Membership Development with a brief to coordinate the activity of the Membership Team to make it even more efficient and effective than it already was. My simple aspiration is to end my tenure with West Kent moving forward with clear and sustainable growth. We must all aspire to leave our Lodges and our Province in a better position than today. I want us to be the generation that formed the basis of the end of the decline in numbers in West Kent and UGLE.

4. With the Craft and Royal Arch Executives now working more closely together, do you work closely with the Deputy Grand Superintendent, if so, how do you collaborate?

The short answer is, yes. The Craft and Royal Arch are two equal parts of the same whole. We collaborate on all aspects of membership, this includes ensuring that we grow the Royal Arch by embedding it as an integral aspect of Craft membership in West Kent.

We ensure the strategic activities of our two teams are aligned and that our teams complement each other through coordinated activity and a clear, shared strategic vision. Together we are achieving great things.

5. Prior to taking up this role, you were Head of Membership Development a role you still hold. Has there been an improvement lately in West Kent membership and are we getting more enquiries from prospective members who are interested in becoming Freemasons?

We know the rate of decline in numbers has dropped dramatically and there is a very real prospect that we are about to see a flat line leading to growth. A decline in numbers is never something to celebrate but we can be confident that the years of unaddressed decline are over and a future of growth beckons.

The number of unsponsored enquiries remains roughly the same year on year so the message is simple, implement the Members' Pathway, approach the right people and generate growth within your Lodges.

6. The Members' Pathway is an important initiative by UGLE. Some lodges have embraced this wholeheartedly and their efforts have borne fruit. What can be done to encourage and motivate other lodges to take similar steps?

The Members' Pathway is the simplest and most effective tool we have. It is no more than an amalgamation of good practice that is proven to grow Lodges when properly embedded and implemented. We have a dedicated and committed team that is waiting for your call. The help and guidance is there, please make use of it.

If motivation is needed, I would urge any Lodge to look around their own centres. One third of our Lodges have grown in number from this time last year. They haven't grown by luck but by the determination of the members. Your Lodge could start to grow or grow further if you adopt and implement the Members' Pathway and work as a team to retain your members and ensure that they are receiving a good masonic experience at every meeting. It's all within our grasp, we just need to recognise the opportunity and seize it.

7. When you come to the end of your tenure, how might you measure your success?

I am of the view that there will be one measure of success and that will very simply be, "is the Province growing?" We all want a happy and vibrant Province. We want our members, new and old, to embrace the Province as a lifelong commitment and encourage the right people to come and join us.

Those of us, who are getting a bit older, can look back on the names of those, who came before us, and associate memories with them, a good example being how we remember Gordon Davie for his amazing lectures and inimitable interaction with others. I would like those who come after us to look back on our stewardship of the Province and associate it with the moment in history when we turned the tide, returned to a sustained period of growth and ensured that, as West Kent celebrates 100 years in 2073, we made the celebration possible.

Solomon for Mentors

The Members Pathway makes the point that a new member is presented with a huge amount of information and needs a 'Personal Mentor' to guide him through it.

solomon.ugle.org.uk





PROVINCIAL GRAND DIRECTOR OF CEREMONIES: DANIEL UNTHANK

”Three Knocks.....“

Brethren, once again we have seen a year filled with every type of meeting that you could think of. Highlights include celebrating 50 years of West Kent being a Masonic Province, saluting members that have attained long service citations, witnessing truly spectacular ceremonies and our own Provincial Honours meeting at Great Queen Street.

Of all the meetings I am lucky enough to attend, the most satisfying are those that involve a new Brother joining our ranks. There is something uniquely special in meeting someone as a stranger before their initiation and then greeting them as a Brother shortly afterwards. Memories of my own initiation come flooding back when seeing an Initiate experience the same ceremony with all of its symbolism and importance.

The ceremony of Initiation is the most important of all Masonic ceremonies. That's quite a bold statement but, if you think about it, is true. Being initiated into Masonry is a single, irreversible process for, once initiated, you can't be uninitiated, nor can you be initiated twice. Even if someone resigns from a Lodge and from the Craft they don't cease to be a Freemason. Initiation also launches the Masonic journey which can take Brethren in many varying directions. Without that first step of Initiation, we couldn't be members of Royal Arch .

or any one of the other Companion Orders that many of us enjoy. So, I would suggest that the most important day in anyone's Masonic life is the day they were initiated into Freemasonry. I would urge everyone to try and attend as many as possible, not only to support the candidate and the future of our Order, but as a reminder of its importance in our own lives and what it means to be 'made a Mason'

There is an old piece of ritual that explains **the three distinct knocks** by which a candidate is admitted. It points out that the knocks allude to an ancient and venerable exhortation: - "Seek and ye shall find:" "Ask and ye shall receive:" "Knock and it shall be opened unto you." So, the knocks represent that the candidate sought to join our fraternity, asked of a friend, he knocked and now the doors of Freemasonry have been opened to admit him. I've always liked that description of why there are three knocks on the door when a candidate is admitted. To me, it conveys the fraternal embodiment of our organisation and that, if I look back over the last 20 plus years, I realise what an important part Freemasonry has played in it and therefore, what a life changing act being made a Mason has been.

Brethren, we all enjoy our Freemasonry. If we didn't, we certainly wouldn't put all the time and effort into it that we do! It's time that we gave three distinct knocks and opened our doors to others who can benefit from the pleasure and satisfaction we get from Masonry. Seek candidates and ye shall find! Ask friends, family or colleagues and ye shall receive! Be the one that rings out that final knock and opens the door to Freemasonry and sets someone on the same rewarding journey we are all making.

I sincerely hope that you and your families have a truly enjoyable Christmas and prosperous New Year. Here's to personal and Masonic health and wealth in 2024!

P.S. Using Masonic Christmas wrapping paper for presents will get you into trouble at home!





**PROVINCIAL GRAND MENTOR:
NEIL DALE**

Firstly, I extend warm wishes for a Merry Christmas to all the esteemed members of our Province. As the Provincial Grand Mentor, I hold a responsibility that goes beyond mere guidance; it's about fostering a thriving lodge environment. While a core part of my role involves supporting and empowering Lodge Mentors in their personal mentoring endeavours, it extends further. I aim to elevate our Lodges into vibrant, engaging spaces far beyond the handful of meetings we hold annually.

I envision our Lodges as more than meeting places, they should epitomise camaraderie, fun, and inclusivity. They should beckon members to actively participate, to make it a destination not just for ritual but for social connections. Imagine it as a hub where members enthusiastically invite their friends and family to share in our fellowship and, perhaps, even consider joining our noble cause.

Together, let's cultivate an atmosphere that not only cherishes tradition but also embraces the joy of shared experiences. Let's transform our Lodges into welcoming havens where bonds are strengthened, memories are created, and where the spirit of togetherness flourishes.

The Members' Pathway is an invaluable toolkit designed explicitly to empower Lodges, fostering their growth and fortification for the times ahead. For those who haven't explored its offerings recently, I strongly encourage revisiting the website, particularly the newly introduced interactive quick start guide available at Members' Pathway Quick Start Guide.

Additionally, I wish to highlight the latest addition to our resources: the Mentor's Corner within Solomon.

This comprehensive repository serves as a centralised hub, catering to the needs of mentors and presenters alike. With an extensive collection comprising over 70 presentations, demonstrations, and quizzes, it equips individuals to deliver engaging content seamlessly, whether in Lodge, Chapter, LOI sessions, or through online platforms.

Exploring Mentor's Corner on Solomon.

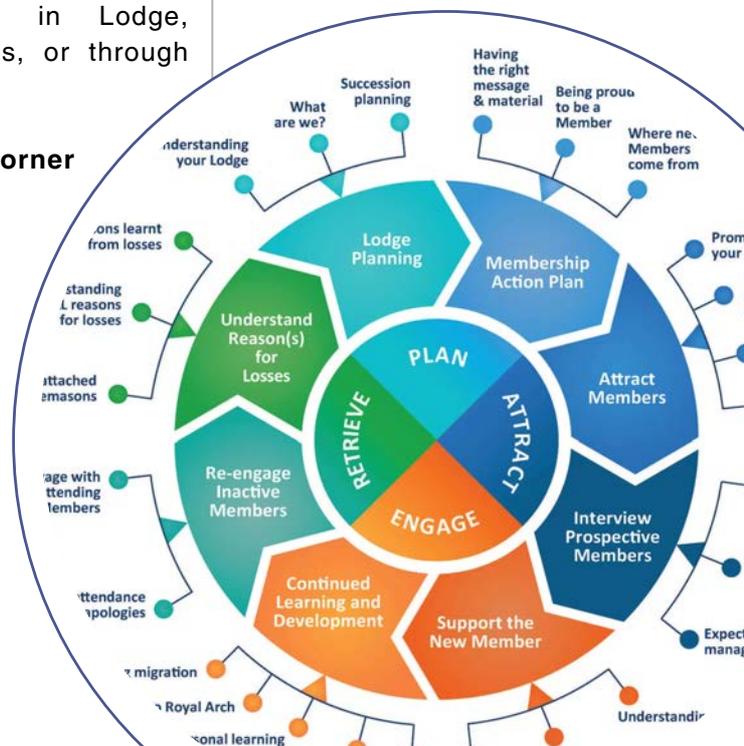
One gem within the Mentor's Corner that resonates with me is the selection of snippets. These bite-sized pieces serve as ideal tools during LOI sessions or meetings,

especially when guiding newer members through their Masonic daily advancement. They offer an accessible way to engage members, encouraging participation and further exploration of Masonic principles.

This wealth of resources enriches our Lodges and empowers individuals to actively contribute to the Masonic journey, fostering continuous growth and understanding among members.

Brethren, please remember the membership team is here for you; if any brother wishes get involved in this work, please get in touch with us.

Neil Dale
Provincial Grand Mentor





**WEST KENT LIGHT BLUES
CLUB CHAIR:
LIAM TURNER**

Recently the West Kent Light Blues Club have organised a wide range of activities from social events to masonic learning, and educational ones, such as the CPR and defibrillator training course at Sevenoaks which was well attended and gave vital training to all who came.



The Cricket match over the summer between East and West Kent Light Blues to mark the 50 years of both Provinces being formed from the single province of Kent proved not only a victory for West Kent but a huge success. 2024 will see a return match and we hope to retain the trophy.



Of course, these events need your support. We really value ideas about the sort of events you want us to provide. The Club is there for you and can only continue to succeed if you support it. So if you have an idea, please contact me via my email at the bottom of this message.



The Club has also been instrumental in helping to repurpose an existing Lodge into a Light Blues Lodge. This is to be called the **Cornerstone Lodge**. Its purpose is to encourage Light Blues who are looking for another Lodge to join in addition to their Mother Lodge to enhance their masonic understanding and journey. All of the progressive offices of the Lodge will be held by Light Blues. If you are interested in joining, and I thoroughly recommend it, please contact me at the email below and I will answer any questions you might have, and will be happy to assist you to become a

member. The Lodge has the full backing of the Craft and Royal Arch Executive, a majority of whom will become Honorary Members to further enhance our Masonic Journey and offer advice and guidance.

At our next meeting on Monday January 15th the Light Blues President, W. Bro Andrew Waddington APM Group two, is giving a talk entitled “**Handcuffs to Chains**” his journey into Freemasonry and rise to the Provincial Executive. If you wish to attend, please let me know before the 8th of January so I can book you in but please do soon as places may become limited. Members of the Craft and Royal Arch Executive will be present.

Liam Turner - Club Chair.
wklbcchair@westkentmasons.org.uk



Light Blues Visit the Shooting Lodge



Light Blues face off against West Kent during the Annual East meets West Cricket event.



TO DOUBLE OR NOT TO DOUBLE: TONY HARVEY

I had just delivered a talk to a Lodge and was queuing at the bar for some much-needed refreshment when a red-faced Brother challenged me.

Him: "Multiple candidates? Not on my watch. It's OK – if we must – for the Second Degree but the First and Third Degrees should be special for the candidate. Double ceremonies detract from the individual experience."

Mustering a smile, but with one eye on the queue, I asked whether he had asked any candidates about what would make a ceremony special for them.

Him: "No, but what would be the point? They wouldn't know, would they?"

Me: "Hmmm, so have you asked anyone who has experienced a multiple ceremony whether it had detracted from their experience?"

He seemed relieved that I had got to the front of the queue and walked away muttering something under his breath.

Is there any evidence to support his belief? Or was he just repeating a conventional opinion without giving it much thought?

I have asked brethren who have been Initiated, Passed and Raised in multiple ceremonies about their experiences. The response has been

overwhelmingly positive. Here is a direct quote from W Bro. Paul Buckingham of Manor of Gillingham Lodge No. 3983:

"I was a double First, Second, Third, HRA, Mark, RAM & Rose Croix with the same person who I only met at interview. Best bonding experience ever. Neither of us ever felt second best or disadvantaged. I was senior in Craft and ultimately put him in the Chair. We swapped place in Chapter where he followed his father then installed me as Z. We were "We 3" together. I'm so fed-up hearing about the 'missed unique' experience. I never felt so alone as when I eventually joined another order without him!"

Bro. Buckingham is hardly the first candidate in a multiple ceremony. The first record we have of an Initiation in England tells us Elias Ashmole and Col. Henry Mainwaring were admitted in a double ceremony in October 1646. Multiple ceremonies can hardly be considered a modern threat to our ancient practices.

Apollo University Lodge No. 357 has been conducting multiple ceremonies since 1819. Each candidate has his own Deacon to escort him and his own Past Master to entrust or test him at various points in the ceremony. United Grand Lodge has produced a video to demonstrate how this system works.

Masonic history tells us these are not isolated examples. Between the

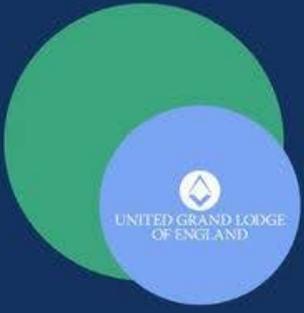
1920s and the 1960s many Lodges conducted multiple ceremonies. Unfortunately, few members remain who can tell us how they operated then. Instead, we rely on living memory, and we ignore our rich history, traditions and practices.

As well as our history and traditions, there is a very sound reason why we should undertake multiple ceremonies. They serve the best interests of our candidates, by building strong relationships, as well as those of the Lodge, by enabling progress. If Freemasonry really is to offer a unique form of personal development, surely we must make it truly personal by listening to our candidates and members, rather than imposing our beliefs, our preferences, our prejudices on them.

The Pro Grand Master is calling on us to adopt a "Yes, if ..." attitude and UGLE is removing the requirement for a dispensation for ceremonies with more than two candidates. So, I say, let us embrace the opportunity to rejuvenate our Lodges and, once again, do multiple ceremonies!

About the author:

Tony conceived, and was the main author of, United Grand Lodge of England's (UGLE) Members' Pathway which, in June 2019, the then Pro Grand Master described as a "game changer." In late 2022, Lewis Masonic published his book, "The Seven Habits of Highly Successful Lodges", with a foreword written by the Deputy Grand Master of UGLE, RW Bro. Sir David Wootton.



My hopes are for a thriving membership, and, of course, the Members' Pathway is a tool and a route by which we can achieve thriving membership.

CRAFTCAST
The Freemasons Podcast

Ian Copestake
Members' Pathway
Working Party Chairman



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PASTORAL CARE TEAM (PCT)



Overindulgence during the Festive Season?

Following the successful programmes over the last three years, the Pastoral Care Team will be re-running the Weight Loss Initiative from the beginning of January until the end of March and you can join at any time in that period. Details are available by emailing pastoralcareteam@westkentmasons.org.uk, quoting 'weight' in the subject line and giving your contact details.

You can also be enrolled in the associated WhatsApp group which has proved invaluable as a mutual support resource. Thanks are due to George Buckberry for taking on the task of managing the programme again next year.

The PCT CareLine is open throughout the Holidays

Back in 2021 when the CareLine was 'initiated' the PCT team had no idea of the scope of issues with which they would be presented. Consequently, one of the preparatory jobs was the collation of a broad database of organisations to which Brethren could be referred for specialist counselling or information. However it has seldom been needed, because more often than not all the caller wants is to chat with a Brother who can identify with their own issues.

Although the Team doesn't offer counselling itself, it includes qualified

mental health counsellors as well as a senior paramedic and members who have suffered various forms of cancer and heart problems, all of whom are available for Brethren who may wish to share fears and concerns with others who can identify with their problems.

Whilst the first port of call for Brethren in distress should normally be their Lodge Almoner, the CareLine exists as an emergency service. Indeed, there are many members that prefer to talk to an 'outsider' rather than to share their problems with a member of their own Lodge. In many ways that is perfectly understandable.

It is not within the remit, or wish, of the Team to detract from the Almoners' role but unfortunately it is sometimes difficult to avoid because the wishes and well-being of the Brother concerned are paramount.

Some of the issues that have been faced have been heart-rending to say the least but without exception, there has always been a positive outcome.

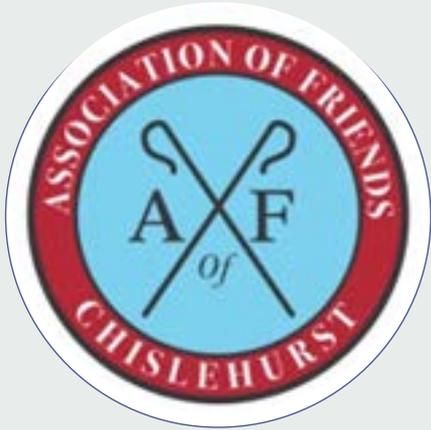
The CareLine is available twenty four hours a day, 365 days a year, ready to listen and help. Whether it's just a chat, a health issue or just about any personal problem imaginable - and be it be a Brother, a member of their immediate family or one of our cherished widows, the Team is there to help because ... FREEMASONRY CARES.

The dreaded ULEZ

Many members of Lodges that now fall within the ULEZ area are faced with the additional cost when attending meetings and we strongly encourage Brethren to consider whether they might assist by car-sharing. The impact will fall especially hard on our older and less able-bodied Brethren. We know that many members already help out in this way but please consider whether we could all do more, as the last thing we need in these difficult times is to see Brethren fall by the wayside because of the additional expense.

Long Covid? - some personal thoughts from Team member David Hedges.

Covid doesn't just go away as soon as you take a negative test, as we all know, the impact can last a long time and in many differing ways. At the moment not much is known about the detailed cause and there are no specific cures, nonetheless help is available from the NHS and if you have the slightest doubt get your GP to refer you to the excellent local support team. My own issue is decidedly Masonic; since Covid I have difficulty projecting my voice, not good for a dedicated ritualist. As anticipated there's no easy cure but I have been referred to a voice coach at the English National Opera, one of the many organisations that are supporting rehabilitation - Don't suffer, there is help available.



Chairman of The “Association of Friends” Prince George Duke of Kent Court:
Mike Bowyer-Jones

It’s that time of year again, when our thoughts turn to our relatives and friends and the possibility of making New Year Resolutions that are realistic for us to persue, including a healthier life style.

With that in mind The Association of Friends believe that an active mind and body will help the residents avoid mishaps and tumbles that can be so debilitating to our senior members. We therefore support regular music therapy which stimulates their memory and strengthens the chest and core muscles as well as “fun fit and fabulous”exercises that may be performed sitting or standing, to enhance balance and general flexibility whilst promoting a general feeling of well being when the body releases the endorphins.

In addition, “The Friends” support Traditional and National days as well as other events throughout the year.

“So what can I do to help?” I hear you ask - well all this costs money. By supporting our 500 Club, for just £50 per year, be it Lodges, individual members, relatives or members of the public, everyone will have a chance to win £1000 from our prize draw, whilst supporting our wonderful home.

By joining the 500 club it enables us to forecast our income and obtain more competitive prices by “block booking “ entertainment etc. in our residents calendar.

We also have Thursday and Saturdays available for our Coffee Mornings. Lodges wishing to sponsor these we be able to serve coffee and cake to the residents chat with them and brighten their day! Members of the Association and staff will be present to assist you, so all you have to do is turn up.

Remember this is our Masonic Home and any one of us may have cause to call upon it for assistance for a loved one or even for ourselves

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year

Association of Friends: aofpgdkc@gmail.com
500 Club: aof500club@gmail.com



Association of Friends Prince George Duke of Kent Court

Prince George Duke of Kent Court Christmas Bonanza was held on Sunday 3rd December at which the December 500 Club Draw took place.

The Home Manager, Nina Stephens was pleased to pick out the three winning numbers !!



The lucky winners were:

- Cantuarian Lodge 5733 £1,000
- Walsingham Lodge 2148 £250
- Seven Stars Lodge 6417 £100

The Association were very pleased to receive £270 raised by Members of Heart of Oak Lodge 6416 on their Tombola Stand.

The 500 Club is open to Lodges, Chapters and Individuals, why not join ? Simply scan to QR Code and complete the application.





ROYAL MASONIC BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION: Chislehurst care home receives surprise visit from Rocky the donkey

Residents at RMBI Care Co. Home Prince George Duke of Kent Court in Chislehurst, Kent were delighted recently when Rocky the donkey came to visit.

Rocky was led by handler Caroline Edmonds from Second Chance, a sanctuary based in Somerset, all around the Home so that residents could pet and stroke him. They even stopped off at some residents' rooms so that they could be introduced.

The benefits of spending time with animals for older people are immense. Research has shown that having something to pet or touch can result in lower blood pressure, better heart rate and reduced stress. Animals can provide emotional stability during stressful situations, helping to reduce anxiety and depression.

The visit also proved to be wonderful for residents with dementia at Prince George Duke of Kent Court, as it helped to spark conversation and reminiscence.

Diane Connor, the Home's Activities Coordinator, said: "It was wonderful to see the residents' faces light up when Rocky came around! He brought joy and calmness to our residents, which is beneficial for their mental health and wellbeing."

RMBI Care Co. Home Prince George Duke of Kent Court, run by RMBI Care Co., is part of the Masonic Charitable Foundation. For more information, please visit: <http://www.rmbi.org.uk/>

About RMBI Care Co.

RMBI Care Co. provides residential care, nursing care and residential dementia support to older Freemasons, their families and people in the wider community. We have been caring for older people for over 180 years and today, we support over 1,000 residents across 17 care homes in England and Wales with a focus on wellbeing and quality outcomes.

We treat each person as an individual. We believe that everyone should be able to enjoy later life and we are here to help our residents stay as independent as possible. Above all, we live by our values – kind, supportive and trusted. RMBI Care Co. is part of the Masonic Charitable Foundation – Funded entirely by Freemasons, MCF builds better lives by encouraging opportunity, promoting independence and improving wellbeing. For more information, please visit: www.mcf.org.uk



Photo 1: Residents Greta Mountford and Sheila Harding at RMBI Home Prince George Duke of Kent Court in Chislehurst greet Rocky the donkey.

Photo 2: Resident Len Willis is delighted to meet Rocky the donkey.

Photo 3: Resident June Ainsworth gently pats Rocky the donkey.

Photo 4: Resident Jean Mountford gives Rocky the donkey a cuddle.

For further information, please contact:
Maricel Foronda, Marketing Team
mforonda@rmbi.org.uk / 0207 596 2400

DAVID NEWBY CYCLES FOR THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

For the last 18 years David Newby of Welling Lodge, has undertaken the Pedal to Paris cycle ride to raise funds for the Royal British Legion (RBL). This year, for the third time, he was also joined by his son, Leigh. Leaving London on 31st August, they arrived in Paris on the 4th September.

During David's working life, he worked in communications at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre and a number of military bases. He saw many of our brave members of the armed forces with various injuries and felt he ought to do something to contribute to the wellbeing of those suffering. Over the years, he has raised many thousands of pounds for this worthy cause.

Leigh, aged 39, has been very much inspired by his Dad to participate, who at 70 years young puts us all to much shame with his energy. David is no doubt a huge inspiration to many of us and a few years ago, was honoured with the Invicta Award for his community services.



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION - APPRECIATION AWARD WINNER

Following another successful Poppy appeal the Sidcup branch of the Royal British legion made an award of a certificate of appreciation to one of our own and well-known West Kent masons for his support of the appeal over many years.

Trevor Jones has been involved for many years with ensuring that all of the centre's have poppies for sale, and collection boxes, and always supplies the poppy wreaths that the executive and lodges lay at the various war memorials within the Province.

His many years of service are well recognised, well-done Trevor.



WEST KENT PROVINCIAL GRAND STEWARDS' LODGE - GARDEN PARTY

In recognition of the **50th anniversary of our Province**, the West Kent Provincial Grand Stewards' Lodge held an outstanding Garden Party at Oakley House on Sunday 10th September. A sell out event, with 250 tickets being sold, and perfect weather, many Brethren, family and friends turned up in the course of the afternoon and enjoyed each other's company.

The singers who entertained throughout the day were outstanding. The barbeque was excellent and kids thoroughly enjoyed themselves on the bouncy castles.

Let's hope this winning formula can be repeated in the future.



**LIGHT BLUES CLUB
ATTEND UGLE
QUARTERLY
COMMUNICATIONS**

A large complement of West Kent Light blues made their way to Great Queen Street on Wednesday 3rd December 2023 to attend Quarterly Communications. The Chairman Liam Turner, was joined by the Light Blues Club President Andrew Waddington and a number of masons from across the province, including Karl Lawton the current Provincial Grand Persuivant.



Quarterly Communications of Grand Lodge are usually held at Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London, in the Grand Temple, and are a great opportunity to socialise and see the Temple in full splendour and magnificence.



**THIS CHEQUERED
EXISTENCE
BOOK REVIEW**

Although much has been written about Freemasonry, hardly anything as substantial or so comprehensive as this study has been published previously to describe the history of the organisation's development during the 20th-century.

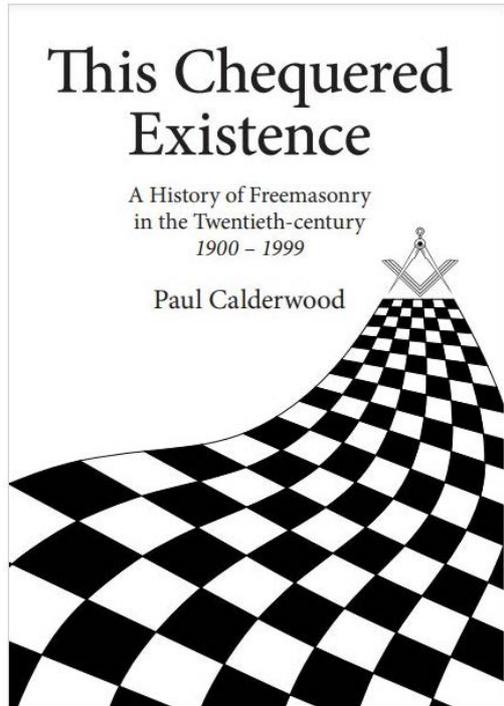
This is all the more surprising since that century witnessed the greatest growth in the organisation's history which extends over more than 300 years. It was the century in which Freemasonry became 'a mass movement' drawing into its ranks much larger numbers of people than ever before and significantly re-shaping its social composition.

Although Freemasonry entered the 20th-century in Britain as a respected organisation, heavily patronised by royalty, praised by church leaders and well represented in government, it was by the end of the century on the defensive and facing a chorus of criticism and suspicion from parliament, the churches and the press, and endorsed in public by few.

The book examines the remarkable expansion of this significant organisation during this period, its royal connections and its role as a major force for good in the charitable sector. It also addresses important changes in its relationship with religious bodies and the media. This book therefore attempts to trace the path of Freemasonry as it journeyed through the century.

There are many common theories about the rise and fall of Masonic membership and number of lodges in the twentieth-century. This is the first volume to give the facts and figures displayed in easy to understand graphs and diagrams.

- Discover notable past and present Freemasons from lords and politicians, to priests and archbishops.
- See the focus of Masonic charity with details of the contributions lodges made to churches, charities and good causes.
- Read an in-depth analysis of the Royal endorsement and membership of the Craft.
- Find out how and why Masonic meeting practices and lodge locations have changed over the years.
- Learn about the changes to public perceptions of Freemasonry and how the press reports on the society and its activities.



WEST KENT 2026 FESTIVAL



Together we've raised over
£1,400,000



A big 'THANK YOU' to each and every member who has supported this incredible journey with the Festival team

YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS



£63,500

We Are Beams, supports disabled children/young people and their families and provide opportunities for these young people

Trinity

£19,000

The Trinity Theatre and Arts Centre, advance education in the arts and provide facilities in the interest of social and cultural welfare

WEST KENT NEWS



11th Edition

WINTER

2023

