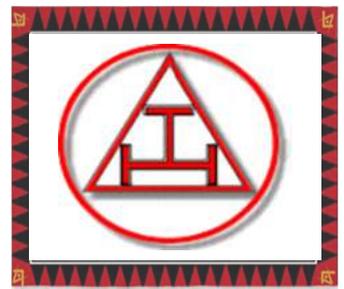




WEST LANCS NUGGETS

“PROVINCIAL NEWS DIGEST”



Welcome to the fifth edition of the Provincial News Digest. During the suspension of Masonic meetings its aim, along with the Provincial website, is to keep brethren and companions in touch with the many activities that are taking place during the lockdown
Issue 5: 27 May 2020

WLFC Update: Steve Kayne

The West Lancashire Freemasons' Charity (WLFC) was formed as a trust on 1 April 2008 when the seven Provincial Charities were merged. 10 years later the charity converted to a company, limited by guarantee. WLFC is governed by a board of directors, currently 6, chaired by John Smith. The day to day operations are managed by the CEO, assisted by the Chief Finance Officer - Howard Lloyd, and the dedicated team of volunteers who continue to put in an effort well above and beyond the call of duty.

They work very closely with the Provincial Grand Almoner, Paul Broadley, and his Provincial Care Team. These people are the principal source of new applications for financial assistance from Masons and their dependents.

At the Huyton office they pride themselves that they are able to 'turn round' applications very quickly. Indeed, emergency payments can be dealt with in just two hours.

However, in the case of regular applications, these are copied to the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) in London and because of this, delays can occur. It is worth noting that some 60% of the value of each 'Daily Living Expense' awards are paid by MCF.

Each year the WLFC makes awards to Masons or their dependents well in excess of £300,000. This is in addition to any grants awarded by the MCF and ensures that our applicants are not only receiving sufficient funds to take them over the 'poverty line' but are also able to achieve a quality of life.

Whilst our priority is, and always will be, the welfare of our brethren, WLFC also makes significant non-Masonic grants. In the last few months, we have made the following awards:-

- The Catalyst Museum Widnes, £25,000
- Crosby Scouts for sailing equipment at Crosby Marina, Liverpool, £25,000
- South Liverpool Boys' Brigade – Minibus £21,000

Of course, during the current 'lockdown' period the office is closed. However, the work is continuing with the applications team, grant executives and treasury officers, all working from home to ensure that there is no hold-up in dealing with Masonic applications for assistance. These applications are received either by post to the office (collected regularly) or electronically direct to the Applications Manager Alan Riley and dealt with as necessary.

Our systems provide for renewals to be automatically 'flagged up' as soon as they are becoming due so that none are missed and appropriate awards are distributed on a timely basis.

At this time, we all find ourselves in exceptional circumstances and the WLFC has responded to the requirements of the current emergency by giving financial assistance to the community at large either through Masons organizing local assistance such as provision of meals on wheels using their local Masonic hall facilities, or by direct grant to charities and other organizations within our province providing assistance to those in need. We have also been active in providing laptops and tablets for children for 'home schooling'. Awards made to date include:-

- Lancaster University for the Lancaster and Morecambe 'Connecting Kids Initiative', £23,000
- St Helens Young Carers Centre, £7,750
- Equipment for nine hospices throughout the Province, £14,699

We have, through the good resources of brother Masons such as Jim Corcoran in Garston, been able to locate volunteer manufacturers of personal protection equipment and continue to provide funds for them to purchase the materials they require.

We are continually in contact with our friends in London (at UGLE and MCF) to maximise available funding and to ensure that we are 'reaching out' to those who need us at this time.

The work of the WLFC is ongoing and would therefore emphasise that if you are aware of any Mason or his dependents who may be in need of our help, or indeed an organization that would benefit from our involvement, please call the office on 0151 482 4757. The telephone lines are currently switched through to the members of the Applications Team and are answered 24/7. All calls received are dealt with promptly and on a strictly confidential basis.



WLFC team of volunteers

Robert Lomas Podcast Initiative

During this unique period when lodges are unable to meet, a series of podcasts are being offered to assist masters and secretaries of lodges and principals and scribe Ezra's of chapters to maintain the interest of their members.

Robert Lomas is a British writer, physicist and business studies academic. He writes primarily about the history of Freemasonry. On 16 March this year Robert was scheduled to give a talk at White Hills Lodge No 5209 within our Province, but unfortunately at that time great concerns were developing over COVID-19 and hence his talk didn't happen. However, this inspired Robert to develop a number of his talks as podcasts to be made available to lodges ideally so that brethren can use them on a day when they should have been holding a regular meeting.

The podcasts offered are private to each subscribing lodge member. This material would normally be delivered within a tyled lodge, and the copyright for the work remains with Robert. Some groups within our Province are already using his podcasts.

These podcasts can be shared as a simple email attachment as no additional software is required to utilise this initiative. It is like listening to a radio broadcast by simply clicking the attachment at a time convenient to yourself. Obviously, the podcasts must not be shared outside the circulation of each individual lodge and they must be kept safe or deleted after use. They must never be shared on social media or websites.

Any master/principal or secretary/scribe Ezra can, if they wish, subscribe directly to Robert as a facilitator, however the Provincial Mentor (Stewart Cranage) is willing to act as facilitator for any lodge or chapter within West Lancashire who may be interested in taking advantage of this initiative.

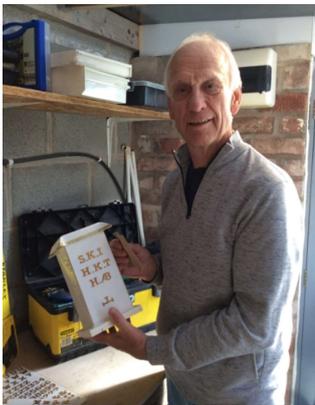
A list of available podcasts and details of how to engage with the initiative will appear on the Provincial website soon.

For further information contact Stewart Cranage, Provincial Mentor via mentor@provinceofwestlancs.org



Apology

In the last issue of the news digest we recognised the craftsmanship of one of our companions but we got his name wrong – apologies 'Harold' Sutcliffe!



Keep smiling!



If you would like to submit an article for a future edition of the West Lancs Nuggets please contact *Stewart Cranage, Provincial Grand Mentor:* mentor@provinceofwestlancs.org or *Paul Renton, DepGSupt:* paul.renton21@btinternet.com

NEWS FROM THE CARE TEAM: Paul Broadley, ProvGAlmoner



As soon as COVID-19 and lockdown became common words in our vocabulary, it became apparent that the Provincial Care Teams' workload could be dramatically increased. However, with the wisdom of the 'high rulers' in the Province, it was decided that a separate team would be put in place, and run parallel with the care team structure. This would be known as the Provincial Welfare Plan.

The creation of the plan enabled the members of the care team and lodge almoners to concentrate with their unseen duties. What a good decision! Advisory communications were sent out to all lodge almoners, to not only encourage them to keep up with their contacts with widows, brethren and those in need, but to be more vigilant in trying to identify their possible increased needs whilst in lockdown. Some groups within the Province were quick of the mark, and had already put their own plans in place. Likewise, some individual lodges took up the challenge in not only helping their own members, but helping people with no Masonic connection, a commendable decision.

Regretfully, we do have widows and brethren who do need assistance in some form or another. The Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) was also quick of the mark. It realised, that those in need were due to be reviewed during the lockdown period. A task that could not be achieved. Another plan was therefore put in place.

All the members of our care team were 'stood down' and requested not to visit any brethren. As a result, the 'workload' was transferred to the MCF Advise and Support Team. Our representative in the team is Elaine Hansen, who could be described as a 'star'. I'm sure she has been one of the busiest MCF advisors in the country.



Her help has kept many heads above water and she has assisted those in need. A big thank you from the Province and the care team should be given to Elaine.

As a Province we should be very thankful to have the support of the West Lancashire Freemasons Charity (WLFC). Like the MCF they also realised at the very early stages of the pandemic, that many could find themselves in need. As a result, an elite team was created for those needing emergency assistance. Similar to the MCF, the scheduled reviews had to be curtailed. Emergency rules came into play and those in need have received assistance. As a foot note, all of those involved in the WLFC are volunteers and again another big thank you from the Province and Care Team should be acknowledged. Thanks have been given to both charities, but we should not forget our own lodge almoners and care team members, who's work goes unrecognised, for confidential reasons.

A personal reflection: Kevin Poynton, PAsstProvGM

Freemasonry like any other organisation belongs to its membership. Its strength and its future rely on the commitment and enthusiasm of each and every one of us.

It's true to say that we are not going to be able to meet person to person as we use to any time soon. This has happened before, so it's up to each and every one of us to ensure that our brothers will still have that commitment and enthusiasm when we do meet again, which will be essential if we are to make our organisation thrive.

Communication is vital. In both World Wars our brethren managed to keep in touch, whether it was by signs, tokens or words. One such token was the forget-me-not. Through such harsh times this small token caused enemies to be friends and this common bond gave value to life. Perhaps now is the time to realise that when we do emerge from this dark era our Masonry will change in so many ways and we will, without doubt, have less members.

So maybe the time has come to ensure that each and every member of our lodges, chapters and many other Masonic Orders, know just how much they are valued. The more senior members in age have to be reassured that their knowledge, wisdom and experience are still precious and that they are needed to teach the younger members with that experience and guidance.

Our younger members must be made to realise that they are just as precious, as they really are the future of Masonry, but going into the future without experience and knowledge is dangerous for Freemasonry. Both the old and the young should be encouraged to communicate with each other and absorb each other's views and concerns. Above all they should share each other's visions of our great organisation.

With the advanced technology of today, a good number of brethren manage to keep in touch and in some cases establish the well-being of those that they contact, and it is refreshing to see that some masters of lodges, together with their secretaries and wardens have devised methods whereby all of the lodge members are contacted.

We don't often appreciate what we already have. Now is the time to tell each and every brother just how much he is appreciated and how vital he is to the success of the lodge and the future of Freemasonry.

