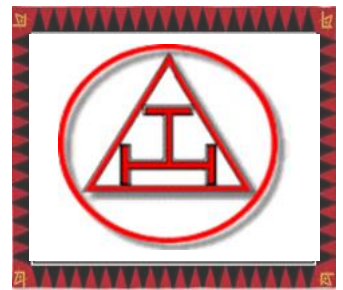




# WEST LANCS NUGGETS

“PROVINCIAL NEWS DIGEST”



**Issue 9 : 5 August 2020**

## PrGM fully supports every individual's choice

Two weeks ago, brethren in the Province received an email message from our Provincial Grand Master Tony Harrison. This followed the decision by The Grand Master not to extend the suspension of Masonic activities. Tony highlighted not only the guidelines and conditions that UGLE had provided for Masonic halls to re-open, but also the Provincial guidance resulting from the work of the Hall Support Group, ably led by Barry Jameson, to enable halls to open safely.

Whilst understanding fully members' desire to return to their lodges and chapters, Tony suggested: "Many of our brethren may not feel confident to return to Freemasonry until such time a vaccine against COVID-19 is available and I can fully understand the rationale of that decision". He stated categorically that the decision to return to regular attendance is for each individual to consider and that he would robustly defend their right to make that choice or not.

Therefore, brethren and companions, whatever decision you reach you can be assured that you will have the full support of our Provincial Grand Master.



## Rugby Lodge : the second to resume in England



Just days before lockdown and the general suspension, Paul Renton was installed as master of St Augustine's Lodge No 9018 as the West Lancashire Freemasons Rugby Club took over the running of the lodge for it to become the lodge for players, former players and fans of both codes of rugby.

On Saturday 18 July, the brethren of St Augustine's Lodge wasted no time in getting back to business and in doing so became the first lodge in West Lancashire (and the second lodge in England) to meet following the suspension. The master declared an emergency meeting and the lodge duly opened at 12:55pm (5 minutes before the scheduled start time). The meeting was held in the boardroom of the Provincial Office in Leyland and 15 brethren were present, all wearing face masks and observing appropriate social distancing.

Brethren had been asked to register online prior to the meeting, provide track-and-trace information as well as answer appropriate questions including if they had symptoms or had been exposed to anyone with the virus. All members were instructed that if they felt unwell, they must not attend.

No matter how well prepared you are there is always something that crops up. In this case it was prior to the meeting when one of the brethren had an issue with their car leading to some impromptu 'scrum practice' to push it up the hill by the office to a parking space. Given that this all took place during a heavy rain shower, everyone agreed it was just like being back at training – that is to say, the forwards doing all the heavy work and the backs trying to make sure their hair didn't get wet whilst trying to look good for the camera!

The meeting itself went very smoothly – if people were out of practice with the ritual it didn't show, and the master dealt with the business (some by-law changes) swiftly. The meeting closed at 1:10pm and the obligatory photograph taken. After the meeting it was decided that brethren would head to Preston Grasshoppers' 'Social Distance Inn' for a bite to eat, a drink or two and a good catch up.

For the number of people to turn up on a wet Saturday afternoon, some of whom had travelled for nearly 2 hours to be there, for a 15-minute meeting, showed the enthusiasm of the lodge members and highlighted a general desire to return to meeting as soon as possible.

All-in-all, a very successful and happy meeting!

## Communication and Publicity : Andy Whittle, APrGM

On 1 April this year I was appointed as an Assistant Provincial Grand Master for this wonderful Province of West Lancashire and as part of my responsibilities the Provincial Grand Master asked me to look after the Communication and Publicity Portfolio. As communication and publicity are two key areas for Freemasonry, both of which have become even more prevalent during the unprecedented times we are currently living through due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This brief article is designed to explain a little more about them.

**Communication** is often described as: 'The imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium' or simply the 'act of transferring information from one place, person or group to another'. Effective communication is about more than just exchanging information. It's about understanding the emotion and intentions behind the information. As well as being able to clearly convey a message, you need to also listen in a way that gains the full meaning of what's being said and makes the other person feel heard and understood. Effective communication sounds like it should be instinctive. But all too often, when we try to communicate with others something goes astray. We say one thing, the other person hears something else, and misunderstandings, frustration, and conflicts ensue.

During the current COVID-19 pandemic both the United Grand Lodge of England and the Province have been trying to communicate with our brethren in new and varied ways such as the First Rising and Nuggets newsletters, direct email communications with brethren, weekly Provincial office webinars, Zoom meetings etc. We understand that not all brethren will either like or use every communication channel but it is the need to maintain communication that is vital, be that at Grand Lodge, Provincial, group or lodge/chapter level.

As many forms of modern communication are online, United Grand Lodge of England has produced a member's Online Communications Toolkit which has been circulated widely but in case you have not had a chance to read it you can view it here <https://www.westlancsfreemasons.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/All-Groups-Online-Communications-Toolkit.pdf> This document gives really good advice on everything from the types of devices that can be used, staying safe online, keeping in touch etc.

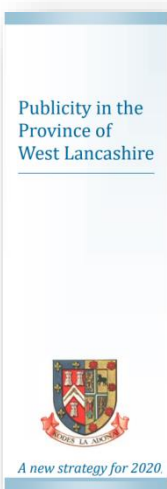
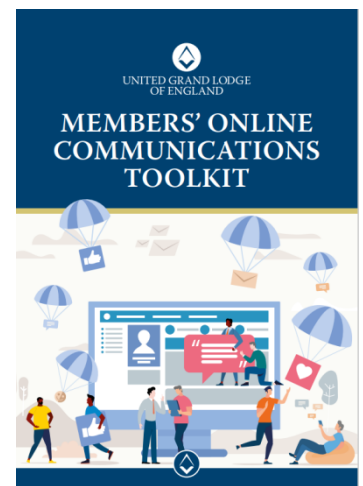
It has been good to see that many lodges/chapters have been quick to utilise varied ways of keeping in touch with their members using platforms such as Zoom, Skype, What's App etc. But we must remember that we have brethren who do not use these platforms or even email, so it is vitally important that we do not forget them and continue to use the traditional forms of communications such as letters and telephone calls. Ask yourself these simple questions – which members of my lodge/chapter have I not seen or spoken to in the last two weeks? If you have not seen or spoken to them has anybody else?

Although United Grand Lodge has now finished its suspension of Masonic meetings, we are still in what for many would be our summer recess. However, there will still be brethren/companions who do not feel that they want to attend physical meetings in the near future. It is therefore important that we all remember to keep in touch with each other by whatever means possible ensuring that we all maintain our interest in Freemasonry and look forward to the day when we can all be together in person at a lodge/chapter meeting.

**Publicity** is often described as: 'Material or information used for advertising or promotional purposes' or the 'public visibility or awareness for any organisation'. Therefore, when we talk about publicity as a Province, we are considering what others outside of our organisation know about us and also how they perceive or view us. As a Province we are constantly trying to publicise ourselves and or course the good things that we do for our local communities. To achieve this, the Province has a new publicity strategy for 2020, which was launched by our Provincial Grand Master towards the end of last year. This strategy has been circulated widely but in case you have not had a chance to read it you can view it here <https://www.westlancsfreemasons.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Publicity-strategy.pdf>

The strategy has five main pillars which are the world wide web, media, teamwork, community engagement and crisis management. Running through all publicity activities there are also certain golden threads which we hope will provide focus and direction.

On 1 April this year the Province launched its new website which is designed to be more public facing and reflecting all aspects of Freemasonry and I hope that you will have had a chance to look at the website and notice we are using the latest news section to publicly show the excellent work that members of this Province do for their local communities. I would say that this has certainly come to the fore during the COVID-19 pandemic and there have been some outstanding examples of members of this Province working hard for their local communities from providing



meals to the vulnerable, making and providing PPE, assistance to food banks, the Masonic Assistance Team, provision of IT equipment to disadvantaged children, support for young carers and the list goes on. Congratulations go to all who have taken part in this wonderful work and it has certainly enabled us to showcase the best in Freemasonry.

The communications and publicity team has also been undergoing a transition as we have been restructuring to meet the needs and the direction of UGLE and the Province in the coming years. We now have teams looking after the website, social media, press liaison and of course the group publicity officers. The new teams have been put together following our advert for interested brethren back in April and they have all started to work well.

The Province now has a social media presence on the following platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, and those brethren who use social media I am sure will have noticed an increased presence of these platforms.

To conclude brethren/companions, continue to keep up the good work in your local communities but remember to tell your local publicity officer so that he can write up a story and we can use it on our Provincial website and our social media platforms. Above all else, keep communicating with each other and remember that a simple telephone call can cheer up the day of a brother or companion.

Look after yourselves, your families and your loved ones. Keep Safe.

## Farewell Terry Hudson



Sadly, it was recently announce that Terry Hudson had passed to the Grand Lodge above. Below is a tribute to Terry by Malcolm Alexander, the scribe Ezra of Provincial Grand Stewards' Chapter of West Lancashire No 8516, which will no doubt be one of many to such a well known and valued companion and brother.

"It is with great sadness that I have to inform you that Terence (Terry) Hudson passed to the 'Celestial Grand Chapter above' on 28 July 2020.

Terry joined our chapter in 1983 becoming the scribe Ezra in 1987, an office he held for 4 years and finally becoming first principal of the chapter in 1993. Terry was an enthusiastic member of the chapter and attended the vast majority of the convocations until his health prevented him from attending on a regular basis in recent years.

Terry was very highly regarded by his many friends in Freemasonry. He served as an Assistant to the Grand Superintendent from 1993 to 2004 when he became the Second Provincial Grand Principal until 2007. In 2007 he became an Assistant Provincial Grand Master in the Craft, a position he held for a number of years. Terry was a very distinguished Freemason and gentleman, and may be well remembered by many for his witty after dinner speeches. Terry was also a member of many Orders in Freemasonry in which he raised to very high rank in them all.

Terry Hudson will be very sadly missed by all that knew him and our chapter in particular. Our thoughts should be for his wife Sonia and his family at this difficult time."

## Thoughts from another Province : Pandemic positives, from the candidate's perspective

With much trepidation we find ourselves once again able to meet and more importantly, bring new life into our lodges. As you'll no doubt have heard, there have been changes to the work we're allowed to do, especially that of the first degree ceremony. I'd like to explore the positives in this unique situation with you all.

Firstly, we should hope this is a once in a lifetime event for Freemasonry. For those candidates joining during this time, there's some dark humour in being a 'COVID Candidate' and something that makes their experience unique and a talking point for the future. Secondly, with the restrictions to the candidate preparation and floor work, it's an opportunity to make an extra effort to explore and discuss the allegory and symbolic nature of the initiation with them – give them more to reflect on than we usually give time for.

It's important we keep a sense of perspective too, remembering that our candidates know nothing of the 'usual' manner of initiation, so will know no different. They will however feel disappointed, should we allow ourselves to project any negative views onto what should be a most memorable occasion for them.

Finally, the very fact we can find a means to initiate new members during a pandemic, popular or not, demonstrates the strength of the chain - we're being tried and tested, but not broken.

With the permission of Nick Thomas, Provincial Membership Officer, Worcestershire

**Please keep your contributions coming via either *Stewart Cranage, Provincial Grand Mentor:***

[mentor@provinceofwestlancs.org](mailto:mentor@provinceofwestlancs.org) or ***Paul Renton, DepGSupt:*** [paul.renton21@btinternet.com](mailto:paul.renton21@btinternet.com)