



Week 49, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021

Brethren, week 49: "Pinch, punch, the first of the month", as we move into March and firmly at the start of the roadmap, to the end of lockdown. Although still many months off, Lodges should now be looking to start making plans for how they would wish to return, and their programme for the future - as hopefully the notices and advice, regarding restrictions starting to ease, will no doubt be soon upon us - don't get caught napping!....and how is that little blue book :) (or even where is it!!)

In this week's edition - for the future, read details of an important new initiative launched by our DPGM. From the past - the next instalment regarding the founding of Freemasonry in Worcestershire; and further afield, read the international celebrations for a worthy Brother on his 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Talking of anniversaries, we are 3 editions away from the time that Square News was launched ONE YEAR AGO! We shall be having a special celebratory edition for week 52, and if you have any articles you think appropriate, which look back over the last 12 months, please let the Ed know.

Keep strong, keep positive, take the vaccine and stay safe.

The Editor

## WBro Chris Firminger PAGDC

It is with extreme sadness and heavy heart, that we have to report the passing to the Grand Lodge above of the well loved and respected Freemason, Chris Firminger.

Chris, a Grand Officer and past Provincial Charity Steward, passed away late Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February, after recently being admitted to hospital.

A full obituary will be included in next week's edition.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Helen, children, and all his family.



## Freemasons in the Community



### A message from VW Bro Stephen J Wyer DPGM

Charity is one of the major pillars of freemasonry, and the brethren of the Province of Worcestershire have, over many years, been tireless in their endeavours on behalf of charity - particularly our provincial festivals of which we can all be very proud.

Whilst we generally receive a small amount of press interest for our charitable fundraising efforts, it is generally felt that the media, and general public, still do not really understand what freemasonry actually is - and what we do in our day to day meetings and our charity work. The UGLE CEO and Grand Secretary, Dr David Staples has recently started to address this, and efforts are now being made at the highest level within the Craft, to raise the profile of freemasonry across the board.

Rather than simply giving money, the aim of this new strategy is to generate **genuine community engagement**, by our members becoming more active and high profile in their local communities as Freemasons; actually supporting local charities, the emergency services and other community groups as the need arises from time to time - for example in times of natural disasters, flooding or searches for missing persons to name but a few. In other words, we should be seen to be **"doing"** rather than just **"giving"**. The Cubit Club clothes bank initiative in aid of the homeless, is one great example of just such engagement. This is an initiative which I and the whole provincial team wholeheartedly support.

As an initial first step, whilst freemasonry remains completely suspended, we invite your Lodge, during any regular online discussions which you may be having, to discuss ways in which we might take this community engagement forward. Thereafter, a small working group will consider all suggestions put forward, and I will head a small action team to progress it to implementation with your support. It may well be that partnership with other charitable organisations and community groups will aid us in this strategy, and this should be a consideration in your deliberations. I would hope that, with your support, we can progress these discussions during the next three months; with suggestions for projects being submitted to province by 1st May 2021, in order that we can move forward and implement a firm and sustainable strategy by 1st July 2021.

I have set out below, for information, an example of a similar charity project being run by a dedicated group of freemasons in the Province of Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire, actively supporting the homeless in their areas - with the support of business, partnerships, and members of the public, together with other organisations, which is high profile and performing a first class service to their community.

<https://www.northants-hunts-masons.org.uk/index.php/charity/the-3-pillars-feeding-the-homeless-trust>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/193804767739323/>

I do hope you feel that this is something which your Lodge and its members will feel able to support. We know that time is a precious commodity, but a little time spent by all of us, could collectively make a huge difference to our local community, and to the way in which Freemasonry is regarded within it.

Please send any contributions or suggestions to me at [SJW@Worcestershireppl.org.uk](mailto:SJW@Worcestershireppl.org.uk).

S&F, VWBro Stephen Wyer

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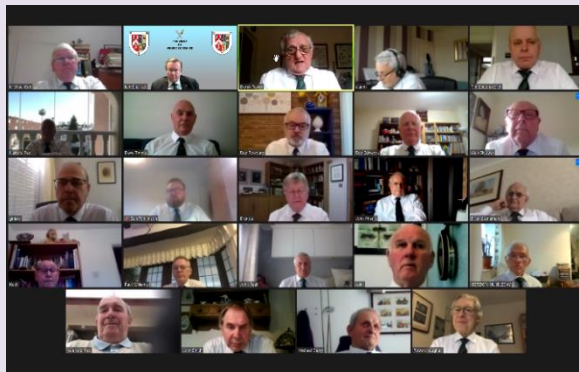


Page 1 of 2

## Zoom Across the Channel..!

WBro Harry Epsom, an Honorary Member of the Lodge of Fellowship No. 6707, was "virtually" presented with his Fifty Year Certificate, on 17th February 2021, by the PGM, RW Bro Robert Vaughan.

This was arranged via a Zoom meeting – exactly 50 years to the day, after Harry was Initiated. Harry has lived in Spain for some years, but often returns for the Lodge's Past Masters Night in January – his last visit being in January 2020, to join in the celebration of the Lodge's 500th Meeting.



Regrettably, the Coronavirus pandemic meant that his planned return to receive his 50th Certificate was not possible – hence the "Zoom across the Channel"!

Several members of the Lodge reflected on very happy times spent with Harry over many years, and he responded with some of his own reminiscences. We all offered our congratulations and "Toasted" him on this very special occasion.

The Zoom photograph shows WBro Harry, on his balcony in Spain, first on the left in the second row and the PGM on the right in the bottom row.

Article by Michael D Cox

## A Daily Advancement....

### The toast to Absent Brethren?

Did you know the first recorded reference, to the tradition of the "Nine O'clock Toast"....

Read more on this topic [HERE](#).



PGL of  
Worcestershire  
2022 Festival  
(E2022)  
donation

<https://gtap.uk/e2022>

## Square News Ambassadors...

We recognise that many brethren do not have the technology, or skills, to be able to electronically receive, download or print their copy of SN.

Why not become a SN Ambassador and do it for them? and keep in touch every week, by hand delivering (safely) a copy for them to read.

## The Development of Freemasonry in Worcestershire....

WBro Bill Mason continues with Part Two; The Province in the early years 1753 – 1756

*"I concluded Part one of this series of articles, with the appointment of Sir Robert de "Cornewall" as Provincial Grand Master in 1753 - but the question remains; who was he, and why was he appointed. I will try to explain".*

Robert was born in April 1700, the eldest surviving son of Vice Admiral Charles Cornewall and Dorothy Hanmer, and was baptised at Eye, Herefordshire, on 21st April 1700. He joined the army, becoming a Cornet in the 2nd Dragoon Guards in 1715. Cornet was originally the lowest grade of commissioned officer in a British cavalry troop, the modern equivalent being a second lieutenant. He was promoted to Lieutenant in 1717, but appears not to have risen above this rank - probably resigning his commission in 1718 on inheriting his father's estate at Berrington, Herefordshire. It is interesting to note that being born in 1700, he must have joined the army at a very young age to become a Cornet at the ripe old age of 15 years, and a Lieutenant at only 17 years of age.

Upon inheriting the Cornewall Estate from his father, he styled himself "Sir Robert de Cornewall", claiming that George I had promised his father a baronetcy (see note 1 below). In the General Election of 1734, 1738 and 1742, he stood as Member of Parliament for Leominster, each time being defeated by Robert Harley. In 1738 he became High Sherriff of Radnorshire; and he finally succeeded in his political ambition - when in 1747, he won the Leominster seat for the Whigs, until again defeat in 1754.

During his time as an MP, he was appointed Provincial Grand Master of the "Freemasons of the Western Shires", by John Proby, 1st Baron Caryfort in the County of Wicklow - a Whig politician, and at one time 1st Lord of the Admiralty.

Sir Robert died unmarried, on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1756, and was buried at Eye 13 days later. He died suddenly, having forecast his own demise and that of his cousin, General Henry Cornewall. They died within a few days of each other.

So much for his origins; what of his appointment? Unfortunately, we have virtually no knowledge of his Masonic qualifications, other than he was a Member of Grand Lodge. We know that he once attended the Premier Grand lodge, when Lord Carysfort, the Grand Master, who gave him his "deputation" was present. However we know nothing of his work in Worcestershire, if any - nor if he even visited the Three Horse Shoes at Leominster, which was less than ten miles from his country house. It is possible that the appointment was purely nominal, as befitted a titled Member of Parliament, and that Sir Robert's influence in his vast province was minimal, if not non-existent.

After his death in 1756, no other Grand Master was appointed until 1792 when John Dent MP was appointed in 1792 - a gap of 36 years. We shall hear more of him, and the subsequent years in our next edition!

*#1 - Sir Robert's father, Vice Admiral Charles Cornewall had been offered a baronetcy "in consideration of his services against the Barbary States" and for "saving lives of women and children", but it appears that he declined, on the grounds that he regarded the fee of honour as too expensive, and so the patent was never taken out. Evidently feeling cheated however, Robert ignored this and claimed the title after his father's death, entering it on his nomination form for the Parliamentary Borough of Leominster, which he represented at Westminster for seven years. Because it appears that the election night results were declared null and void on the grounds that no such person as the baronet existed, he appealed directly to King George II who, fortunately for him, recognised his title; otherwise he may never have become an MP. Even the 'de' part of 'de Cornewall' is no more than an affectation, being a medieval term of convenience.*



Berrington Hall,  
near Leominster

