



Second Rising

Issue 4, July 2026



Editorial

Connect

by Bro Stephen Frost

In January, this publication introduced the Five Ways to Wellbeing as the lens through which Second Rising would look at Freemasonry across Northumberland in 2026. In March, we turned to Give, and found charity expressed less in totals than in time, attention and presence. In May, we turned to Be Active, and found activity measured not in miles but in willingness to move.

This issue turns to Connect.

The word is familiar territory for Freemasons. We are, by design and by principle, a brotherhood. Connection is not something we add to Freemasonry: it is part of what Freemasonry is. And yet familiar territory can become invisible territory. The question worth asking is not whether we connect, but how, and whether we are doing it as well as we might.

Earlier this year I travelled to London for a Light Blues Communication hosted by Lodge Sine Nomine No. 10000 at Freemasons' Hall. It was my first visit to Grand Lodge, and I was not alone: the Northumberland Light Blues organised a delegation of more than thirty Brethren from the Province to attend. The day brought together Light Blues from Provinces across England, women Freemasons, and Scottish Freemasons, in a room presided over by Jonathan Spence, Pro Grand Master, the second most senior figure in English Freemasonry. Presentations covered the history and philosophy of the Craft, the Light Blues initiative, and the individual degrees from Entered Apprentice through to Companion. We then attended a live recording of the UGLE podcast Craftcast.

What struck me was not the grandeur of the building, though that was considerable. It was the ease of the conversation. A room full of people who had never met, from different Provinces, different traditions, in some cases different organisations entirely, finding common ground almost immediately because the foundations were already shared. The ritual, the principles, the reason for being there in the first place.

Connection does not require proximity. It requires common ground and the willingness to stand on it.

That theme runs through this issue in ways both deliberate and unplanned. A man runs four hundred miles and finds Freemasons turning out to support him at roadsides and car parks the length of England. A Brother walks a pilgrimage in Spain and discovers that strangers become companions within hours when you are moving in the same direction. A polo shirt starts a conversation at a beer festival that a formal recruitment drive never could.

The rest of the issue records what connection looks like when it is directed inward: the quiet work of almoners and visiting volunteers, fifty-year certificates and the Lodges that gather to mark them, a Brother who found the support he needed and wants others to know it is there.

Northumberland connects. This issue shows some of the ways it does.

The Power of Connection: The Road That Binds Us

by W Bro Sumer Sardag

When we think of our Five Ways theme, Connect sits close to the heart of it. For a Freemason, connection is not just a wellbeing practice; it is woven into the very fabric of our Craft. We are, at our core, a brotherhood, and fellowship is one of the defining principles of our institution.

It is not merely about being in the same room or sharing the same rituals. It is about building trust, understanding and mutual respect. In a world that can often feel fast-paced and disconnected, Masonic connection offers something different: a space where every voice is heard, every experience is valued, and every member is accepted for who he is. We learn that strength is found not in standing apart, but in standing together, supporting one another through success and difficulty alike.

But what does it really mean to connect as Masons?

It means being there for one another through all of life's seasons. It means offering a shoulder to lean on, having the freedom to cry together, and the joy of laughing together. It is a unique bond that reminds us that no Brother should ever have to walk his path alone.

Expanding Our Horizons

A vital part of keeping this brotherhood alive and vibrant is the tradition of visiting other Lodges. When we travel to meet Brethren in the wider community, we are not simply spectators. We are expanding our Masonic family.

Every visit is an opportunity to make new friends, share ideas, support other Lodges, and remind ourselves that we are part of something much larger than our own four walls. It teaches us that while we may meet in different places and work through different ceremonies, we are all bound by the same principles and the same desire to grow and serve. It keeps us inspired, engaged, and moving forward together.

Looking Out for Our Own

True connection, however, shines brightest when it is directed towards those who need it most. Checking in on our older or more vulnerable Brethren is one of the quiet duties of fellowship. A simple phone call, a quick visit, or an invitation to a meeting shows them they are cared for, supported, and never forgotten.

It reinforces the promise that once you are a Mason, you are always part of this great family, no matter how much time passes or how far apart we may be. Our doors are always open, and our hearts should always be ready to welcome a Brother back into the fold.

The Joy of the Festive Board

And, of course, where is this connection celebrated more vibrantly than at the Festive Board? This is where the formal gives way to the familiar. It is where we come together to enjoy each other's company, share a meal, tell jokes, and make speeches. Through the toasts we raise and the praise we offer one another, we cement the bonds forged upstairs in the Lodge room.

These moments of shared joy and friendship are just as important as the formal ceremonies we hold. They remind us that while we work to improve ourselves and our community through our principles, we should also enjoy each other's company, celebrate our achievements, and find happiness in our shared bond.

The Decision to Connect

Connection matters because it is often the spark that lights the Masonic fire. Theodore Roosevelt is often credited with saying:

"In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing."

In Freemasonry, making the choice to actively connect, whether by visiting a new Lodge, reaching out to a Brother we have not seen in a while, or simply staying behind for a chat at the Festive Board, is always the right thing. When we take that action, the path of true fellowship opens up before us and the rest naturally follows.

So, Brethren, let us keep walking the way together. Let us stay connected. Let us nurture the bonds we share, lift one another up, and ensure that this great brotherhood continues to thrive for generations to come. For in our unity, we find our strength; in our connection, we find our purpose.

Four Hundred Miles, One Purpose

The Temple Run: June 2026

On the morning of 1 June, Guy Smith left Lansdowne Terrace in Gosforth and started walking south. His destination was Freemasons' Hall in London, 400 miles away, with ten days to get there.

What followed was not quite what anyone had planned. It rarely is with ultramarathons, and that, as Guy would be the first to tell you, is precisely the point.

The first two hundred miles went well enough. Then the weather closed in on the North Yorkshire moors, forcing him to push harder to make up lost time. The extra effort took its toll. By the time he reached Market Rasen in Lincolnshire, he had a stress fracture in his left shin, broken toes, and a support team urging him to stop. A local cyclist offered what he described as a guaranteed cure: udder oil, normally used on suckling pigs. It did not work. The car smelled extraordinary for several days.

At the hospital in Lincolnshire, the nurse was direct. Stop. That is the only thing that will fix this. Guy and Teri both burst into tears. Neither of them intended to stop.

What he told the support team was that the doctor had advised 24 hours' rest. What he neglected to mention was that she had said 48. He spent the time icing his shin in a supermarket car park, sleeping in





the car as usual, and thinking. Hobbling to London was still technically possible. He would miss the Quarterly Communication, but he would get there eventually. And then someone suggested a bike.

Guy would not recommend the medical decision-making. The determination behind it, however, was never in doubt.

The Freemasons of Lincolnshire did not hesitate. They found him a bicycle, lights, helmet and everything else he needed, and sent him on his way. Guy had not ridden a bike in twenty years. The bike was the wrong size. Pushing with his heel to protect his shin meant the wheel caught his foot every time he turned. He fell off twice. The pedal took a piece out of his shin. He got back on both times.

The last 120 miles, unable to sit on the saddle, he rode leaning almost entirely on his hands. Freemasons from Leicestershire met him at the roadside and took him to Halfords for padded gloves and whatever else might make it bearable. Under the Humber

Bridge, deep in the night, a group from Lincolnshire had been waiting for him in the dark for hours. He initially mistook them for people about to steal the support vehicle.

By the time he reached London, the watch read 407 miles. His own reckoning, accounting for wrong turns, came to 429. He had taken 2,555,000 steps, roughly half of them on a bicycle he had never ridden before. Every part of his body hurt except, as Graeme Butterfield noted on the podcast, his eyelashes.

At Freemasons' Hall, a private meeting had been arranged with Jonathan Spence, the Pro Grand Master. Guy had not expected that. He had certainly not expected to be called up during the Quarterly Communication itself, led through the building by the DC, and publicly acknowledged in front of Freemasons gathered from across the country. He had also not expected to be told he could wear his running kit with an apron over the top, only to be told he definitely could not, only for the Pro Grand Master himself to look down at his swollen feet and ask who on earth had told him he had to wear shoes. Guy went back to his trainers. He said he would be checking.

Sitting in the front row, directly beside Guy, was his father Colin, who turns 90 in July and has just received his own 50-year Masonic certificate. He had not booked a seat. A past Provincial Grand Master of Durham, John Paul Thompson, who had walked sections of the route with Guy through his own Province, quietly sorted it. When Guy's name was called and he was led to the front, Colin was in tears. The person sitting directly behind him was too.

What the run raised for The Freemasons' Charity and the Northumberland 2031 Festival will be announced once all donations have been counted. The total is significant. Donations are still being accepted via the links page at the end of this issue.

Guy is already planning the next one. For the full story in his own words, find the Squarely Speaking episode on the Northumberland Freemasons podcast via the links page at the end of this issue.



Buen Camino

The Camino Inglés: Spring 2026



What started as an idea became a challenge, then a goal, and finally a reality: 75 miles on foot through northern Spain, raising funds for Médecins Sans Frontières.

The physical side could be prepared for. Training walks, route planning, fundraising. What could not be prepared for was the people.

The Camino Inglés follows Spain's Atlantic coast through Galicia: coastal paths, eucalyptus forests, quiet villages, ancient churches and rolling hills. The weather was unexpectedly kind throughout, the only sounds on many stretches the birds, the distant crow of cockerels and the bells of grazing animals. What begins as a collection of strangers walking in the same direction becomes, over several days, something harder to define.

Conversations start naturally when you are side by side with someone for hours at a time. Backgrounds, stories, reasons for being there. People walked for reflection, for adventure, for personal challenge, or simply because they felt drawn to the trail. Fellow pilgrims from Argentina, Brazil, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal and beyond. One afternoon, after stopping for a cold *tinto de verano*, an impromptu chorus of Italian songs broke out among people who had known each other for a matter of hours. Moments like that cannot be planned.

Not everything went smoothly. A Camino sign hidden behind a bush led to two miles in the wrong direction before a local resident intervened with some urgency. A favourite shirt, strapped to the outside of a backpack to dry in the sunshine, was left somewhere on the trail. A cap disappeared from a water fountain. The number of caps seen hanging from signs and fences along the route suggests this is not unusual.

The longest day covered 17 miles and ended in Sigüeiro. From there, Santiago de Compostela felt close for the first time. The final approach brought the old town into view, the cathedral ahead and, somewhat unexpectedly, the golden arches of a McDonald's. After days of early starts and long miles, it was, by all accounts, the finest meal in Spain.

Standing in front of the cathedral at journey's end, the destination mattered less than everything that had led to it. Simple conversations. Shared effort. The kindness of strangers who were strangers only briefly.

Buen Camino.

The Shirt Does the Work



On a Saturday afternoon at Ponteland Beer Festival, a member of Saint Nicholas Lodge was standing at the bar wearing a Northumberland Freemasons polo shirt. A stranger approached him and asked a question that Freemasonry has struggled to answer for generations: I thought you were supposed to be secretive about all this?

That conversation led to another, and another. The man had been curious about Freemasonry for some time but had not known how to go about finding out more. He wondered, among other things, whether he could join as a Sikh. His questions were answered. Contact details were exchanged. A meeting was arranged.

A few weeks later, Saint Nicholas Lodge hosted one of its Gosforth High Street sojourns, a roving afternoon that works its way between venues with donations to Teddies for Loving Care as the only entry requirement. Again, the polo shirts were visible. Again, they opened doors. A Brother attending who was not a member of the Royal Arch spent the afternoon in conversation and left having asked to be proposed for Oriental Chapter.

The afternoon raised £345 for TLC. It may also have gained the Craft a new member and the Chapter a new Companion. The next sojourn is planned for 29 December in Ouseburn.

None of this happened because of a leaflet, a website, or a formal recruitment drive. It happened because people were visible, approachable, and willing to have a conversation. The shirt, as it turns out, does a great deal of the work.



Fifty Years of Quiet Service

W Bro Norman West, PJGD



Norman West's father was initiated into Freemasonry in Detroit in the 1930s, while working in the United States. He came home, and in 1944 joined Holy Cross Lodge No. 3679 in Wallsend alongside his brother. Norman followed him in, initiated on 4 April 1976. Fifty years later, almost to the day, he sat in the same Lodge while a past Provincial Grand Master read out a certificate bearing the signature of the current one.

The occasion called for a speech. What it got was something closer to a reckoning.

Ian Craigs, who presented the certificate, has known Norman a long time. He covered the Lodge offices held across five decades, the 32 years as Lodge Secretary, the decade as a director of Wallsend Masonic Hall and twelve years as its chairman, the Provincial appointments building steadily from 1997 onwards. He covered the Grand Ranks: PAGDC in 2011, PJGD in 2020. He covered the Order of Mercy, awarded in 2021 for Norman's work with the Richard Henry Holmes Masonic Benevolent Fund. He covered the MCF

advisory roles: specialist adviser for home adaptations since 2023, sitting on the MCF Advisory Panel, and from 2026 the Province's representative on the new Community Fund.

He also said that Norman's charity work in the Province is second to none, and that the previous Festival would not have been as good as it was without him. That Norman, working alongside the Provincial Charity Steward, had spent years going round Lodges explaining what the Province does with the money it raises, and why it matters. That his work had brought an average of £500,000 into the Province over the years as Provincial Almoner, a role he has held since 2007 and still holds today, with further sums directed toward the residential fees at Scarborough Court on top of that figure. That the Provincial Almoner does not push himself forward. He works behind the scenes. He gets involved in the cases. He meets people whose names are never mentioned, in circumstances that are never disclosed, and he makes a difference that is rarely visible to anyone else.

At the end of the formal proceedings, a Brother asked to speak.

Gavin Wales had been in the Lodge room that evening. He wanted to say thank you. In October 2023, he had been in a very bad way. Norman came to see him, and kept coming. Not just in scheduled visits, but in calls at random times, day and night, checking that he was all right and that he was safe. Many hours of conversation followed. After counselling, Gavin has made a full recovery.

He has given his permission for that to be said here, and asked that his name be used. He has spoken openly about his mental health before, and his reasoning is straightforward. If somebody reads this and asks for help, his words will have been a success. He wants people to understand that they are not alone, that problems can be worked through, and that life can improve. It takes courage, patience, and the right support. And talking about it, he says, is not something to be ashamed of. For him, it is a relief.

Norman West has been a Freemason for fifty years. He has held more offices, filled more roles, and supported more people than most will ever know. The certificate is a small token for someone who has done a very large amount of work. The Lodge saluted him with three.

The Visit That Makes the Difference

W Bro Jeff Gibbs PProvSGW, MCF Visiting Volunteer

Before the Masonic Charitable Foundation came into being in 2016, a Brother in difficulty would typically be visited by his Lodge Almoner or Secretary, who would fill in the relevant forms by hand. The answers were often illegible. The grants team in London struggled. The system worked, after a fashion, but it was not good enough.

When the MCF was established, one of its early decisions was that this had to change. Lodge Almoners could not be expected to complete complex application forms. What was needed instead was a cadre of trained, DBS-vetted visitors who could sit with a Brother in need, listen without judgement, and gather the information the grants team required in a way that was accurate, sensitive and consistent. There was also a more human reason. It is very hard for someone to put their hand up and ask for help. It is harder still when the person they are asking is a fellow Lodge member. A Visiting Volunteer, independent of the Lodge, removes that barrier.

The idea was announced at a Lodge Almoners meeting in March of that year. Four or five members expressed interest. One of them was Jeff Gibbs.

Jeff completed the first training course, obtained his DBS certificate, and took on his first commission within a matter of weeks. He has not stopped since. When the grants team in London or the Provincial



Almoner asks whether Jeff can go and see a Brother, the answer is always yes. The only exception is when he is on one of his many holidays to Spain.

The Province now has three trained and DBS-checked Visiting Volunteers: Jeff Gibbs, Trevor Fish and the Provincial Almoner himself. All three have completed initial training and refresher courses. The DBS check is not a formality: Visiting Volunteers sometimes work with vulnerable individuals and young people, and the standard has to be right.

Jeff's recent promotion from Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden to Past Provincial Senior Grand Warden is recognition of nearly a decade of that commitment. He brings a kind and patient approach to every visit, completes the forms to a high standard, and knows MCF policy in depth. The work is quiet, private, and largely invisible. That is exactly how it should be.

Fifty Years

Fifty Years, Nine Chairs, Twenty-Three Times

W Bro John Tomlin PJGD



When David Armstrong sat down to write a tribute for John Tomlin's 50-year certificate, he ran into a problem most speakers never face. The usual sources for background, Adelphi for the Craft and Royal Arch, Keystone Online for the other Orders, normally yield half a page and a couple more. For John, Adelphi alone ran to two pages. Keystone Online ran to fifteen. And that did not include two further Orders David knew John belonged to.

John was initiated into Morpeth Lodge on 2 March 1976, passed three months later, and raised that November. He became Master in 1989 and has served as Secretary on three separate occasions. He went on to join five further Craft Lodges over the following decades, including Post Horn Lodge, Northumbrian Masters, John Stephenson Lecture Lodge, where he became Master in 2009, and Viking Lodge, where he became Master again in 2021, sixty years after first being initiated.

Across the Craft and the Royal Arch alone, John has occupied nine different chairs on twenty-three separate occasions. He received Provincial Grand Rank in 1997 and Grand Rank in 2006, promoted to Past Junior Grand Deacon in 2018. In the Royal Arch, exalted in 1979, he became Most Excellent Zerubbabel on three occasions across two different Chapters, and went on to hold Provincial and Grand Rank there too.

Beyond the Craft and Chapter, John is a member of eight Orders governed by Mark Masons' Hall, and has previously belonged to a ninth. Across his Masonic life he has belonged to six Craft Lodges, three Chapters, four Mark Lodges, four Royal Ark Mariner Lodges, four Knights Templar Preceptories, two Orders of the Secret Monitor, three Red Cross of Constantine groups and three Royal and Select Masters Councils, alongside the Knights Beneficent of the Holy City, the Commemorative Masonic Order of Athelstan, the Royal Order of Scotland and the Rose Croix.

He holds Grand Officer rank, or its equivalent, in nine separate Orders. In Athelstan, he was held in such regard that he was appointed a Grand Lodge Officer without passing through the chair at all. He currently serves as Deputy in both the Royal and Select Masters and the Red Cross of Constantine, having been promoted there after already receiving Grand Rank, and holds the rank of Very Worshipful Master in the Mark Degree, the Red Cross of Constantine and the Royal and Select Masters.

The presentation took place on Saturday 25 April 2026 at Morpeth, with the Brethren afterwards dining at Morpeth Golf Club. David Armstrong, presenting the certificate, said he found it hard to know where to start in acknowledging a journey of that length and breadth. In the end, he said, the only way to do it justice was to speak from the heart, for a very good friend.

110 Years of Service | Carliol Lodge No. 5419

On Wednesday 17 June, the Provincial Grand Master, RW Bro Kevin Stannard, attended Carliol Lodge to pay tribute to two Brethren who, between them, had clocked up 110 years of dedicated service to Freemasonry.

W Bro Stan Scowen PProvSGW was initiated into Carliol Lodge sixty years ago, on 15 June 1966. He served as Master in 1981, and again in 2005 and 2010. Honoured in 1990 with appointment to Past Provincial Senior Grand Deacon, the highest first rank appointment attainable, he was subsequently promoted three times in Provincial Grand Lodge, most recently to Past Provincial Senior Grand Warden on the occasion of his 50th anniversary in 2016. He has also given more than fifty years of service to Royal Arch Masonry as a member of Carliol Royal Arch Chapter, having been exalted in January 1974.



Exactly ten years after Stan was initiated, on 16 June 1976, W Bro Ian Matthews was initiated into the same Lodge. He served as Master in 1999, then again in 2002, 2007 and most recently in 2022, and passed through the chairs at Legion Lodge in 2013 and White Friars' Lodge in 2019, joining both to offer support during periods of reduced membership.

First appointed Past Provincial Deputy Grand Registrar in 2007, Ian served as Provincial Senior Grand Warden in 2011, before appointment in Grand Lodge to Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies in 2015. A Royal Arch Companion of 26 years standing, he holds Supreme Grand Chapter rank as Past Grand Standard Bearer, following service as Provincial Third Grand Principal in 2015. He is also a strong supporter of the Companion Masonic Orders, particularly the Royal Kent units with such deep roots in the Province's history, holding office across the Rose Croix, the Knights Templar, the Grand College of Knight Templar Priests and the Red Cross of Constantine.

Congratulating Ian on a remarkable Masonic career, the Provincial Grand Master said he looked forward to seeing him emulate Stan with the award of a 60-year certificate in 2036.



A Lodge Renewed | Prudhoe Castle Lodge No. 7065

The Installation meeting of Prudhoe Castle Lodge No. 7065 marked two occasions at once. W Bro Jeff Hird was installed as Worshipful Master, and W Bro Bill Dunn received his 50-year certificate.

Bill's achievement carries an additional footnote. This was his fifth consecutive year serving as Senior Warden, a record of patience and loyalty to a Lodge that has seen its share of difficulty in recent years. A Lodge that installs a new Master and marks fifty years of service in the same evening is a Lodge that is moving forward.



A Century Between Two | Bedlington Lodge

At a recent meeting of Bedlington Lodge, two Brothers received their 50-year certificates together: W Bro Joe Butters and Bro Ken Beatie. One hundred years of combined service to the Craft, marked in a single evening.



Two Lives in the Craft | Perfect Ashlar Lodge No. 7986

Perfect Ashlar Lodge No. 7986 marked a double milestone at a recent meeting, with 50-year certificates presented to W Bro David Gray and W Bro Ian Hudson, both of whom have given long service to the Lodge and to the Province.

Sixty Years and Thirty-Five Minutes | Coquetdale Lodge No. 5122

W Bro William Thompson Bathgate PPSGW received his 60-year certificate at a recent meeting of Coquetdale Lodge No. 5122. When it came to the toast in his honour, he was on his feet within seconds. His reply lasted thirty-five minutes.

The cake was excellent.



Sixty Years, and Still Reading the Words

W Bro Kenneth Falconer Hall, Shiremoor Lodge

Ken Hall received his 60-year certificate from Assistant Provincial Grand Master Chris Ainsley at a recent meeting of Shiremoor Lodge. The list of offices Ken has held across six decades was, by Chris's own admission, too long to read out in full. That alone says something about the contribution behind it.

Ken was born in North Shields in 1941. At eighteen he joined the Merchant Navy as a marine engineer, circumnavigating the globe several times. He joined Freemasonry at twenty-one, though his voyages meant it took three years before he became a Master Mason.

What he spoke about in his after-dinner speech was the ritual itself, and what sixty years of returning to the same words had given him. Read it once, he said, and it teaches you the words. Read it again, years later, and it teaches you something else entirely, because you are not the same person reading it. Sixty years on, Ken is still finding new meaning in the same lines.

It was, those present say, a genuinely moving evening.



In Memoriam

Bro Frank Surtees, The St Anthony's Lodge No. 4423



Bro Frank Surtees passed to the Grand Lodge Above on 15 June, shortly after celebrating his 100th birthday. We share this with his family's permission.

Frank's birthday was marked at Scarborough Court, where W Bro Nick Deakin, Provincial Grand Secretary, represented the Provincial Grand Master to present Frank with an apron and collar marking his field promotion to PProvGPurs, following the presentation of his 60-year certificate by the PGM earlier in the year. The Worshipful Master of The St Anthony's Lodge No. 4423, W Bro J Celino, presented Frank with a card from the Lodge and raised a toast in his honour.

An extraordinary meeting had been planned for July, at which Frank would have been formally presented to the Lodge in his regalia. The Lodge's thoughts are with Frank's family at this time.

How We Give

Northumberland Freemasons support good causes in several distinct ways. Understanding the difference between them matters.

The Richard Henry Holmes Masonic Benevolent Fund distributes grant income from invested bequests. No fundraising is involved: the Trust exists to steward what was left to it and distribute it carefully to local causes. Lodges give from their own funds, making their own decisions about where that money goes. The Festival 2031 and The Freemasons' Charity represent the Province's structured fundraising effort. And Teddies for Loving Care is something different again: not a recipient of Masonic generosity but a Masonic charity in its own right, run by Freemasons and supported by Northumberland through active fundraising.

The Trust That Gives from What Was Left

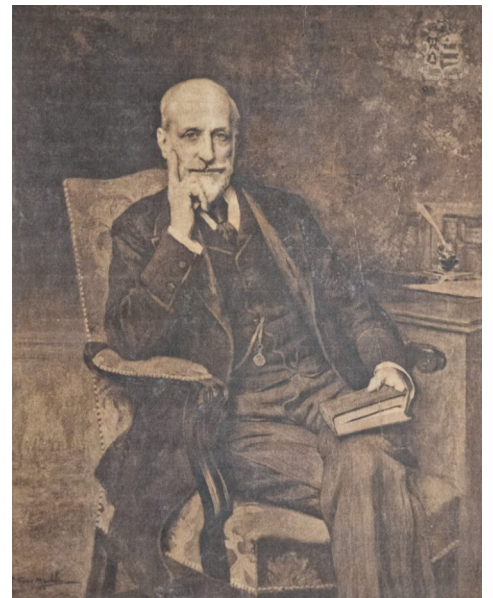
The Richard Henry Holmes Masonic Benevolent Fund

Not all charitable giving starts with a fundraising event or a donation form. Some of it starts with a bequest.

The Richard Henry Holmes Masonic Benevolent Fund is a charitable trust administered by Northumberland Freemasons. The capital in the fund was left by benefactors over the years, and is professionally invested. The Trustees do not run fundraising campaigns. They steward what was entrusted to them, and distribute the income it generates.

On average, that amounts to around £160,000 per year.

The Trustees meet twice a year, in March and October, to consider applications. These can come from almost any source. Some are small: a community group running a warm hub and soup kitchen for elderly people in winter, needing a modest donation or a piece of kitchen equipment. Others are larger, supporting local community



projects for young people, sports teams, Scouts and Guide groups, groups for disabled people, or other causes the Trustees judge to be making good use of the money.

Every application is different and is looked at individually. The Trustees have full discretion and apply no fixed formula. What they look for is simple: would this money make a real difference, and would it be well used?

When the opportunity exists, the Trust likes to make its support visible: a logo on a piece of kit, on the back of a football shirt, on a team top. It is a small thing, but it is a reminder that the support came from somewhere, and that it came from here.

Four examples of Lodge giving from recent months illustrate what that looks like in practice.

A Paddle and a Lodge Behind It

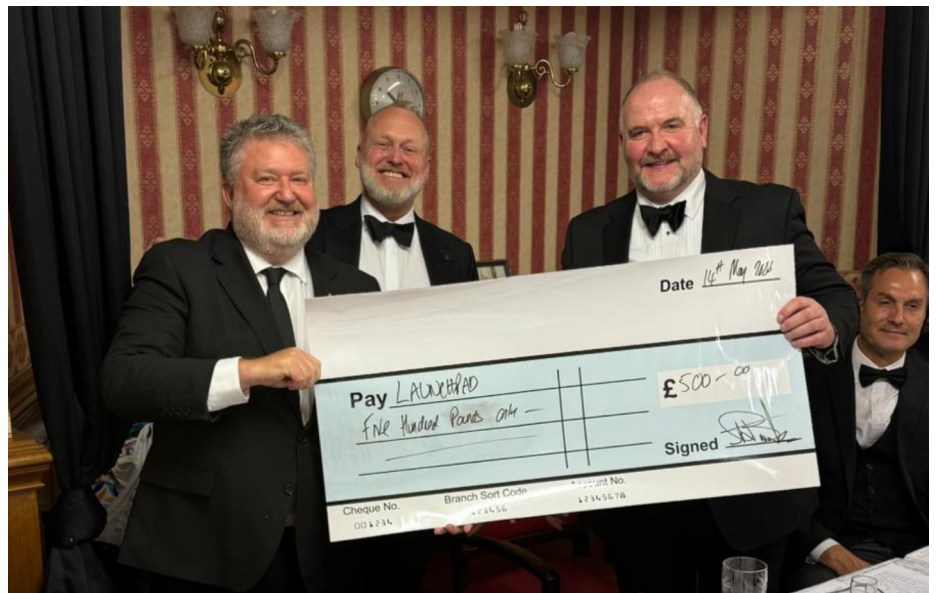
Earlier this year, a Brother kayaked the length of the Caledonian Canal for his local Scout district, raising just under £3,000. Sport England had offered to match fund the total, but the threshold was £1,325 and the fundraising had fallen short. St Alban Lodge No. 5322 called an emergency Founders and Past Masters meeting, agreed to top up the shortfall with £1,000 from Lodge funds, and the match funding was secured.

The kayak was one man's effort. The result was a collective one.

Veterans Helping Veterans

Ocianus Lodge No. 8329 chose to donate the proceeds of its Installation raffle to Launchpad, a local veterans' charity. The £500 cheque was presented by the Worshipful Master, himself a former Royal Marine, alongside the Deputy Provincial Membership Officer, also a veteran.

Launchpad intends to use the money to begin setting up an IT suite, giving veterans access to



training courses, education opportunities and job coaching support. Getting a veteran off the street, as Launchpad put it, can be the easier part. What comes next is the harder question. Education and training are key to answering it.

Supporting Young People in Ponteland

Members of Ocianus Lodge No. 8329 also visited 4th Ponteland Guides to present a further £500 donation, supporting the group's annual programme of camps, activities and community work in Ponteland. The cheque was received by the Guide leaders, Lucinda, Sarah and Amanda.

Two donations from one Lodge, to two very different causes, both chosen by the Lodge itself.

Red Squirrels in Coquetdale



A grant of £2,300 from Northumberland Freemasons has gone to the Upper Coquetdale Red Squirrel Group, supporting supplementary feeding stations and population monitoring for one of the region's most threatened native species. The red squirrel population in Northumberland is one of the last strongholds in England, and the Group's work in maintaining it is both practical and locally significant.

Brethren interested in visiting the Hepple Estate and Gin Distillery on 22 August to see the work in person should contact W Bro Robin Murray to register their interest.

Red Squirrels: Get Involved

Following the recent grant to the Upper Coquetdale Red Squirrel Group, there is now a direct way for Brethren to get hands-on with the project itself.

The Group monitors red squirrel activity through a network of cameras, and individual cameras can be allocated to volunteers willing to check in on the footage and report what they see. No special equipment is needed beyond a smartphone and the free UBox app. Reports do not need to be daily; once a week is enough, noting whatever has passed in front of the camera, whether that is a red squirrel, a deer, or a passing bird.

To take part, download the UBox app, set up a login, and email Ian at northumberlandreds@gmail.com with your details. Ian will allocate you a camera and get you started.

It is a small commitment with a genuine purpose: helping protect one of Northumberland's last strongholds for a threatened native species, one weekly report at a time.



Giving Children the Best Start

Children North East and the Play and Inclusion Project



A grant of £54,000 from The Freemasons' Charity has been awarded to Children North East in support of its Play and Inclusion Project, which provides 12-week group support programmes for children under five with special educational needs and disabilities, and their families.

The project operates in some of Newcastle's most deprived areas and supports around 140 children and their families each year. For many of those families, the programme provides not only practical support for their child's development but also connection with other parents navigating similar experiences.

This grant comes through The Freemasons' Charity rather than Lodge funds or the RHH Trust, and reflects the national reach of what the MCF is able to do with the money raised through Festivals like the one Northumberland has just launched.



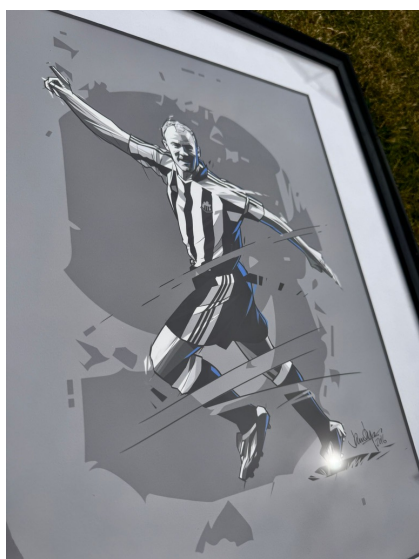
The Gavel and the Sceptre

Two items will begin travelling around the Province in September, moving between Lodges and Chapters at least once a month.

The Travelling Gavel will move between Craft Lodges. The Travelling Sceptre will move between Royal Arch Chapters. Both work on the same principle: to claim either item, a Lodge or Chapter makes a qualifying donation to the Northumberland 2031 Festival. The item then travels to them, moves on to the next claimant the following month, and the cycle continues.

If your Lodge or Chapter would like to be the first to receive the Gavel or the Sceptre, get in touch with the Festival team now. Links at the end of this issue.

Art for the Festival | Silent Auction: Newcastle Legends



Two original framed artworks are currently under the hammer in support of Festival 2031.

Both pieces are by John Dyer of Windle Creative and depict figures who need no introduction to anyone in the North East: Kevin Keegan and Alan Shearer. The works have been donated specifically in support of the Festival, and the auction closes on 31 August 2026.

Bidding is already under way. Links at the end of this issue.



Northumberland Light Blues News



Annual General Meeting

The Northumberland Light Blues AGM will be taking place shortly. All Light Blues are welcome. Links at the end of this issue. Keep an eye on socials etc. for details.

Curry Night

The NLB Curry Night takes place on Monday 6 July at Char Masum, Station Road, Stannington. Tickets are £30 per person and the evening is open to partners, friends and family. There will be a raffle on the night. Links at the end of this issue.

Widows Sons: Issue 18 Out Now

The latest issue of Son, the Widows Sons Masonic Bikers Association newsletter, is out now. Link at the end of this issue.

The Widows Sons is an international riders' association open to Master Masons in good standing who share a passion for motorcycling, combining the open road with raising the profile of Freemasonry and supporting local and national charities.

Tell Your Story: The PGLN Communications Hub



Every issue of Second Rising starts with the same problem: finding out what is happening across a Province of more than 2,500 members spread across dozens of Lodges, Chapters and Side Orders.

The stories in this issue came through personal contacts, direct submissions and a fair amount of chasing. Some good stories almost certainly did not make it because nobody knew where to send them.

The PGLN Communications Hub changes that. It is now live, and it is the single point of contact for anything you would like to share with the Provincial Communications Team: news, photographs, event details, Lodge milestones, community activity, or anything else that reflects what Freemasonry in Northumberland looks like in practice.

You do not need to write a polished article. A few lines and a photograph is enough to work with. The Hub exists precisely so that the people who know what is happening do not have to work out who to tell.

If something is happening in your Lodge or Chapter, use it. Links at the end of this issue.

Squarely Speaking: More to Come

The first episode of Squarely Speaking landed to a strong response. Feedback has been almost entirely positive, with the one recurring comment being that people wanted more of it: Tony Harvey's conversation, by general agreement, could easily have run longer. He may well be invited back.

Following that launch, three further episodes are already recorded and ready to go. Paul Winship spoke about the Northumberland 2031 Festival, the thinking behind a five-year structured giving programme and what it means for Brethren across the Province. The Provincial Grand Master and John Bruce, who also carries responsibility for the Festival, recorded a conversation last weekend. And Guy Smith, fresh off the back of the Temple Run, will be next.

Keep an eye on Provincial channels and the Squarely Speaking YouTube channel for release dates. Links at the end of this issue.



Portal: Now at 54%

More than half of the Province's membership is now registered on Portal, the UGLE membership system being rolled out nationally across England and Wales.

Portal is no longer just a personal membership record. Lodge Secretaries and Chapter Scribe Es can now amend member contact details directly through the system, and further functionality for Treasurers and Lodge administration is on the way. Lodge Returns and Registration Forms are coming to Portal soon.

The Learning and Development Team has recently delivered training by webinar, allowing Secretaries and Scribe Es to take part from their own homes rather than travelling to a separate venue. Further webinars are being arranged. Watch your email for details, or contact portal@pgln.org.uk with any questions. Links at the end of this issue.

Freemasons' National Service of Remembrance

Saturday 31 October 2026 | National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

The Freemasons' National Service of Remembrance takes place this year at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, hosted by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Derbyshire.

The annual service brings together Freemasons, families and friends from across the country to honour members of the Armed Forces and those who have served, reflecting Freemasonry's continuing commitment to remembrance, service and the Armed Forces Covenant.

Arrangements for this year's event are now well under way. The venue has been booked, the band and bugler are confirmed, and the Service and Act of Remembrance are being prepared. The arrangements for wreaths have also been circulated, with the Widows Sons Masonic Bikers Association supporting the supply of wreaths this year.

Attendance is free, but booking is requested so that numbers can be managed. Dining can also be booked in advance, with payment required at the time of booking. Dining places are limited, and the event is expected to be well attended, so early booking is strongly encouraged. The on-site cafeteria will also be available.

Car parking at the National Memorial Arboretum is £8 on the day, or £5 if pre-booked.

The event is open to all Freemasons, families and friends. Links at the end of this issue.

Upcoming Events

NLB Annual General Meeting

Date TBC

Location TBC

NLB Curry Night

Monday 6 July 2026

Char Masum, Station Road, Stannington, £30 per person

Red Squirrel Visit, Hepple Estate and Gin Distillery

Saturday 22 August 2026

Contact W Bro Robin Murray to register interest

NE1 Newcastle Dragon Boat Race

Saturday 26 September 2026

Newcastle Quayside, between the Tyne and Millennium Bridges

In support of the Sir Bobby Robson Foundation and Festival 2031

Freemasons' National Service of Remembrance

Saturday 31 October 2026

National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

Hosted by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Derbyshire

Attendance free, booking requested. Dining available by advance booking.

As We Go Into Recess

A message from the Provincial Communications Team

As we enter the summer recess, the Provincial Communications Team would like to wish all Brethren and their families a happy, healthy, and enjoyable break.

While our Lodges may temporarily fall silent, we know that many of you will be hard at work maintaining the highest standards of Freemasonry, whether that's perfecting your barbecue technique, explaining to neighbours that no, we don't run the world, or finally completing those household jobs that somehow appeared the moment the last meeting ended.

Please take the opportunity to relax, spend time with loved ones, and enjoy the lighter evenings. If you happen to take your Provincial tie, polo shirt, or lapel badge on holiday, we promise not to accuse you of attracting potential candidates for the Province while sunbathing.

We look forward to sharing your stories, photographs, and activities throughout the recess, and to seeing everyone refreshed and ready for another successful Masonic season when our Lodges return from refreshment to labour.

Until then, stay safe, enjoy yourselves, and remember whilst the Lodge may be in recess, the Provincial Communications Team never truly sleeps. We're always watching out for a good story and a photo opportunity.

Have a wonderful summer, Brethren.

W Bro Graeme Butterfield, Provincial Grand Communications Officer



For more further infomaiton including a link to our submission form as well as links to other useful resources, notes and key dates, scan the QR code or visit:

www.pinboardly.com/pgln

