



2021 Annual General Meeting Report

Due to Covid-19, the 2021 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Kent Masonic Museum & Library Trust was held by post and email, and in accordance with the Charitable Incorporated Organisation governance document Section 11 subsection 8 Paragraph a

..... The CIO may, If the charity trustees so decide,, allow the members to vote by post or electronic mail ("email") to elect charity trustees or to make a decision on any matter that is being decided.....

President's Address

So, the Kent Museum of Freemasonry, as with many other aspects of normal life, has been in mothballs since the last AGM, and nothing much has been going on? That is so far from the truth. Since our last AGM considerable time and effort has been put into essential maintenance, upgrading various aspects of the fabric of the building and ensuring that it remains Covid compliant albeit the rules and legal requirements have regularly changed and evolved. All of this has necessitated much planning not only for the work itself, but also to ensure the safety of staff and the integrity of everything within the building. As a result we are now, I am delighted to say, on the brink of reopening to visitors. This is fantastic news particularly for the public whose interest shown through the footfall increase in previous years proves that the M & L is indeed a valuable resource for Freemasonry, the City of Canterbury and our visitors from far and wide.

One element of support crucial to the existence of the M & L comes from Patrons whose constant personal interest and commitment, predominantly financial, is so vital. Our Patrons, of course, include individual Freemasons, their family members, Lodges, Chapters and many others whose continuing generosity is so essential and is truly appreciated. My sincere thanks go also to the Association of Patrons team for managing this vital element so efficiently and enthusiastically across both East and West Kent.

We are grateful to the many Ambassadors who take the lead locally in their Centres, Lodges and Chapters, in promoting the M & L amongst our members. That is such an important role in underlining both the need for their continued support and in emphasising that it is a facility equally available and accessible for them to visit, enjoy and take pride in.

Another invaluable source of assistance has always been that dedicated group of volunteers who put their personal time into delivering an experience that visitors comment upon so favourably. It has been a quiet year for them and I do thank them for their patience during the time of enforced closure. But I am sure that they too are looking forward to the fast approaching day when the doors re-open and they resume their interaction with visitors which they are so good at.

I must also mention one individual who has been instrumental in taking the M & L forward and increasing public awareness of its existence and purpose. Robin Evans is stepping down after eleven years as the Communications Officer, a role that he has fulfilled with great ability and skill. I take this opportunity to thank him, on behalf of us all, for those eleven years in which he has managed our interface with the wider world so effectively. He has set the bar high for his successor.

I must also pay tribute to the Trustees for their sterling work, especially in how they have responded to and managed the unanticipated demands of both the pandemic and the building works. Both issues have presented challenges requiring their careful attention and full involvement and I do acknowledge the commitment and individual abilities that they have quietly displayed in bringing the M & L through some testing times.

Once again I add my personal thanks to the Vice President, R.W.Bro Mark Estaugh, Provincial Grand Master and Grand Superintendent for West Kent for his support. We have between our Provinces a shared asset that we are both proud of and a partnership which I need no convincing brings greater strength to the Association of Patrons and the M & L.

Finally I extend my thanks and gratitude to the Chairman, W.Bro. Roger Waltham. He has again during this past year displayed energy, foresight and leadership and, together with the professionalism and dedication of his team, has adapted and responded effectively to the problems arising during some anxious times. His skills and leadership have been crucial in overcoming what can rightly be described as unprecedented challenges.

I feel quite certain that we will be able to hold the AGM next year in the way that we would all wish, i.e. together and in a much more personal way. I look forward to that day as I am sure you do. In the meantime I thank you all for your unwavering commitment to the Museum and Library, and for taking the time to read this address.

R.W.Bro Neil Johnstone. Provincial Grand Master and Grand Superintendent for East Kent. President of the Kent Masonic Museum & Library Trust.

Chairman's Report

First and foremost, both personally and on behalf of my fellow Trustees, I would like to express my genuine, heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved in the work and promotion of the Trust; the wonderful, amazing Stewards who look after our visitors so brilliantly and earn us so many great reviews on Trip Advisor, the Lodge Representatives – or Ambassadors as we now like to call them – who continuously promote our important work to the membership, the key people and managers who organise everything so superbly, including: our Curator and Assistant Curator – David Birch and Mike Farrell; Phil Zygmant our Operations Manager; Adrian Wagstaff our Assistant Secretary, and Phil Moore, Mark Rosen and Steve Fletcher the Deputy Chairman, Secretary and Membership Manager of our essential Association of Patrons, without the financial support of which we would cease to function. Brian Blake continues, as he has for many years now, to add to that essential income through his wonderful work in the sales of regalia. Thank you so much, Brian – it is greatly appreciated. A special additional thank you goes out to Jim Flower who has been invaluable in helping us to ensure compliance to our insurance requirements regarding the security and safety of the building throughout this extended period of closure.

As I pointed out last year, the overall team needed to maintain and continuously improve our value, our work and our operation, is large, consisting of more than eighty people. If you add the Lodge Ambassadors to that, there are well in excess of 200. That's a big family for sure, and I'm grateful that I don't need to buy them all a Christmas present! I want each and every one of that extended family to know that your contribution is greatly valued and that without your zeal and attachment, the important and ever-growing reach and benefit of this Trust would simply not work. It is an enormous privilege to be the Chairman of the Trust and I am ever mindful of the value that you all bring to our work and to our family. It is difficult to express that gratitude sufficiently, so I hope that a simple but very sincere "Thank you all" will suffice.

I would like to take this opportunity to also extend those deep and heartfelt thanks, of course, to our Trustees, very importantly including David Tyler our Deputy Chairman, Peter West our Chief Executive Officer, John Andrews our Secretary, Charles Byford our Treasurer, former Chairman and Life Vice President Charles Boxer who has overarching responsibility for our collections, and Charles Pottle, who is also Chairman of the vital Association of Patrons. This year, I would like to extend a very special thank you to Robin Evans who has looked after marketing so brilliantly for the Trust for over ten years. I am saddened that Robin will be stepping down this year. We will miss his extremely valuable input so very much. Thank you, Robin, and we wish you every good health and happiness.

I'd also like to offer my very special thanks to Right Worshipful Brothers Neil Johnstone and Mark Estaugh, the Provincial Grand Masters of East and West Kent, for their invaluable and highly appreciated support of, and enthusiasm for, the work of the Trust. Their respective positions as de-facto President and Vice President of the Trust continues to deliver an ongoing powerful message of joint support, which adds significant strength and benefit to the future of the Trust, and will carry on doing so from generation to generation.

Added to that strong message, Phil Moore, as Deputy Chairman of the Association of Patrons continues to work very closely with Charles Pottle and the AOP team in his endeavours to reinforce and expand the steadily growing support of West Kent Members and their Lodges for the continued and future benefit of the Trust. Adrian Wagstaff's support, as Assistant Secretary of the Trust, adds further to that very positive message.

In recognising our status both as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) and as a responsible Trust with a strong public connection and alignment to Freemasonry, I have spoken on a number of occasions of the absolute importance of us developing our mindset so that we come to positive terms with modern organisational practices, including some of those legally essential things such as regulatory compliance, health & safety for the visiting public, passers-by, and our own team members, the dreaded GDPR data regulations, and so on. David Tyler and Peter West have been superb in ensuring that those essential changes are happening and that our working practices are re-visited to ensure proper compliance with all of those difficult rules, regulations, and guidelines.

That work continues as we look at the very important issues being raised, quite rightly, to ensure conscious positivity within organisations with regard to diversity and inclusion. Whether it is related to race, colour, gender, background, disability, sexuality, or anything else, we want it to be clearly seen and understood that diversity and inclusion are more than just words to the Kent Masonic Museum & Library Trust. They are positive and guiding principles as we continue to maintain our teams and cultivate our key people. Inclusion, where everyone is welcome, should be in the very heart of the Trust. You will see positive developments in this genuine endeavour as we work towards the re-opening of our doors to visitors. That leads me to the issue of the building works. As we are all aware, in addition to the Covid-19 situation that has enforced a shutdown of operations, disruptive maintenance work needs to be carried out over the coming months. We are currently exploring how best to manage everything whilst those works are underway. It is probable that the building will need to remain closed for a further six to nine months. It could, potentially, even be a little longer.

There have been some security concerns, which have been troubling for the Trustees. We have also been concerned about our ability to ensure the safety and wellbeing of unexpected visitors to the building and car park during the closedown period. It also became clear that we would be unable to provide accurate information of keyholders should it be required by our insurers or the Police. For these reasons, and to ensure that we can manage safety aspects properly during the building works period, the decision was made to change the locks. Keys will be re-issued when the works are completed, before we re-open.

There have also been some difficult situations, before and during the closure period, regarding access and car park arrangements. I take this opportunity to sincerely thank the management team of the Canterbury Masonic Centre, who have worked closely with us in resolving those situations. That amicable and positive support is greatly valued.

It has certainly been a rather challenging year and it looks like it will continue to be so for some time to come, but we are all absolutely determined to work through these trials to ensure that the work of the Trust starts anew as soon as possible. The combination of Covid-19 and the essential building works are a trial, for sure, but we are resolute in reaching a positive end result that provides a solid platform for the benefit of future generations. Thank you all, so very much, for your continued support. It is invaluable and hugely appreciated.

Thank you. Roger Waltham Chairman

Marketing Report

As you would expect, with the combination of Covid and our enforced closure, this year has been extremely quiet on the marketing front. Whilst a number of planned events have either had to be postponed or cancelled, I kept things ticking along in the background.

We have continued to work quietly behind the scenes with our tactical partners such as Visit Canterbury and Visit Kent to ensure that when we re-open we will be in the best possible position.

On a positive note, we achieved our fifth consecutive TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice award which is given to accommodations, attractions and restaurants that consistently earn great reviews from travellers and are ranked within the top 10% of properties on TripAdvisor. We remain firmly positioned in the Top Ten Things To Do In Canterbury.

As I mentioned at the outset, this my final report as I will be standing down from my role as Marketing Manager on 31st December after more than a decade in post. My role has been made incredibly easy over the years due to the hard work and dedication of the whole museum family of volunteers and I extend my gratitude to every one of them past, present and future.

Robin

Association of Patrons Chairman's Report

It is my pleasure to offer this report on the activities of the Association of Patrons (AoP) since our last AGM in 2020. Despite the unprecedented challenges prevalent in the wider world we have made further progress in our primary objective of supporting the Kent Museum of Freemasonry. Doubtless you will be aware that there has been much work being done behind the scenes to ensure the Museum is fully ready to re-open in due course and on behalf of the AoP I thank all those who dedicate themselves to this very worthy endeavour.

As is customary, I extend a most sincere thank you to all our Patrons. Without your ongoing support the Kent Museum of Freemasonry could not operate. The success of the AoP is key. As always, please encourage your friends, Lodges, Chapters and other Orders to sign up, support and share in its future. We are particularly grateful for the efforts of the Lodge Museum Ambassadors in promoting the Museum within their Lodges and the wider brethren. Please keep up the good work and we hope to collaborate with you more once our Lodges have re-opened and commenced regular meetings.

The hard work and commitment of all those on the AoP team during 2020-21 ensured further growth in the key areas. Everyone has played their part and I am grateful to them all. I extend a very warm welcome to the newest member of the team – W.Bro Clive Moore. Clive is more than well known in West Kent as the Provincial Grand Orator and is hugely experienced in masonic history, amongst many other talents. The AoP will benefit greatly from his contribution going forwards.

With regard to Patrons and Patron Income, during the financial year 2020-21

- Total AoP income (inc Gift Aid) was £15,149.00. Another record high and an increase of 18% on last year. Income is up 90% since 2017-18.
- This year we achieved an uplift of 19 new Patronages and 8 reactivations. Another year of strong growth, especially given lockdown.

- Overall this means that we have delivered 110% of the Patron target set out in our original 2018-21 planning.
- For the first time we have over 300 active (paid-up) Patrons.

I know the whole AoP Team are very proud of these results but, there is always more to do. We will continue to seek new Patrons and re-engage with those who have lapsed. Current circumstances are extremely challenging but I am hopeful that our efforts in 2021-22 will still deliver further success.

The AoP continues to be mindful that it is the Kent Museum of Freemasonry and we are therefore grateful for the ongoing support given by our friends in West Kent and, in particular, the hard miles put in by our Deputy Chairman (W.Bro Phil Moore). We continue to acknowledge the support and encouragement of the PGM and Deputy PGM for West Kent for the AoP and the Museum & Library as a whole.

W.Bro Peter Lapage will continue to promote the interests of the Kent Museum of Freemasonry within Kent's Mark Lodges and are very grateful for the support already shown. I am confident that his activities will deliver increased Patron representation in due course.

Communications – “Museum Matters”, the feedback has continued to be very positive. W.Bro Howard Griffin is to be congratulated for all his work and we have enjoyed the contributions of Bro Matthew Edson and W.Bro Clive Moore. It is a most important way we can engage and say a “Thank You” to our Patrons. We are always looking for support and ideas so please get in touch if you can.

In closing I reiterate how lucky we are in Kent to have the Kent Museum of Freemasonry and the invaluable “window to our world” it provides. The strength of the Association of Patrons will continue to underpin this fantastic facility. Lastly - a reminder to all Patrons – if your contact details do change, please ensure you update the AoP, we won't know if you don't tell us !

Wishing you all the very best of health.

Thank you.

W. Bro Charles Pottle Chairman Association of Patrons

Votes & Resolutions

1. To approve the accounts ending 31st March 2021
2. To re-elect Bro. Charles Byford as Treasurer.
3. To re-appoint Kreston Reeves as auditors
4. Resignation and Appointment of Trustees. In accordance with the requirements of the Trust Documents, 1/3 of the Trustees must retire in rotation each year and may seek re-election for a maximum of three times. W.Bro. Charles Boxer, W.Bro. David Tyler and W.Bro. John Andrews are resigning and seeking re-election.

The responses received by the due date of 18th September were unanimously in favour of all four propositions and thus all were duly carried.