

# Official Launch of TLC Ireland

9.00 a.m. on Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2013 all seems calm in Molesworth Street. Little do the hundreds of people passing Freemasons' Hall know that nerves are stretched to almost breaking point for a small number of 'those guys' in there. It is the day before Summer Lodge, Masons from



Members of the Metropolitan Board of General Purposes with Big Ted and some of his cousins, together with members of the TLC Committee, on the day before Summer Lodge.



Did you pack these bags yourself, sir?

all over Ireland and from much further afield also are preparing to travel here to attend what has become one of the highlights of the annual Masonic Calendar, Summer Lodge being hosted by Philip Daley and the members of the Metropolitan Board of General Purposes.

Meanwhile, somewhere to the north side of London a very important contributor to the above meeting is making his way to Southend on Sea Airport in the back of a taxi belonging to W.Bro. Emlyn Carter. "Big Ted" as he has become affectionately known is about to do what he is



Ted having fun at Southend Airport.

best at, namely entertain those gathered at the airport. He has a busy few hours ahead of him, he will meet and greet the crew of the Aer Arran plane that is about to embark on its journey to our fair land. His travelling companions, W.Bro. Ian Simpson and his lovely wife, Angela, are shown to their seats while Big Ted has a little cavorting to attend to with some members of the crew. Both Ian and Emlyn are members of Skillet and Trowel Lodge No. 981. When all settle in and safety checks are gone through, off they go and they are heading westward to Dublin. While Ian and Angela are regular visitors to Dublin, this is the first time that Big Ted has come over. Secretly he is thinking I might like to stay a little longer than this lot. When they touch down in Dublin, Big Ted is again up to some of his tricks, he manages to get into the cockpit with the pilot and even kicks the Captain out of his seat for a short time. Then it is time to leave his Aer Arran friends and

make his way through to the arrivals area. He is travelling on a carriage provided by the Dublin Airport Authority, powered by the strength of his travelling companion, Ian and as soon as the trio emerge through the arrivals door there is a somewhat informally dressed Philip Daley to greet them. A thought crosses his mind that Masonry here in Ireland may be a little different than it is on the island that he had just left. Morning suits and black ties etc.

After a pleasant journey from the airport to the city Big Ted is booked into Buswells



Magdalena, Senior Cabin Crew, Aer Lingus Regional, another one of Big Ted's friends.



Hotel, catching a brief glance of Freemasons' Hall as he arrived. He was somewhat distracted at this moment in that he was approached by yet another good looking lady, Mary Mitchell-O'Connor, TD. who welcomed him yet again



*Black Tie and Morning Suit? I'm delighted to be in Dublin.*

to our capital. After a brief chat and exchange of Facebook and Twitter addresses things seem to be looking good for Big Ted.

Across the road things are getting somewhat hectic, some of the more active members of the Metropolitan Board are beginning to set up for the events taking place the next day. The Dining Room takes on the appearance of a Party Zone, with helium filled balloons and Teddy bears Picnic areas all set out. The merchandise tables are all laid out and ready to be manned by some of the lady members of the staff at Freemasons' Hall under the guidance of Heather Gyles who is a very hard working member of the TLC Committee. Philip Daley is flying around and preparing for a final practice session to ensure that all goes well when Summer Lodge is held the next day.



*Mary Mitchell-O'Connor, TD*

Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> July arrives. Big Ted takes his place with all his cousins in the Dining Room. Some of those attending Summer Lodge start to arrive and there is an air of great excitement about. Shortly after 10.30 a.m. a limousine pulls up outside Freemasons' Hall and Peter Lowndes, Patron of TLC England and Wales arrives. He also happens to be the Pro-Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England. He is accompanied by Sir Neill Thorpe on this occasion but is visiting Dublin in his TLC capacity. He is met and welcomed by Most Worshipful Brother Eric Waller, Right Worshipful Brother Philip Daley, Right Worshipful Brother Richard Gray and other members of the TLC Committee in Ireland. He is then taken to a small pre-lunch reception where he meets with all the members of the TLC Committee here in Ireland and the Patron of TLC Ireland, Professor Patrick Plunkett who happens to be Worshipful Master of Trinity Lodge No. 357. The reception was followed by a beautiful lunch provided by Catherine and John.



*W.Bro. Ian Simpson, Skillet and Trowel No. 981 and R.W. Bro. Philip Daley Chairperson, Metropolitan Board of General Purposes. Both proud fathers of TLC.*

Summer Lodge commenced at 2.30 p.m. The meeting itself was conducted very well and the Ritual on the day was as close to perfect as seen in recent times. No problems with the sun's destination were witnessed this year. It was very well attended with Brethren travelling from near and far to be there to witness the launch the TLC Project formally in Ireland. Just as the Worshipful Master was about to close the Lodge there was "an Alarm" and a member dressed as a Teddy Bear entered the Room. He saluted the Worshipful Master and took his place in the Lodge. As the Lodge was being closed this member stood and invited the Brethren assembled to accompany the Worshipful Master at a special Teddy Bears Picnic which was to take place downstairs coinciding with the official Launch of TLC Ireland.



M.W.Bro. Eric Waller spoke to all those attending. He welcomed the representatives from the Dublin Hospitals who were attending and also other members of the public. Little Grace and Avagh Armstrong Patten were there with their mother Caroline, and they, together with a number of other children were made welcome. Grace and Avagh are the girls that feature on the TLC Promotional Brochure. Little Harry Broughall Sykes, the boy on the Brochure, was too small to attend.



*Caroline, Grace and Avagh Armstrong-Patton*

Professor Patrick Plunkett addressed the gathering and went on to say that he was delighted to be involved and honoured to be Patron of the Project here in Ireland. He spoke from the perspective of the Medical and Nursing staff members in the Emergency Department. He said that the “Hospital Teddies” were being very well received in the hospitals here in Dublin, close on 1000 have been distributed at Our Lady’s Hospital, Crumlin, alone and the Project was being welcomed at Tallaght and Temple Street Hospitals also. He said that the Teddies were a great idea and that they far outstripped the traditional appeasement tool of a Lollipop. He went on to say that everywhere he mentioned the Project it was being welcomed with great enthusiasm.



*Rebecca Hayes, Alison Moffatt, Heather Gyles and Cristina Eremia*

Peter Lowndes addressed all by saying how proud he was to be present to see this wonderful idea being embraced here in Ireland. He thanked all concerned but made special mention of W. Bro. Ian Simpson who was the father of the original idea back in time. A huge amount of work goes into making this work but is all worth it when we receive feedback from the families of the children who are given the Teddies in the Emergency Departments. He mentioned that well over a million Teddies have been distributed in England and Wales to date. When that number reached 500,000 there was a celebratory get together and he said he was very happy to meet with the first recipient of a Teddy. He was now a happy healthy teenager but still had his Teddy.

In concluding the formalities of the day M.W.Bro. Eric Waller said that he was very proud himself to be involved as Chairman of the TLC Organising Committee. He said



*R.W. Bro. Peter Lowndes, Pro-Grand Master, UGLE, Patron TLC UK; M.W. Bro. Eric Waller Immediate Past Grand Master, Chairman TLC Ireland and W. Bro. Patrick Plunkett Patron TLC Ireland.*

that a great deal of success had been achieved as a result of the work done to date. He was extremely happy to relate that the Project was to be extended to Our Ladies Hospital, Drogheda in the coming days and throughout the country very shortly. Cork and Sligo Hospitals being targeted in the very near future. The project is planned to be launched throughout Northern Ireland in the Autumn.

Formalities out of the way Big Ted met with a number of Committee Members and was “persuaded” to stay in Ireland for a few months to help us with further official launches throughout the country. I understand that his diary is rather full even at this early date and he looks forward to meeting you all in the coming months.

