

Brethren, we had the great pleasure on Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2013 to attend the Northern Launch of the Teddies for Loving Care initiative, which is a programme that gives Teddies to all the young distressed children, who find themselves in the A&E department in our local Hospitals. The launch yesterday was at the A & E department of the Craigavon Area Hospital at 11.00, followed by a further launch in the Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. Our guest of Honour was BIG TED, who arrived at Craigavon on his three wheeled trike, accompanied by the President, Vice President and Chapter members of the Widows Sons Masonic Bikers Association.



Here he was welcomed by Rt Wor Bro Richard Grey and his team from the Northern Committee of the Irish Masonic Teddies for Loving Care organisation, better known as TLC Ireland. Despite the fact that it was a cold and wet morning, there were a goodly number of supporters present, from right across the North.





Big Ted was then introduced to a few of the A&E nursing staff, and having spotted a near-by Morgan roadster, took them over and into the car for a photo opportunity.



By now word of Big Ted's arrival had spread and a number of reporters and TV crews started to appear, including Barra Best and his crew from the BBC. When Barra saw the bike, he asked Ted could they go for a spin and when Big Ted said yes, Barra roared off at 5 miles per hour.





Several wheelies later, when Barra got the hair fixed, he then conducted an interview with both Big Ted and then Rt Wor Bro Richard Gray. This was scheduled to be shown on the BBC Northern Ireland News at 5.50pm on Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2013 ( you may still be able to see it on BBC iplayer ).



By now, Big Ted, was feeling the call of the road, so with his supporters, he set off from Craigavon on his road trike, and headed up the M1 to The Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.



Imagine his surprise, on arrival, when he saw many familiar faces, that he had met earlier in the day.





Big Ted has issued a press statement to explain why he is over in Ireland to promote the giving of bears to children if they arrive distressed in the A & E department of a participating hospital. He felt that the best way to explain the process was to let us all share a story about one young boy's experience in attending hospital for the first time. The story goes something like this :-

***I am a young child.***

***Something is wrong with me.***

***I am ill, or I've had an accident.***

***It hurt, and I don't know what's wrong.***

***Mum and Dad seem worried, that worries me***

***I am taken to Hospital – the Emergency Unit***

***I don't understand what is happening***

***There are strange people – in uniforms & coats***

***With all kinds of frightening needles and instruments.***

***I am still in pain, but now I'm very scared!***

***I don't want them to touch me – it will hurt***

***I am scared at what they are going to do***

***I cry – I scream – I struggle.***

***Everyone says they just want to make me better***



***But it's so scary – they always say it won't hurt.***

***But one of them has a teddy, they give it to me to cuddle***

***They tell me what they need to do.***

***They show me what they are going to do on teddy***

***Teddy doesn't cry – It didn't seem to hurt him.***

***If it didn't hurt teddy, it won't hurt me,***

***I cuddle teddy very hard.***

***It doesn't hurt as much, They say I'm very brave***

***As brave as Teddy, They say I'm going to get better.***

***They say I can go home, Mum and Dad are smiling***

***The nurse says I can take teddy home – I am smiling.***



Well Brethren, I think Big Ted makes a great case for our on-going support for the TLC Ireland initiative, and I hope that you will all contribute as individuals, as Lodges and as Provinces to this fund that supports the purchase and distribution of the Teddies for Loving Care. Your support may be by means of financial donations, the purchase of tie pins £ 4.00 sterling each or indeed the bears themselves at £ 5.00 for a small bear and £ 20.00 for a larger bear. It goes without saying that Big Ted himself, an international Bear of Mystery, is priceless and not for sale.

Your local Provincial Grand Lodges will be launching the TLC initiative at their forthcoming meetings in September, October and November. Merchandising will be available for purchase at these meetings, but should you wish to donate or purchase items sooner than your next meeting then contact Rt Wor Bro Richard Gray and his team at 115 The Mount, Belfast.

In conclusion, I would not like you all thinking that you are too old for the magic of Big Ted. On our way home last night we called to see Wor Bro John Kelly, of Whitehead Lodge No 313 I.C. and The Irish Lodge of Research No 200 I.C. On arrival at Ward 2C we discovered that not only was John in attendance but two other Brethren – Bobby Spiers a well known P.G.Instructor and Wor Bro Norman Brown from Islandmagee were also not too well. As you can see, it didn't take Teddy long to work his magic.

