



the
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making friends, helping people

Summer 2020
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Beds and Bucks News and Views

News and views from your local friendship group

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**Welcome to the latest edition
of the Beds and Bucks District
Newsletter.**

Hello, I hope you enjoy the news and stories shared in this different from the normal newsletter from us. We thought it would be nice to share some of the stories and photographs taken before Covid-19 and to take time and share some news and stories with you.

If I said six months ago that we would be subject to a lockdown you would have thought I was quite mad but here we are and this all seems quite normal now. I especially love Thursday evenings, going out to clap for key workers helps to re-align and value what is important. At this time the most important thing is our health and wellbeing, as we continue to adapt to these strange times, and finding new challenges each day to overcome, this is more evident than ever before.

The Beds and Bucks District usually have a busy events diary and I have no news of a return to our social events or what these events will look like. However, as soon as we get the green light branches in our District will get our social events up and running. I hope it won't be too long.

Our social events might be on hold but we are still here to offer support and help. Nothing is too small we are here for advice, a listening ear or a simple chat. All branch secretaries and welfare officers are still working to ensure that we are still here for our members. We are only a phone call away.

Please take care of yourselves and I genuinely hope we can all get together sometime in the near future.

Best Wishes

Doreen

Who are the Oddfellows?

The Beds and Bucks District is a group of four Branches across Bedfordshire, Buckingham, Hertfordshire and Northamptonshire. Each branch has a monthly business meeting and as many social events as they can fit in.

Through friendship and social events we help our members to get more enjoyment out of life. With the help of the Unity office in Manchester we offer care and support in times of need. We welcome every one of all ages - our youngest member being four months and the eldest 100 years. To find out more please visit www.oddfellows.co.uk or call on 0800 028 1810 or the Branch Secretaries.

Join the conversation @ OddfellowsUK

Share your news, start a conversation or simply stay up-to-date! If you're on Facebook or Twitter, make sure you've liked and followed our Oddfellows social media pages.

Find us at:



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A message from the Beds and Bucks District Provincial Grand Master (Our Chairman)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Hope you are well and safe at this terrible time with this horrible virus.

A few of my friends caught the virus and luckily recovered however, sadly, one of my oldest friends did not.

Jean and I have been in lockdown since Wednesday 11 March. I have been busy tidying my shed and sorting lots of rubbish out. Best of all I found things I didn't know I had. I have made plenty of space and assembled quite a few model aeroplanes in there. Jean said now I can move your bed in there seeing as I spend so much time in there! Our garden looks lovely, no weeds at the moment and we are looking forward to visiting a garden centre when restrictions are lifted for us.

We are very lucky, our daughter does our shopping for us and our neighbour gets our newspaper and anything else we need.

It was disappointing to say the least when we had to cancel the Annual Church

Service at Thornborough this year. Sunday 5 April was a lovely sunny day and the daffodils in the village looked lovely.

Our village street party was cancelled for VE Day, still people dressed up, bunting and flags were put up around the village. It was lovely to see so many people take time to decorate their gardens. On Thursday nights we go out to clap for the NHS with the neighbours in our street.

We are blessed to live in such a friendly village, neighbours walk past our garden and always say hello and stop for a chat. We never feel as if we are alone.

I hope it won't be too long until events and meetings are held, I especially miss our social events. In the meanwhile stay safe and look after yourself.

Yours Fraternally

Michael Mc Straw
Provincial Grand Master (Chairman)





Greatmoor Energy from Waste Visit

Friday 22 November 2019

A fantastic and informative visit to Greatmoor EfW (Energy from Waste) We were shown around the facilities including the gigantic waste hopper where all of Buckinghamshire's waste

is delivered, the incinerator which powers the turbines which in turn powers 40,000 homes. Thanks Jez for showing us around.

Bedford Branch Secretary



The Bedford and Northampton Branch are pleased to welcome Amanda Buckmaster as a member

and Secretary of the Branch from the beginning of January. She looks forward to getting to know the members whether it's by telephone, letter or in person. If they call in to the office at Wootton on a Monday or Wednesday or Thursday morning between 10am and 1 pm.

Members enjoyed an Italian two course meal at Bellini's in Clapham, Bedford in February. The food and friendship warmed a very cold evening and an 18th birthday gathering thanked us for joining in the singing of Happy Birthday! We may return sometime but the idea is to eat our way around the world (well perhaps not all of it!).



Christmas Lunch

On Sunday 15 December over 40 members and friends assembled at the Woburn Hotel to enjoy a delicious Christmas turkey with all the trimmings lunch to really get the festive season well underway. A Mulled Wine reception set expectations very high and the event did not disappoint.

The lunch had been many weeks in the planning and was highly anticipated but today it was tinged with sadness as very dear lady and friend to everyone, Ida Hammett, who had been the driving force behind all our events at the hotel had recently lost her fight with cancer. Everyone was keen for the lunch to be a great success, be thoroughly enjoyed and a fitting tribute to such a special person.



Members were treated to gifts of sweets and luxury Christmas crackers at their table places when they sat down. The food was fantastic, delicious and plentiful and as usual at the hotel the staff were exemplary, tending to our every need whilst being completely unobtrusive.

A raffle was held with some generously donated luxurious prizes up for grabs.

The event was rounded off perfectly for the season by a contingent from the Bedford Choral Society Chamber Choir who came to sing for us and entertain with popular Christmas carols including a selection we could join in with.

The event was much enjoyed by all but as with all good things it was over much too quickly.



London Marathon 2019 Helen Gurney and London Marathon 2020 (or 2021?) Doreen Sams

Helen's Story

Towards the end of 2018, I along with thousands of other hopefuls, applied to be part of something very special - the 2019 London Marathon. After weeks of waiting, the response arrived and I was disappointed to find that my application had been unsuccessful.



As luck would have it, in January 2019 an advert appeared at work informing employees that a place had become available to run the Marathon for a small charity called Together for Short Lives. (togetherforshortlives.org.uk) After looking into the charity, I decided to apply once more and was delighted that this time round I was granted a place. However, this left only three months to train to run the furthest I'd ever been.

There were many times that I'd lay in bed on the dark winter mornings, wanting to stay in the warmth of my house, but I was driven to keep up the pace of training so that I did not let my friends and family

down on the day. When it became too icy to run on the paths of Thrapston and too slippery to run the bridleways in the surrounding villages, I'd go to the local gym and train on the treadmill. I was spurred on by the support of so many, with people regaling stories of their Marathon experiences and told me that it would not disappoint.

A week before the event, I was invited to collect my number from the Excel centre. I was overwhelmed by the sheer number of people doing the same and the volume of associated trade stalls selling advanced running kits and nutritional food supplements - none of which I owned making me wonder if I was doing the right thing. There was no turning back, however!

The day finally came. All the hours of training lead up to this special day. I had pre-arranged to run with a woman I'd met through the charity and we agreed that we'd stay together throughout the race. It took us 45 minutes to get to the start line and when we eventually got there, crowds were ready to cheer us on. I cannot describe the feeling of elation seeing all the crowds, the Pearly King and Queen, watching people banging pots and pans, children offering sweets to provide energy and live music playing at regular intervals.

Spectators were four deep in places and in order to catch a glimpse of my family and friends, I asked them to hold up fluorescent inflatable guitars which made it so much easier to spot them. Seeing them was amazing - their brief words of encouragement spurred me on to keep going right to the finish line.

As the mile markers passed and the numbers increased, I got closer to the finish line. Looking at fellow participants who appeared similarly exhausted, we seemed to gain a second wind to get towards the end. Once we got over the line, we received fantastic support from the wonderful race volunteers and of course, from our friends and family.

I was extremely happy to have been part of the fantastic institution that is the London Marathon. I feel for those impacted by the delay to the 2020 Marathon because training is so hard and to have to start again later in the year will be so tough. I wish Sister Doreen well with her run and hope that she takes as much from the day as I did.

Helen Gurney

Fantastic Helen, and well done. Love the funky leggings.

Doreen's Story

I was the lucky winner of a ballot place for the London Marathon 2020. I was so excited and happy, it was like winning the lottery. Even though I gained a ballot place I decided that I would run in aid of SANDS (stillbirth and neonatal

death charity) in memory of my grandson Mason.

I am an early morning runner, so four mornings a week wearing the brightest, boldest running clothes and a powerful chest torch I headed out come whatever

the weather. Like Helen, some mornings I questioned my sanity as to why anyone would choose to take this challenge. However, the dark mornings didn't last long and ditching the chest torch was a milestone in my training.

Then the dreadful Covid-19 took hold of our country. To say I was disappointed that the London Marathon which was to be held in April had been postponed to October is an understatement, it was a massive blow. My training put on hold and hotels had to be cancelled and rebooked.

Although my training is on hold I still manage to run six days a week. I am still up and out first thing in the morning and enjoy this time to myself. I start training again on the first week of June for the London Marathon. I do hope that the event will go ahead in October. Meantime I will carry on fundraising for SANDS, hopefully I will run a quicker stronger marathon than I had planned for.

Doreen Sams





Holy Saviour Christmas Tree Festival

The weekend of the 7 and 8 December saw the Holy Saviour Christmas tree festival in Hitchin. On the Friday Albert Branch members Helen and Carol set up the Albert Branch 'Friendship Tree'. Members were present for the official light up on Saturday where the church junior choir entertained the assembled

crowds. The lights were switched on by the Deputy Lieutenant of Hertfordshire. There was a stunning array of trees to view accompanied by non stop music. The members of the community had set up a cafe in the church and excellent food and drink was available at very reasonable cost.

Last Meeting of 2019

Lovely festive evening at Grenville Branch in Buckingham in December. Mince pie tasting, bell ringing to Christmas carols and presentation of cheques to charities we supported this year. A lovely way to end the year.



Jack and the Beanstalk

Wellingborough's amateur dramatics were a treat on Saturday 18 January, when 23 members enjoyed a trip to Wellingborough Castle Theatre to watch Jack and the Beanstalk.

Slime, played by Connor Jeffery, the giant's evil henchman was superb as well as the loveable fool Simon Durden played by Reece Yarnold. Dame Durden played by Jon Litchfield played up all the stereotypes. All round a superb cast and we all had a fantastic afternoon.



Cheese and Wine

Can you think of a better way to start the New Year? Grenville members enjoyed an annual cheese and wine evening on the first meeting of the year.

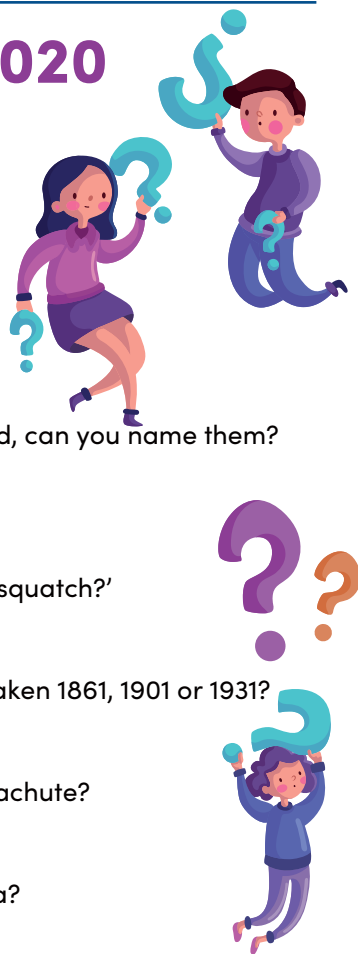


Quiz Questions May 2020

Just for fun. Answers on page 20

1. How many stars has the American flag?
2. How long is the Great Wall of China?
3. Who solves the crime Death on the Nile?
4. What are the three primary colours?
5. From which country does pitta bread originate?
6. The Quarrymen' later became a very famous band, can you name them?
7. What is the most spoken language in the world?
8. How many children did Queen Victoria have?
9. By what other name do Americans refer to the 'sasquatch'?
10. Which gem stone consists of fossilised resin?
11. In which year was the first coloured photograph taken 1861, 1901 or 1931?
12. Which animals come in grey and timber varieties?
13. Which was invented first the aeroplane or the parachute?
14. Who was known as the nine days queen?
15. Which of the world's countries has the largest area?

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Is there someone you know who'd enjoy what we do?

Refer a friend today

To refer a friend, call Membership on **0800 028 1810**, or visit our Members' Area at **www.oddfellows.co.uk** or fill in the **Refer a Friend form** available from your Branch Secretary

*Terms and conditions apply to the Refer a Friend offer. It cannot be used in conjunction with any other member offer. For full terms and conditions and for details of the rewards visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/offers.

Ref 1644



Annual Dinner Saturday 18 January 2020

Fifty friends and members of Victoria Branch enjoyed our annual meal at the Rushden Indoor Bowls Club. We raised £130 for the new Chairman's appeal.



Annual District Meeting

We held our 70th Annual District meeting on Saturday 25 January 2020. Congratulations to our New District Officers who were installed at the meeting. Adrian our outgoing

Chairman, raised a healthy £2,870 while in office and presented a cheque to Tony Bartlett from Prostate Cancer UK.



What did you do in the lockdown?

Many of you will be familiar with the question "What did you do in the war?" but I wonder how the next generation will deal with question "What did you do in the lockdown?"

After all the cupboards have been cleaned and sorted and every inch of one's home cleaned and cleaned again, what next? I started sorting all my holiday photos and all the other things one collects from special holidays, and I came across the itinerary of a very special holiday that started on the 30 March 1999. On that day, 43 Oddfellows met at Heathrow Airport and under the leadership of the late Past Grand Master (Past Chairman) Derek Winbush and commenced a trip of a lifetime. Our cases were festooned with rainbow coloured ribbon and Derek then proceeded to stick numbers from 1-44 on them (you guessed someone just had to have two cases, but not me). We found the reason for this when we landed the following morning in the beautiful city of Cape Town. The men were instructed to grab all the cases from the carousel, while the ladies fetched the trolleys and once the cases were loaded up in numbered order we moved on, this happened for every flight and every time we left a hotel and it worked, not one piece of luggage was lost.

Cape Town in 1999 was not long out of apartheid and security was everywhere and once we had arrived at the hotel, the doors were locked behind us. We were told not to go out after dark unless you booked

a taxis to pick you up at the front door, and when you looked out of the window at night the city squares were patrolled with armed police and dogs. So different today when it's as safe as here as long as you don't go to certain areas. The local Oddfellows made sure that our short visit was packed. From Table Mountain, down to the Cape of Good Hope, and we visited the two Branches and made many friends. My late husband and I went back many times over the years, I feel so sad that I might not go back again.

From Cape Town we flew on to Johannesburg for our flight to Sydney which because of the distance, refuelled in Perth, Western Australia. On arrival in Sydney we were met by the Australian Oddfellows who of course made sure we saw all the sights. We had dinner in the revolving tower and saw Sydney by night as we ate, then they took us on a harbour cruise, passing the Opera House and sailing under the famous Sydney Harbour Bridge. I think I was surprised at the size of the bridge, and in fact my husband said it was no bigger than Haddiscoe Bridge in Norfolk (near where we lived at the time). I think the Television makes these famous sights appear a lot larger than they actually are.

After four days we said our goodbyes and flew on to Christchurch New Zealand then a very beautiful city, but sadly today still recovering from that terrible

earthquake of a few years ago. Then we visited the Cathedral, similar to ours but only in miniature. We talked to one of the clergy only to find he came from Widford in Hertfordshire not far from my home town of Ware, so we took him for a coffee and learnt all about the cathedral and were also allowed to take pictures. So sad to think that this is now a ruin. We attended the Branch in Christchurch and again made more friends.

Leaving Christchurch behind us we started a tour of the South Island, driving through the Canterbury plain, through Burkes pass and onto Mount Cook National Park with its snow clad mountains and glaciers, on past Lake Pukaki to Omarama. The next morning we were off to Dunedin with several stops on the way, in particular the beach at Moeraki which has some very unusual marble boulders. On our way to the hotel in the very Scottish Dunedin we passed the highest street in the world.

The next stop was Queenstown where in the evening we boarded the skyline gondola for a ride up the mountain to dine at the Skyline Restaurant. Not only was the food fantastic, but the panoramic views over the lake and mountains were very special. The next day was a very long one and we travelled down through the spectacular scenery towards Milford Wharf to board the MV.

From Milford Monarch we cruised down the fiord past the Mitre Peak into the open sea, with waterfalls, seals and dolphins along the way. It was difficult to know

where to point the camera. On our return to Queenstown we then spent the next day travelling on to Franz Josef, where we walked on the glacier, which is very rare to have a glacier so close to sea level in a temperate climate. Our final port of call in South Island was Nelson where we met up with more local Oddfellows and had a great party and outing with them. Back in 1999 the airport at Nelson was small and it took three small planes with all our luggage stacked in the aisles to Wellington. After a further local flight to Auckland from Wellington we left New Zealand for an onward flight to Fiji.

On arrival we transferred to the Warwick Fiji Hotel where in splendour we relaxed and enjoyed the beaches and the views for three days. There was much excitement on the departure day, as we had noticed that the sea was coming up rather high and the waves were smashing onto the reef with water coming onto the grounds. Our coach was summoned and we departed for the airport earlier than expected as the hotel management were concerned that the roads would flood and that the ground floor of the hotel would be under water. All this had apparently been caused by an earthquake in Tonga which set off a mini tsunami in Fiji. We made it safely to the airport for our long flight home via Los Angeles to London. The end of a wonderful holiday, with many new and special friends made, some of which we have sadly since lost but who will never be forgotten.

Pat Flynn

Isolation by Ann Boyle

A few things you may or may not have known about self-isolation and plagues.

Medical science was not advanced enough to react to an outbreak in the same way it can today and, in 1592, theatres closed for what would turn out to be a two-year period. Shakespeare found the time to research and write the historical play Richard III. As plague levels became dangerous again in 1603, Shakespeare took refuge in a safe house. From 1603 to 1613, there were many outbreaks of plague and during this decade his works included classics such as Othello, King Lear, Macbeth and The Tempest.

Isaac Newton was 23, a student at Cambridge self-isolated during the plague year 1665-66. During what he called his 'Annus Mirabilis', or wonderful year, at Woolsthorpe, Newton did three significant things: He invented the mathematical system called calculus, he drilled a hole in the shutter of his bedroom window and held a prism up to the beam of sunlight that came through it, discovering that white light is made up of every colour. He watched apples falling from the trees in his garden and theorised about a force called gravity, which keeps the moon revolving around planet Earth.

No pandemic confined Anna Sewall to her writer's desk, merely a sequence of misfortunes that began at fourteen, when she tripped while running home from school in the rain, injuring both her ankles.

The injury never fully healed and she led a life of periodic invalidism until, from 1871 to 1877 at a time when her health further declined and she was confined to the house and her sofa, she wrote Black Beauty.

While in prison... John Bunyan wrote Pilgrim's Progress. While in self-isolation... I once again failed to read Pilgrims Progress, to finish the spring cleaning and the bag of wool is as full as ever.

I did consume a large quantity of chocolate, knit 25 garments for charity, contact many friends, walk and walk and walk and cook and share three meals on time every day for seven weeks with my long suffering husband for the first time in over 50 years of married life.



10 ways to politely say hello in different countries. Some of which do not involve touching at all

Stick out your tongue

Tibet



Clap your hands

Zimbabwe and Mozambique



Bump noses

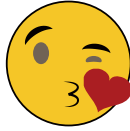
Qatar, Yemen, Oman, United Arab Emirates

Put your hand on your heart

Malaysia

Air kiss on the cheek

France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Latin America, Ukraine, and Québec, Canada



Bow

Cambodia, India, Nepal, Laos, Thailand, and Japan



Sniff faces

Greenland and Tuvalu (Oceania)

Rub noses (and sometimes foreheads)

New Zealand

Shake hands

Botswana, China, Germany, Zambia, Rwanda, and the Middle East



Revere your elders

Asia and Africa



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A Helping Hand

Grenville Branch member Phyllis Beasley making scrubs bags and face masks for those who need them at The Horton Hospital on her treadle singer sewing machine.

For those in the know you won't be surprised that she's had this sewing machine since she did her apprenticeship many years ago. Thank you Phyllis.



Oddfellows Apprenticeship Awards



Aston University in Birmingham, which forms part of James's recent appointment as Trainee Planner with Western Power Distribution. The award is £250 per year for the duration of an Apprenticeship.

James, comes from an Oddfellow family and has been a member since birth and transferred to the Bedford Branch from the Norwich District when the Branch of which they were members closed.

On receiving the news, James said: "I'm extremely grateful. It's been a huge help already, as I've been able to buy things like a laptop, a scientific calculator, course books and a large enough rucksack for me to fit everything in for when I'm working away or on training courses". James tells us that his course is very varied and in addition to time spent at Aston University includes on-site training because, as a future planner he must learn every aspect of the work done by the company including climbing overhead line poles.

The Oddfellows Educational awards are made every year and can be applied for by members going to University or taking an Apprenticeship so if you have a young member of the Society in your family who you think could benefit, contact your Branch Secretary for details, standards are high for the award but as James has proved obtainable.

See page 22 for more information on Oddfellows Educational Awards.

Bedford Branch are delighted to tell you that one of their members, James Gifford, has been awarded one of the coveted Oddfellows Apprenticeship Awards by the Fraternal Board. The grant is designed to support him throughout his three-year Power Engineering Foundation Degree (FdEng) at

Victoria Branch Knuston Lunch



Sixteen members all enjoyed lunch at the beautiful Knuston Hall.

Jordans Flour Mill

On the first of February a group of Oddfellows from the Loyal Albert Branch visited Jordans flour mill near Broom.

The visit started with lunch in the mill cafe adjacent to the mill, after lunch most of the group enjoyed a guided tour of the mill. The mill is an historic site and has been owned by the Jordan family for 150 years and only stopped commercial milling in 2000. It was extensively rebuilt in the late 1900's to the latest specification

having a turbine in place of a water wheel and at the time the latest roller mills rather than the traditional stones.

The site is unique as having passed straight from work to preservation it is largely intact with little restoration needed.

Jordans of course are famous for their cereals, Ryvita and Dorset cereals and these products along with many other healthy and organic foods are available for the discerning customer in the well stocked shop.



Something to look out for

While you are out and about walking or gardening as part of your daily exercise, have a closer look in the pebbles or soil you are digging. Since lockdown we have found a shark's tooth, one of the most common fossils you'll find, (here are a couple next to the real thing), head of a bone and possibly a Dino tooth or could be just a crocodile tooth. Happy hunting. If you find any fossils send me a photo and I will publish them in our next Out and About/newsletter.



Roast at The Crown

Fabulous midweek roast at The Crown at Gawcott on Wednesday 12 February. Friends and members met at this 16th century pub. Roast was lovely, but fish and chips, gammon, chips and egg and lasagne were all tasty too. Pudding? I hear you say! Scrummy. We look forward to visiting again later in the year.



May 2020 Quiz Answers

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. 50 | 6. The Beatles | 11. 1861 |
| 2. 4,000 miles | 7. Chinese | 12. Wolves |
| 3. Hercule Poirot | 8. Nine | 13. Parachute |
| 4. Blue, Yellow, Red | 9. Bigfoot | 14. Lady Jane Grey |
| 5. Greece | 10. Amber | 15. Russia |

A huge thank you to our big-hearted Branches!

In 2019, our Branches and their members collectively raised a staggering £155,000 for good causes and charities. What a wonderful bunch you are!

And this is on top of support being given to other causes such as the RNLI, the HA Andrews Memorial Fund, which has supported various UK medical research projects since 1971, and the Oddfellows' Orphan Gift Fund.

Jane Nelson, Oddfellows CEO, shares how proud she feels to be part of a Society that continually looks at ways it can give back to the community. She says: "You can't go a week on social media without seeing a big cheque being handed over by a Branch to a local charity or good cause. It's so heart-warming to see. And



Prostate Cancer UK received £1,500 from Tunbridge Wells Branch.

then finding out that these kind gestures have amounted to over £155,000, it's simply fantastic. Thank you all for digging deep and doing the best you can to help others in need."

Photos show just a few of the causes that have received your help in 2019.



KIND received £150 from Mersey Branch.



British Heart Foundation received over £1,300 from Great Berkhamstead Branch.

Find out more about how the Society is giving back to its communities at www.oddfellows.co.uk/about/giving-back

Financial help to progress your studies and your career



Lisa Sutlow (pictured), a Leodis Branch member and winner of a 2019 First Degree Course Educational Award says: "The Award has allowed me to cut down the hours I work, meaning I can have quiet time during the day to focus on my studies."

I want to be a great example to my two daughters, Isabelle and Harriet, to show them you can achieve anything with hard work and passion. I can't wait to become an occupational therapist, being able to make a difference and help someone every day."

Are you soon to start your first apprenticeship or your first degree course at university? Remember, all members with five years' continuous membership are invited to apply for an Oddfellows Educational Award. These awards are open to all eligible members, regardless of age.

First Degree Course Educational Award

Each year, we grant up to three First Degree Course Educational Awards consisting of £900 per year for the duration of a student's first degree programme.* To apply, applications should be made via your Branch around April, with judging taking place in September.

Apprenticeship Educational Award

Each year, we grant up to three Apprenticeship Educational Awards consisting of £250 per year for the duration (maximum three years) of a member's apprenticeship.* To apply for the 2019 Apprenticeship Educational Awards, applications should be made via your Branch no later than 31 March 2020 for consideration in April 2020. For the 2020 Apprenticeship Awards, you need to apply via your Branch around September 2020. Judging will take place in February 2021.

*Young Oddfellows membership is taken into consideration. To check your eligibility and to see the full terms and conditions of this benefit, go to www.oddfellows.co.uk/member-tcs.

Getting the right social care support – challenging refusals, diversions and delays

It's an all too common conversation over our Care and Welfare Helpline. Members, and their families, want to find out what social care support they're entitled to and, having requested or had a needs or carer's assessment from their local council, they're facing refusals, diversions or delays.

“We often find that members are having to deal with such setbacks during times of crisis,” said Andrea Libman of the Oddfellows' Care and Welfare team. “This makes it more likely to be confused about what you're entitled to, know where you're up to with decisions, and what you're to do next.

“My single biggest piece of advice is to find out about your entitlements. We can help you with that. Secondly, it's to get support if you need it, to help you make progress.”

How to take positive action

- **Keep notes.** From day one, keep a record of who you spoke to, what they agreed to do, any deadlines and the date and time of the call. This will help you to know where things are up to.
- **Get decisions in writing.** Social services should write to you about any decisions they make, such as a care and support plan, the outcome of a financial assessment to determine care cost contributions, or a decision about a disabled facilities grant for home adaptations.



- **Make a complaint.** If you can't informally resolve a complaint, use the council's official complaint process. When submitting a complaint, it's essential to set out each issue clearly, explain what has or hasn't happened and what outcomes you're seeking.
- **Contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.** If you're not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, escalate it to the Ombudsman. If you pay for your own care, you can take your complaint to the Ombudsman if you've exhausted your care provider's complaints process.

Are you in this situation and need some support? We'll help where we can. Call the Care and Welfare Helpline on **0800 0149 822**. Lines are open from 9.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Thursday and 9.30am to 4pm on Friday. The 0800 number is free to call from landlines and mobiles. You can also email care@oddfellows.co.uk.

Oddfellows Members: Do you need help?



None of us know what is around the corner...

Local Care and Welfare Support

To request contact from a Welfare Visitor and for local help and information about Branch benefits and benevolence contact Doreen on **01280 822399** or email **doreen.sams@oddfellows.co.uk**.

Oddfellows Citizens Advice Line Call 0800 0149 821*

(free to callers from any landline or mobile number)

Monday - Friday, 9.30am - 4.30pm

Email: oddfellows@manchestercab.org



Run by Citizens Advice for Oddfellows members, you can access free, confidential, independent advice on welfare benefits, money and debt issues, consumer problems, housing, fuel bills, employment issues and many other issues.

***The Oddfellows cannot provide legal advice and accepts no liability whatsoever for advice provided by Citizens Advice, which is an independent advice agency. If you have any queries about the advice you have received or wish to make a complaint then you should contact Citizens Advice directly. Citizens Advice operate a formal complaints process.**

Care and Welfare Helpline Call 0800 0149 822

(free to callers from any landline or mobile number)

Monday to Thursday, 9.30am - 4.30pm, Friday, 9.30am - 4pm

Email: care@oddfellows.co.uk

Run by the Oddfellows Care and Welfare Department, you can access information and guidance on issues such as accessing health and care services, supported housing, support for carers, and planning for later life. The helpline will try and identify any Oddfellows benefits or services in the community which may be of help to you.

**Visit our website page at www.oddfellows.co.uk/benefits/care
for care and welfare information**

The Oddfellows is the trading name of The Independent Order of Odd Fellows Manchester Unity Friendly Society Limited, incorporated and registered in England and Wales No. 223F.
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