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The Secretary, Freemason Editorial Committee
The United Grand Lodge of NSW & ACT
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Australian Bush Fire – Disaster Relief Action

The 2019-20 Australian bush fire season began with several serious uncontrolled fires in June 2019. Throughout the summer hundreds of fires burned, mainly in the south east of the country. The major fires peaked during December - January and as of early March 2020 the fires had ruined an estimated 186,000 square kilometres of land, destroyed over 5,900 buildings including 2,779 homes and killed at least 34 people. The scale of the damage was overwhelming.

In early January 2020 the Grand Lodge of British Freemasons in Germany (GL BFG) was made aware of a New South Wales Freemasons Disaster Relief Fund to assist with immediate and practical assistance to the brethren in their jurisdiction, their families, and local communities, who had been affected by both the fires and drought conditions. This was via a communication from MW Bro Derek J Robson AM, Grand Master UGL NSW & the ACT. The disaster fund is administered and promoted by Masonicare, which actively participates in and runs numerous fund-raising activities throughout the year for local communities.

Recognising the urgency of the situation, the Grand Master of the GL BFG, MW Bro Glyn Edmonds, sent out a call for supporting donations for this cause to all constituent lodges, the Grand Lodge of Germany (VGLvD), all Grand Lodges within the VGLvD, and the Freimaurerisches Hilfswerke. All monies were to be collected in the Grand Lodge Charity Account and the GL BFG made an immediate donation to kick start the proceedings of €4000 (A\$6,500). Word quickly spread and donations were immediately forthcoming from individuals, lodges, Grand Lodges and from other masonic orders in Germany and further afield.

In an unprecedented show of united generosity and charity, one of the grand principles in which the order of our marvellous fraternity is founded and practised, an astounding sum had been received by the proposed cut-off date and the GL BFG was able to donate €30,000 (A\$48,500) to the Masonicare New South Wales Freemasons Disaster Relief Fund on the last day of February. An incredible achievement for such a small Grand Lodge.

The GL BFG is humbled and extremely appreciative of the amount given to this aid initiative and to the speed with which it was donated. An old proverb wisely states 'He who gives quickly, gives twice'.

We can all be assured it will be faithfully applied.

Fraternally,

W Bro Christopher Bilson
GL BFG Grand Charity Steward

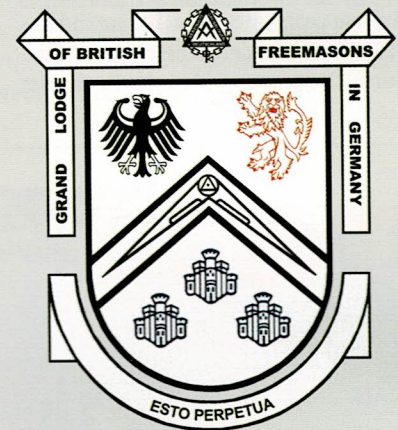
Grand Lodge of British Freemasons in Germany

British Freemasons have been in Germany for more than 50 years.

The first lodge, New Absalom Lodge, was consecrated in 1957 as part of the United Grand Lodges of Germany but soon afterward 'A Provincial Grand Lodge of British Freemasons in Germany' was founded. In 1980, the current Grand Lodge of British Freemasons in Germany (GLBFG) was created.

Although they are German masons, they are a truly International Grand Lodge and have members from all four corners of the globe making up our ranks within the 18 lodges covered.

The Coat of arms of the GLBFG is shown to the right. The eagle symbolizes Germany, the lion Great Britain. The three castles are to remind us of the original Provincial Grand Lodge of British Freemasons in Germany. The motto, *Esto Perpetua* means 'May it last forever'.



The United Grand Lodges of Germany have existed as an umbrella organisation to order masonic diversity in Germany since 1958. It covers some 15,000 German Freemasons, who are organised independently in five Member Grand Lodges where they actively lead lives in the masonic community.