



Somerset 2031 Festival

In support of the MCF, The Freemasons' Charity





Welcome to Somerset 2031 Festival

- Barrie Palmer APM
- Howard Wilson MCF Trustee





Meet the Team

- Sam Tam - Secretary
- Robin Browning - Treasurer
- Graham Puddy PGCS
- Darren Sinclair PGCS Designate
- Adrian Robson PGA
- Geoff Lester PGCS RA
- Steve Collings AsstPGCS
- Andy Wade IT

David will hand over to Howard Wilson.



I am sure you are all aware of the four pillars or values on which Freemasonry rests. Integrity, friendship, respect and service. All of these have a part to play in how we live as members of wider society as well as members of this fraternal society.

They also play a part in how we consider and practice our personal aims in life and for the purposes of this presentation, our philanthropic ambitions.

The United Grand Lodge of England says that kindness and charitable giving are deeply ingrained within the principles of Freemasonry. Service and of course charity is in a Freemason's DNA. It is the focus of the First Degree ceremony and its importance and virtues are the first lesson that a newly made Freemason learns.

It is therefore important that every member has the tools and knowledge to ensure that they are able to fulfil their own personal ambitions on how to demonstrate their commitment to this important aspect of being a Freemason.

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To enable you to do this, UGLE provides several resources to help everyone make positive contributions to charity. One of the largest and most effective of these resources is the MCF, the Freemasons' Charity.

The MCF are proud to work as UGLE's key partner when it comes to charity. Of the £50 million that Freemasonry gives on average each year, around half comes through the MCF.

But what is the Masonic Charitable Foundation? Well, the MCF is the Freemasons' Charity. A charity that is funded through the generosity of Freemasons and their families that helps the most vulnerable people in society to live happy, fulfilling lives. A charity that strives for excellence by making a difference and being responsive to need.

The MCF is one of the largest grant-making charities in the country, building better lives by enabling opportunity, advancing healthcare and education and promoting independence.

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What does the MCF do?

- Local communities
- Local good causes and charities
- Funding national charities
- Masonic families
- Creating impact



The MCF supports communities.

Whether it's our local community, good causes and charities that work locally to improve lives, providing a national grant to charities that help communities across the country thrive or of course supporting our own masonic community, the MCF engages with communities and creates impact.

Let's take a look in more detail how this support is actually delivered

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What does the MCF do?

- Reaching into the heart of Somerset communities by enabling Somerset Freemasons to have a greater input.



There is a new drive to ensure that Freemasonry engages in more effective ways with our local community. The recently published UGLE Third Pillar Review adopts this theme throughout, and UGLE are working on a number of initiatives that support this approach. The MCF are also looking at ways that we can enhance our approach and work with UGLE to meet shared ambitions in this area.

Our work, supporting local charities has been part of our vision for society where everyone has the opportunity to lead positive, active and fulfilling lives, especially those that are in need, disadvantaged or marginalised, since our creation in 2016.

This has been achieved by awarding grants to local good causes that work in areas such as early years development, special educational needs & disabilities, domestic abuse and dementia.

In addition, we have worked with Provinces to award grants to charities that are important to the freemasons in that Province. This has been achieved through our Matched Funding Programme and our Festival Grants Scheme.

This has resulted in 41 grants being made to charities in Somerset since the end of your last Festival in 2020. These grants total just over £407,000. 22 of the grants were made through applications by the Province using the matched funding scheme.

The grants have covered areas such as Bath, Keynsham, Long Ashton, Yeovil and Frome and provided support to children, the hospice movement, those with sight impairment, those suffering with their mental health, poverty and tackling loneliness and isolation.

But the MCF want to go further, we want to enhance our reach into the heart of your Province and this is why from April next year we are extending the funds that will be available to the Province when wishing to support local good causes. This will be done by allocating 25% of your Festival income for the Province to disperse. Giving you all more input into how, through the MCF, Somerset Freemasons can play a greater role in community engagement.

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The MCF are also support local people through our national grants with strategic partners like Home Start.

The MCF provided a £1,000,000 grant over five years to expand Home Starts 'Big Hopes, Big future' programme to support families with young children facing serious challenges. The programme which concludes this year, aims to improve children's readiness for school by fostering positive home learning environments for children aged from 18 months to five years

The impact of this grant is that 1,100 children have been supported, with focus on critical skills development in areas such as language, cognitive abilities, daily living skills and behavioural improvement ensuring that children in communities like those here in Somerset, were better equipped to engage with nursery and school life.

The MCF will continue to make these strategic partnerships to enable greater reach through projects that engage and improve lives for local families.

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It will of course, always be the case the MCF will support members of our own Masonic Family when there is a real need or crisis, and this demonstrated by the amount of support that has been afforded members in Somerset. Since your last festival ended, the MCF has provided £1.1million to support families through 382 grants.

However, we must remember that the number and the value of grants does not paint the full picture. The MCF also do a lot of work supporting members in other areas.

An example of this is our support for mental health which has always been a core focus of our work. We have continued deliver mental health services to individuals and their families addressing well-being needs and in the last year we provided mental health support for over 400 adults and nearly 70 children

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MCF Advice and Support Team

- Free, confidential support for Freemasons & families
- Help with financial issues, care needs, education & child well-being.



Another area where the MCF provide support that is in the form of a grant is through the work of our Advice and Support Team or AST.

The AST offers a free and confidential service for Freemasons and their families. They can help by talking about financial difficulties, assisting with applications for MCF support, discussing the best approach to meet care needs, exploring how home adaptations and mobility aids can help people maintain independence, and by offering practical advice on education and the well-being of children.

Perhaps even more important though, is that the AST is a trusted and knowledgeable resource for understanding and accessing benefits grants and other financial assistance. They can signpost to state and local authority benefits and services available from other charitable organisations.

And the reason why this is so important is because often the system is complex, time is short, or there is a lack of clarity on who could be eligible to make a claim. Sometimes people are doing their best in tough times and simply haven't been told what help exists from the state and/or their local authority, or they assume

they won't qualify.

The AST are successfully helping people get through all these issues and in just the first nine months of this year alone, the AST have identified over £1.5 million of state and local authority benefits that were not being claimed.

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There are many other areas in which the MCF.

For instance, the MCF feels that it is really important that everyone plans for the future, and this includes making a Will. Having a Will ensures that your wishes are carried out.

Therefore, to make the process of writing a Will as easy as possible, the MCF have collaborated with The Goodwill Partnership to offer the provision of a Will writing service paid for by the MCF.

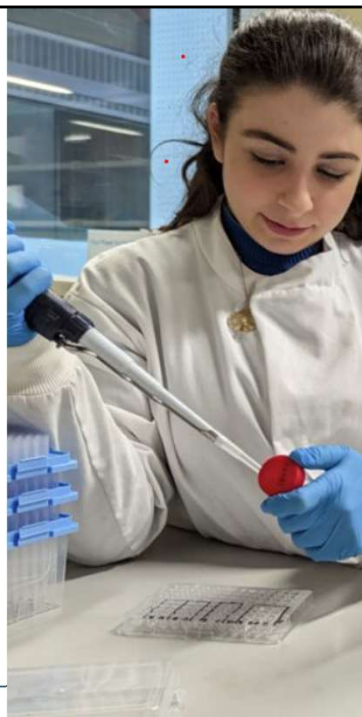
The MCF feel so strongly about ensuring that people have a Will in place that this service is not just available to all Freemasons those associated with Freemasons. It is available to anyone. People from every walk of life can have access to a quality Will, giving them peace of mind that their future wishes are recorded and carried out.

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Investing in the future

- MCF funds research to improve treatment & services for life-changing illnesses
- Focus on early career researchers through PhD studentships



Thinking more about society and the impact that we can make for future generations, the MCF has, for many years, funded medical research. The primary aim of this funding is to improve knowledge, treatment, and services for people with life changing diseases and illnesses.

Recognising that early career research is often underfunded, the MCF focuses its medical research programme on funding PhD studentships, which we hope will create the next generation of research experts and scientists.

We have supported research into a range of diseases including prostate cancer, motor neurone disease, Alzheimer's, heart disease and many more.

Our medical research programme is invitation only and our current focus is childhood diseases and conditions.

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Encouraging talent

- Identifying exceptional talent
- Supporting children and grandchildren of Freemasons





The MCF also want young people to thrive and become the best version of themselves, promoting their exceptional skills and abilities.

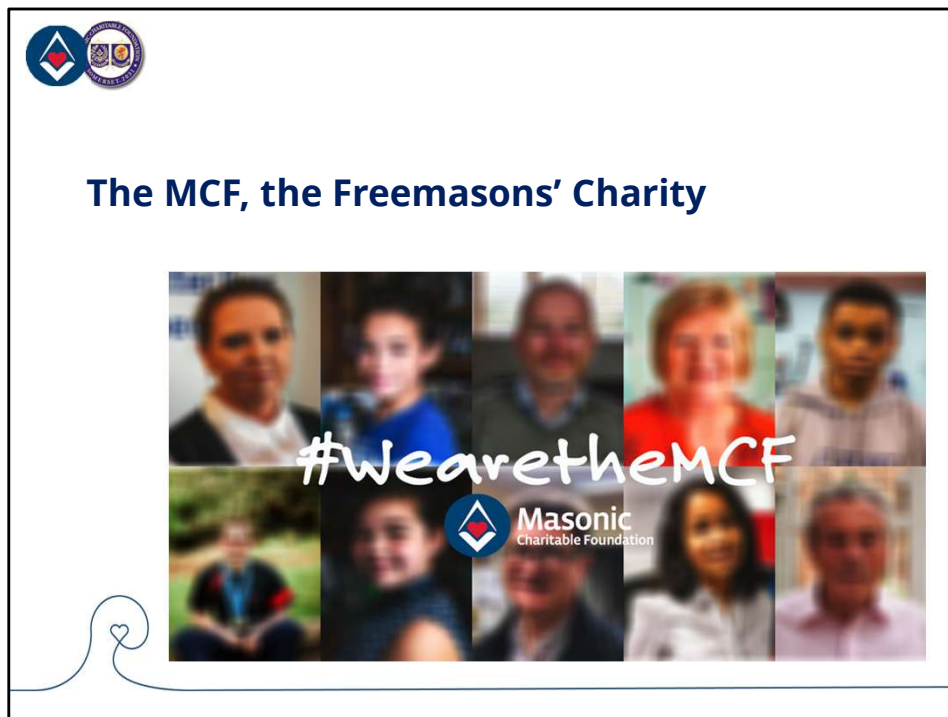
The MCF's talent aid programme helps the children and grandchildren of Freemasons who are exceptionally talented in music sport or the performing arts.

Grants can be awarded to assist with ongoing costs such as sports coaching, advanced music lessons, and the purchase of one-off items such as a musical instrument or sports equipment.

Support is agreed for a set period and subject to an annual financial assessment and confirmation that the candidate's talent continues to develop.

As you can imagine the scheme is competitive and has limited funds, therefore there is a short window of when applications can be made. This window will open in January 2026.

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Brethren to conclude the MCF is funded entirely through the generosity of Freemasons and their families and has become one of the largest grant-making charities in the country.

Through the work that I have just described you can see that we really do build better lives by enabling opportunity, advancing healthcare and education, and promoting independence.

We stand by our vision for society that everyone has the opportunity to lead positive active and fulfilling lives especially those that are in need disadvantaged or marginalised, and we also stand by our vision for the Masonic community in that Masonic families are healthy stable and secure thereby providing them with the opportunities to participate actively in their community and succeed in life.

With your support through the 2031 Festival, we will continue to create impact and remain a positive force for good.

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The 2031 Festival

- What is a festival



It is very much a part of the history that Freemasonry supports charity. It is ingrained in our ceremonies and underlies who we are.

The question of why and how we do this can be sourced back to a rather generous Dentist, Bartholomew Ruspini. An Italian dentist who settled in England in the 1750s, Ruspini set about transforming professional dental care through his developments and inventions. But more than that, once he became a Freemason, his generosity truly flourished.

Ruspini didn't just treat London's poor for free—he also organized large-scale charitable efforts within the Grand Lodge. One of his most remarkable achievements was founding a school for girls in 1788, specifically to support the daughters of Freemasons who had fallen on hard times.

And he didn't do it alone. Thanks to his close ties with the Prince of Wales—who he once saved with a dental styptic—he secured royal patronage. The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland also lent their support, and the Royal Cumberland School for Girls was born.

To fund the school, Ruspini came up with a clever idea: musical performances. He sold tickets to concerts, drawing support from fellow Freemasons and the well-to-do patients whose teeth he'd fixed.

This idea of coming together to raise funds laid the foundation for what we now call a Festival.

So what is a Festival?

It's a fundraising appeal that supports the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF). It usually lasts about 5 to 6 years and ends with a big celebration—the Festival finale. During the appeal, members across the Province get involved: donating, hosting events, raising awareness, and having fun while doing good.

The Festival is a true partnership between the Province and the MCF. The MCF supports every step of the way, helping ensure the appeal is successful and impactful.

There are 44 Provinces in the Festival system, and each one holds a Festival every 11 years. At any given time, around 24 Festival Appeals are running. It's a powerful, ongoing tradition of generosity and community spirit and as we know is something that you and your members here in Somerset are, once again, about to embark upon.

Handover to David Maddern

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The 2031 Festival

The Festival Target will be.....

£2,500,000





Festival Honorifics

Lodge Honorifics

Award Level 1 - £450/member

Award Level 2 - £750/member

Award Level 3 - £1,000/member

Tennyson Lodge No 4947
Somerset 2020 Festival Achievement



2007 Festival 5 Acorn Lodge





Festival Honorifics

Member Honorifics

| | |
|--------------|--------|
| Steward | £450 |
| Vice Patron | £750 |
| Patron | £1,200 |
| Grand Patron | £2,400 |





Festival Giving



Masonic
Charitable Foundation

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Festivals

To raise money for the MCF, Provinces in England and Wales organise fundraising appeals known as festivals. A festival appeal usually lasts for five years. Festival appeals are a vital source of funding and generate the majority of donations made to the MCF. We are extremely grateful for the hard work and generosity of Freemasons who support their festival appeals.

Filter festivals by:

Somerset

2031

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Sort by:

Date (Newest)



Page 1 of 1



Somerset 2031 Festival

[DONATE OR FUNDRAISE](#) [SET A REGULAR DONATION](#) [MORE INFO](#)

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Festival Giving

Somerset 2031 Festival

Relief Chest No: E2031

Scan the QR code to set up a regular donation to donate by direct debit



or visit <https://donate.mcf.org.uk/festival/somerset>

Somerset 2031 Festival

Digital Donations

To make a donation, scan the below QR code

Somerset 2031 Festival
E2031

To make a donation
Scan with phone camera to open
or visit URL

<https://gtap.uk/e2031>



OR

click the below URL

<https://gtap.uk/e2031>

Hand Over to Howard Wison

The graphic is divided into two main sections. The left section has a white background and contains two circular logos at the top left: the first is a blue circle with a white triangle and a red heart, and the second is a purple circle with a white cross and a red heart. Below the logos, the text "Why donate" is written in a bold, dark blue font. Underneath this, a bullet point in blue text reads: "• Because your contributions really do make a difference, create impact and build better lives, just ask Steven!". At the bottom left of this section is a decorative blue line that forms a heart shape. The right section of the graphic is a photograph of a young boy with short brown hair, wearing a white t-shirt under a dark green button-down shirt. He is sitting and gesturing with his right hand as if speaking.

Why donate

- Because your contributions really do make a difference, create impact and build better lives, just ask Steven!

We have now heard about the various ways in which you and your members can make their contributions to the Festival appeal, but the big question is why should they make their donation.

There are of course many reasons why people give to charity and whatever those reasons are, the one common thing that every donor wants to know, is that their contribution will make a difference.

It would be is easy for me to stand here and tell you about the thousands of grants and millions of pounds that go out from the MCF but this won't give you a sense of what your donation can do, so let me give you an example and to do so, we need to go back to 2022 and the publication of the Good Childhood Report.

This report confirmed a worrying trend: that over several years, children's happiness was continuing to decline. While the exact number of children struggling with issues like anxiety and depression remains unclear, the data is stark—over the past three years, the likelihood of a young person experiencing a mental health problem has risen by 50%.

Today, it's estimated that in every classroom of 30 children, 5 are likely to have a mental health issue. That's 1 in 6 children aged 5 to 16. Even more concerning is that half of all mental health problems begin by the age of 14.

One of the biggest challenges these young people face is the long wait for support. Delays can worsen their condition, and some children are even turned away, having been told their problems aren't "serious enough" to qualify for help. Those who do make it onto waiting lists often don't receive support until they reach a crisis point.

At the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF), we've also acted. We believe early intervention is key to ensuring young people get the help they need, when they need it most. Acknowledging the growing demand for mental health support, we launched a dedicated programme in 2023 to support the children and grandchildren of Freemasons aged 5 to 16.

Since its launch, the programme has already supported nearly 150 children on their mental health journey—children like Steven.

Steven, 13, is the son of a Freemason. He sought support after experiencing difficulties with friendships at school, which left him feeling excluded, anxious, and low in mood.

His goal was to build confidence, improve self-esteem, and better understand his emotions.

Over six sessions of counselling, Steven engaged actively, using creative tools to challenge negative thoughts and develop coping strategies.

By the end of the programme, he reported on the impact that his sessions had on his mental health.

This included, Improved mood, Reduced anxiety, increased confidence, greater comfort in seeking support and a stronger ability to manage his wellbeing.

So why is this relevant, well it is hoped that as many members in the Province as possible will qualify as Festival Stewards and hopefully gain an honorific. It will entitle the member to wear a Festival Stewards Jewel, demonstrating to all others their commitment to the Appeal, their commitment to caring.

This is really important to people like Steven. Because if you do become a Festival Steward and go on to qualify as vice Patron, you will have provided the

funding for those 6 counselling sessions. That's what you, that's what your members do. It's that simple. Become a vice Patron and support a child, or other beneficiaries in various ways.

And for Steven, well, Steven and of course every beneficiary has a story to tell, and every story needs a hero.

So those of you who are Stewards or indeed holders of higher honorifics, I say this, - you could be the hero in Steven's story, or any number of those who receive MCF support.



Remember, not all heroes wear capes, some wear a Festival Stewards Jewel.

I hope that this re-assures you and your members that making a donation to the MCF, through your Festival, really does make a difference, really does have an impact and really does build better lives.

[CLICK](#)



Sponsored events

- How to run them
- Freemasonry Gives



There are countless ways to raise funds, but if you are looking for something creative, fun and effective then sponsored events stand out as one of the most engaging and rewarding. They not only help generate donations but also bring people together—members, donors, and supporters—around a shared goal. These events offer donors a chance to feel involved and connected to your fundraising appeal.

From traditional activities like runs, walks, and cycles to more personal challenges such as weight-loss journeys or beard-growing marathons, the possibilities are endless. If you're looking for something a bit different, why not try a virtual balloon race or an endurance event? You can even design a challenge that reflects something meaningful to you—there's no limit to your creativity.

Sponsored events are fun, inclusive, and highly effective. They allow individuals or groups to take on a challenge while donors support them through sponsorship. Because these donations are voluntary, they qualify for Gift Aid, helping you maximise your fundraising impact.

Beyond the financial benefits, sponsored events foster a sense of community.

Supporters stay engaged through updates and stories, and everyone shares in the success of the challenge.

All it takes is a spark of imagination and a willingness to take on a challenge. The more unique or adventurous the idea, the more likely it is to capture attention and inspire donations. A well-promoted event creates buzz and excitement—and that's where your fundraising page comes in.

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Festival Events





Set up a page, share it via social media and email, and keep your supporters updated throughout the journey. This not only boosts engagement but also helps raise more funds.

Success depends on how well your activity is promoted. A strong fundraising page is essential. The MCF's new platform, Freemasonry Gives, is designed to help you do just that. Managed by the Relief Chest, it's available to any member who wants to start fundraising. You'll find everything you need on the MCF Fundraising Hub.

Freemasonry Gives lets you share your activity, raise awareness, and boost support—all in one place.

Sponsored events bring people together, spark creativity, and raise vital funds. Whether you go classic or quirky, the opportunities are endless.

So, the question is: what will you do?

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Festival Comms & Marketing

Aim: Share a clear, inspiring, and consistent message about the Festival

Resources available

- Festival logo & brand pack
- Brochures, banners, and posters
- PowerPoint & leaflet templates
- Email & social media materials
- Key messages & FAQs
- QR Code – Toolkit Access (Coming Soon)

How we will communicate

- Through Lodge meetings & festive boards
- Provincial website & newsletter
- Social media & community outreach
- Shared Lodge stories & updates

Your role

- Use the materials provided
- Share the Festival story with your Lodge
- Feed back success stories & ideas

"Clear. Consistent. Inspiring. Every Lodge a part of the story."





Festival Resources IT & Website

E2031 - Somerset 2031 Festival

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[Become a fundraiser >](#)

Resources and Guides

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Regular Donation by Post (PDF) | Download |
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| Single Donation by post (PDF) | Download |
| Single donation by QR code (PDF) | Download |
| Credit Card Donation by post (PDF) | Download |
| Miscellaneous Form (PDF) | Download |
| Donating from a Lodge Relief Chest (PDF) | Download |
| Gift Aid Envelope verification form (PDF) | Download |
| Guide to donating for Charity Stewards. (PDF) | Download |
| Guide for Donors (PDF) | Download |





In addition to the support that you will receive from your Provincial Festival team, there are many resources that are available to you from the MCF.

Perhaps the most useful resource that you have is the MCF Fundraising Hub. The Hub is an online portal that hosts an array of support materials for those looking to improve their fundraising skills, outcomes and achievements.

Created by the Fundraising team it has become the go to place for all guidance and information regarding fundraising matters.

There are currently six sections on the hub; The Festival Guidelines, Festival Bites, Best Practice and Governance, The Fundraising toolkit, Conference Presentations and the TLC Hub.

There are 89 documents and videos on the hub all of which are produced, reviewed and maintained by the Fundraising team and are designed to answer as many of your questions as possible.

I would anticipate that you will use the Fundraising Toolkit and the Best Practice

and Governance sections more than any others.

Topics covered in these sections include, creating a fundraising plan, affordable giving, a Charity Stewards report template, using Digital Donations, objection handling, lotteries and raffles and much more.

The Fundraising Hub can be accessed at mcf.org.uk/fundraisinghub

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Other resources available to you include the UGLE Charity Stewards Guide, the MCF website and of course the Fundraising team at the MCF. The team are always on hand to answer questions and signpost you to ways in which you can get the most out of your fundraising efforts.

It is also really important that as Charity Stewards, you know the latest news from the MCF, therefore it is a really good idea, if you have not already done so, to sign up to the MCF e-newsletter, the Better Lives online magazine and follow the social media output from the MCF.

The best way to ensure that your members understand the case for support, the reason why they are being asked to donate, is to know what the MCF are doing and the impact that we are making through their contributions.

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Q and A and myth-busting

