

The quarterly newsletter  
of the District Grand  
Lodge of the South Island

# DEGREES SOUTH



AUGUST 2013

## DISTRICT GRAND MASTER THROWS DOWN THE GAUNTLET

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### IMPORTANT DATES

- Saturday 3rd August - Combined Midland English Meeting hosted by the Lodge of St John.
- 7th September - Greymouth Lodge Installation
- 9th September - Lodge of St John Installation
- 18th September - Dunedin Lodge Installation
- 15th October - Ashburton Lodge Installation
- 17th October - St Albans Lodge Installation
- 19th October - Southern Star Lodge Installation

Greetings to all Brethren and their families,

Well another Annual Communications has been and gone and what a weekend it was. The Brethren and their Ladies of the Conyers Lodge are to be commended for the efforts they put in in making this one of the most enjoyable Communications yet. From the Friday night get together - great meet and greet opportunity - (the small numbers of seats available meant everyone had to mix and socialize - which is the object of the exercise) to the meeting itself where I will admit to a slight hiccup with the election of the Board Members - the first time since I became District Grand Master that we have had to hold an election for the Board - to the Communications Dinner (Fire Alarm and all) topped off with the entertainment to round off the evening. It must have been enjoyable as someone who shall remain nameless wound up doing "head spins" in a kilt at the end of the evening. I must commend the organisers for employing the services of an "Events Manager". His expertise ensured the smooth running of both the Friday night function and Saturday evening's dinner. I would also like to express the appreciation of all to our District Grand Secretary, Ron Sutherland for his organisation of the formal part of proceedings through to his liaising with the Conyers organisers and ensuring the smooth running of the weekend.

Recently I sent a letter through your Lodge Secretaries setting out the progress we have made over the past few years - the well managed growth of our Charity Fund Base is a credit to our Treasurer and his financial advisers and the increase in overall membership, given the general downturn in membership in this country is most gratifying and is a credit to all Lodges.

During the Address to the Brethren at Communications I challenged you all to select from the ritual book a "charge" for



you to learn during the course of the year and to take the opportunity to present it at one of your Lodge meetings. Freemasonry is not about being a member and fitting in - it is about self-improvement by Charity, Friendship and more importantly, improving yourself. Most of us - me included - have experienced that trepidation when first asked to present a part of the ritual in Lodge. The only way to overcome this is to learn, practise and present. With each presentation comes more confidence - just remember that the charge you are giving is as much a theatrical play as it is an address to the recipient. You owe it to yourself to be the best that you can!

I am looking forward to hearing of the positive results in this sphere and I wish you all well as you take up this challenge.

Until next time,

*Fraternally yours*

*Geoffrey W Rowe District Grand Master*

## FROM THE DEPUTY DISTRICT GRAND MASTER

Fancy we are already half way through the year. The Royal Prince George has arrived, Wellington has had a good shake up, some of the Highlanders forward pack have signed up for contracts at Social Welfare complete with Gold Cards and the Crusaders have made the Semifinals of Super 15 again so all is good.

Masonically we are looking forward to the Combined Canterbury English lodge meeting in Timaru, the Irish and Scottish Installations in Dunedin and Milton, the Dunedin lodge Installation in Blenheim, then the big trip across the Alps to the Greymouth Installation, followed by the Lodge of St John and the Ashburton installations. Holy mackerel it will be nearly Christmas by then!

The lodges in the Midland District are all in good heart and we are very pleased to hear that Wor Bro John Kinvig will be the new Mid-

land District Grand Master for the NZC for the next three years and I am looking forward to working with him. We have been very lucky to have Very Wor Bro Allen Glasson as Dist Grand Master for the previous three years and I would like to thank Allen and the GDC Very Wor bro Alex Solomon for the support, friendship and courtesies that they have extended not only to me personally but also to the EC in particular. There is a strong bond of friendship and support within the Midland District which I am sure will continue under the leadership if John Kinvig.

I sincerely hope that all brethren are enjoying good health and survived the winter well and looking forward to the longer warmer days ahead.

Cheers Ken

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*There's a world where all are equal we're coming to it fast  
We shall meet upon the level there, when the days on Earth are passed  
We shall stand before the altar and our Master will be there  
To try the blocks we offer with his own unerring Square  
We shall meet upon the level there but never thence depart  
There's a Mansion — 'tis all ready for each trusting, faithful heart  
There's a Mansion and a welcome and a multitude is there  
Who have met upon the Level and been tried upon the Square  
Let us meet upon the level then while these earthly ties we share  
And just hope we're there to answer when the roll is called up there  
As we travel through our lifespan time aids us to prepare  
To gather up our working tools and part upon the Square  
So remember all our teachings, that bright Fraternal chain  
We part upon the Square below to meet in Heaven again  
These words have precious meaning and are practiced everywhere  
We meet upon the Level & we part upon the Square. (Dr. Rob Morris 1854)*

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## W BRO JACK SHEEHAN

West Coast Freemasonry has lost one of its senior freemasons, with the passing of Wor. Bro. Ramon John (Jack) Sheehan R.H., and Past District Grand Bible Bearer, New Zealand Constitution.

Jack died peacefully in Greymouth Hospital on the morning of Monday 13th May 2013. At the time of his death he was Wor. Master of the Greymouth Lodge 1233 E.C., and only the week before he had been present to see the lodges candidate be raised to the third degree. At age 26 years, occupation coal miner, February 1960, he was initiated into Lodge Waro 173 NZC at Blackball. He followed his fathers' footsteps. He was W.M. of that lodge in 1968. When Waro closed, Jack joined Advance Lodge 61 NZC, again becoming the W.M. Advance amalgamated with Mawhera Lodge to become Advance Mawhera Lodge 61 NZC., again Jack occupied the Masters' chair.

In 2010 after visiting Greymouth Lodge for many years, Jack became a joining member, and W.M. for the 2012/2013 year. He was

very proud to have for the first time since 1994 a candidate taking the three degrees. Jack was also a member of allied degrees, often over the years visiting fellow lodges up and down the Coast.

He was a quietly spoken man, a fine ritualist, active in his R.S.A., a community and family man, respected by many.

His brother Viv. is currently W.M. of Advance Mawhera Lodge. Jack was very keen to see Greymouth Lodge move permanently to Freemasons' Hall at Shantytown, and prior to his death was able to see two meetings of that lodge take place in the new home.

His funeral service was held at Greymouth on Thursday 16th May, attended by many Greymouth residents, as well as freemasons. V. Wor. Bro. Peter Robinson D.G.M. Westland NZC and Wor. Bro. Doug Stapleton P.M. Greymouth Lodge 1233 E.C. spoke in masonic terms.

Our deepest sympathies to Jack's partner Maureen Dando and the Sheehan family.

*"He was a quietly spoken man, a fine ritualist, active in his R.S.A., a community and family man, respected by many."*

## A VISIT TO A UK LODGE

Brethren, greetings from Lincolnshire, where we are told we are going through a most unusual heat wave, although not so much here on the East coast.

Since leaving Nelson on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May we find ourselves about two thirds of our way through our northern hemisphere sojourn. On our way to visit family in the UK we stopped for a few days at Narita in Japan, then subsequently have travelled by train through France, Germany, Austria and Italy. Since returning to the UK, we recently bumped into the DGSec, Ron Sutherland and wife Bettine in the city of York. Masonically, when visiting the U.K. at this time of the year, it's usual to find a lack of Masonic activity due to their summer recess May to September. However, just prior to leaving N.Z., I had been in contact with Bro. Richard Cox who is a member of Southern Star Lodge, but who lives and works in Penarth, South Wales. Richard is now a member of the Dinas Powis Lodge No. 5997 in the province of South Wales and currently Junior Warden. During my correspondence with Richard I mentioned that we would be in the U.K. for a number of weeks in June and July which prompted him to ask if I would like to visit his Lodge on the 8<sup>th</sup> June as they were having a very special meeting which involved a visit by Lodge Nitshill No. 1478, from Glasgow. The visitors were due to perform a Scottish 3<sup>rd</sup> degree ceremony which was to be followed by a Ladies dining evening and entertainment by a Welsh Choir. This sounded so good that I jumped at the chance even though it required some very rapid head-scratching changes to our schedule.

Arrangements were made for the visit through Richard's Lodge Secretary who obtained the appropriate approvals. After first catching up with family we then made our way to South Wales to our Hotel on the Sea front at Penarth. On the Saturday, we met up with Richard and wife Alison before going our separate ways. Alison and Fran went local touring whilst Richard and I attended the Lodge where I was received by the Worshipful Master, Wor Bro David Jones as his visitor. Once greetings were given following the opening, the members of Lodge Nitshill were received and the gavel exchanged, the afternoon ceremony proceeded. I found it to be a most interesting, fascinating and an enjoyable ceremony, many parts of which I could relate to Chapter of which I am a member.

At the end of the meeting and during exchange of greetings, I was presented with a book "A History of the Masonic Province of



*Dave and Fran Stenning pictured outside a local hostelry with Richard and Alison Cox*

South Wales" as a memento of my visit. The book also contains a signed greeting by the Rt Wor Bro Capt Sir Norman Edwards, Prov GM. Provincial Grand Lodge of South Wales. Following the closing of the Lodge, we were joined by our ladies for the festive board. This was a wonderful occasion with a traditional Welsh menu and fare, whilst we were entertained by the choir who sang typical Welsh and other well known songs where we were invited to join in.

Another aspect that made the evening so special was the meeting up of some very old Royal Air Force friends of mine, dating back to 1960-63 who were invited to attend the evening function by Richard. Much time was spent reminiscing the days of RAF Halton "brats" school. Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June will go down as a most memorable day in our travels.

A few days later, whilst in London I attended the Quarterly Communications at Grand Lodge where I was met by the Grand Secretary's P.A. and guided to the Grand Officers rooms prior to the meeting. The Grandeur of the meeting was most overwhelming for someone who has only known ceremonies in our own little backwater of the South Island. The final spectacle was the introduction of visitors and our acknowledgement, followed by the processing out of that truly spectacular chamber.

Brethren, I urge you, if you ever find yourselves in London, you must visit the Grand Lodge in Great Queen Street.

*"Brethren, I urge you, if you ever find yourselves in London, you must visit the Grand Lodge in Great Queen Street."*

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### Degrees South Deadlines:

October 31st for the November edition

January 31st for the February edition

April 30th for the May edition

July 31st for the August edition

## REGALIA

W. Bro. R.A. (Dick) Scadden has contacts to import regalia etc. "These are good quality, and keenly priced"

Aprons \$45, Collars \$30 to \$35, Gloves \$7 pr., Soft apron case \$50 to \$60, can place apron inside without folding same.

Postage is around \$5 to \$10 per item. Actual quoted prices depend on exchange rates etc.

Ph. Fax 03 782 8293,

e mail [rascadden@extra.co.nz](mailto:rascadden@extra.co.nz)

## GRAND JUNCTION LODGE NO 9775

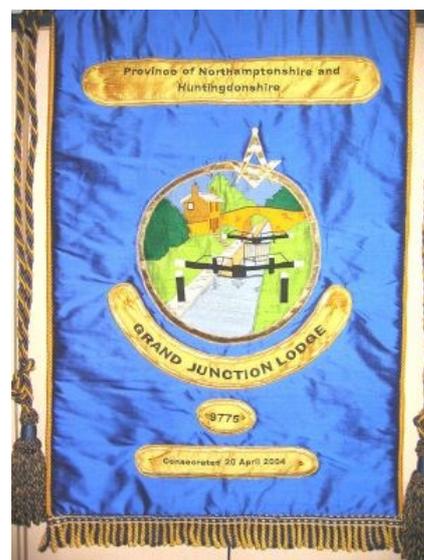
I would like to take the time to tell you all of a success story that is more than heartening and encouraging for the future of Freemasonry.

Over the years prior to my transportation to the colonies I spent many happy vacations cruising the Inland Waterways of England in a traditional styled 'narrowboat', adapted for modern living, centrally heated with berths for up to 10 people - essentially a floating campervan 70 feet long.

When I first ventured onto the canal system, in 1971, there were about 2000 miles of waterways to navigate. Since then more and more abandoned canals have been restored such that they now total nearer 3000 miles.

At heart of this system lies Stoke Bruerne, a small Northamptonshire village which found itself at one end of the longest tunnel (Blissworth - 2813m) on the Grand Junction Canal. In those days (late 18th Century) tunnels were a bottleneck to canal traffic as each boat had to be 'legged' through the tunnel. This involved two men laying on a stout board secured across the bow of the boat, on their backs, and stepping sideways along the wall of the tunnel, thereby propelling the boat.

In true English fashion wherever there's a constant supply of men



kicking around with nothing to do, a Pub will appear and open up for business.

"The Boat Inn" at Stoke Bruerne is one such pub in which I have spent many happy evenings well knowing that I only had to walk a short distance to my mooring, the only hazard being the water itself.

Now to the story. In 2004 a group of Freemasons, one of them the licensee of the pub, with a common interest in the waterways founded a lodge which meets at the "Boat Inn" four times a year.

The objects of the Grand Junction Lodge are to sustain and extend the fellowship through the medium of Freemasonry of those who hold dear an association with local canals or inland waterways for either commercial or recreational interests.

The village of Stoke Bruerne is also the home of the Canal Museum and with its industrial heritage, is recognised as one of the country's main cultural centres for canal and inland waterways enthusiasts.

With many double ceremonies and joining members the Lodge has grown rapidly, whilst enjoying a full programme of social events.

In March of this year they installed their first initiate as Worshipful Master with a second due to be installed next year.

Such is the popularity of the Lodge, they are not, at this time, accepting any more joining members and are restricting candidates to one per year. Visitors will always be welcome, however, book well in advance due to space limitations.



Here's the restaurant at the Boat Inn set up for a Lodge meeting. This is a true link back to the early days of Freemasonry when Lodges would invariably meet at an Inn or Hotel.