

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

DEGREES SOUTH



AUGUST 2014

FREEMASONS HALL - A MEMORIAL TO THE FALLEN OF THE GREAT WAR

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IMPORTANT DATES

- **Saturday 6th September - Greymouth Lodge Installation - 1:30pm**
- **Monday 8th September - The Lodge of St John Installation**
- **Thursday 16th October - St Albans Lodge Installation**
- **Saturday 18th October - Southern Star Installation**
- **Tuesday 21st October - Ashburton Lodge installation**

At this significant anniversary of the outbreak of the first World War, it is good to reflect on the motivation that inspired the building of Freemasons Hall. This monolithic art deco building is the HQ of the United Grand Lodge of England and is also the main meeting place for London's Lodges. The Freemasons' website says that it was built (1927-33 by H. V. Ashley and Winton Newman) as a memorial to the Freemasons who died on active service in WW1. Many people, including Freemasons, are unaware that the building was initially called the Masonic Peace Memorial but, on the outbreak of WW2 that no longer seemed appropriate so it was renamed Freemasons' Hall. Inside there is a very ornate memorial shrine commemorating the 3,225 brethren who died on active service in WW1.



This is the third Freemasons' Hall on this site: the foundation stone for the first was laid 1 May 1775 (opened 23 May 1776), the second 27 April 1864 (opened 14 April 1869), the third 14 July 1927 (opened 19 July 1933 by the Duke of Connaught, Grand Master).

ASHBURTON'S SALMON FISHERS DEGREE

The Salmon Fishers Degree was born after W Bro Ken Borland witnessed the "Duck Shooters Degree" at a Progress Lodge meeting at Southbridge in 2004. After 3-4 months of jotting down notes, collecting data and pondering ideas, a draft copy was produced. Brethren from Ashburton, Thistle and Methven Lodges, with an interest in Salmon Fishing were approached to attend a meeting to discuss the possibility of attempting to bring the idea into fruition. In June 2005 it was performed for the first

time when the candidate, "Mr Sockeye Squiddly Schinook Cock-a-Bully was passed to the status of a genuine Salmon Fisher.

In 2012, with the assistance of W Bro Clarrie Brake and his trusty camera, a magnificent tracing board was produced. This really put the finishing touch to the ceremony.

Whilst it is a humorous event, it contains a very serious message to all fishermen as regards to their responsibilities and obligations to the Fish and Game authorities and the laws of the land. If you missed this year's, the next degree will be held in 2016.

FROM THE DEPUTY DISTRICT GRAND MASTER

Greetings brethren.

What a pleasure it was to see the Amberley Lodge rooms tastefully decorated and utilised for Ian James and Lynne Dodd's recent wedding. Best wishes to the happy couple. St Patricks Irish Installation in Dunedin was again enjoyable especially as it was the first full installation I had witnessed. What a wonderful day it was for the Darling family with Wayne becoming the Master and Mel carrying out most of the ceremony.

While South I attended the Lodge St John Milton Installation.

Winter is nearly over, the days are becoming progressively longer and the nights shorter.

Don't forget the forthcoming Lodge of St John Installation 1137 Timaru on September 8 and Ashburton Lodge 1811 on October 21.

The Masonic quote of the year - "The ritual book to Charlie, the retiring master, was as useful as a bicycle is to a fish".

Fraternally Ken

FROM THE ASSISTANT DISTRICT GRAND MASTER

Greeting Brethren from the Top of the South where, even though we are only just half way through winter, we appear to have at the moment a very Spring like feeling in the air.

It's the time of year when Freemasonry seems to have low numbers of attendees at our Lodge meetings, which is to be expected with many of our older brethren wishing to stay at home in the warm.

However one of our Lodges, Southern Star has been kept very busy of late. Following the initiation of Daniel Mortimer in April, the WM Wor Bro Paul Wigzell decided, with advice from some of the Past Masters of the Lodge, to put Daniel through the degree again in May. This time with a difference, he was taken round the Lodge by a Past Master and having each charge explained to him in plain English and allowing him time to ask questions afterwards and at each stage of the ceremony. This Daniel very much appreciated, allowing him to understand the working of the degree.

The June meeting of the Lodge was the full working of the 1st Lecture where all the Brethren at the meeting, including some of the visiting Masters, taking part. This was a very long meeting but very much enjoyed by all who attended and which induced discussion afterwards. Also at the end of June the Lodge held a 'Ladies Night' dine 'n dance fundraising evening, the proceeds from which are going to the Nelson Tasman Hospice Trust. A very well attended affair with good food, company and

Free Masons from Nelson's Southern Star Lodge held a successful Ladies' Night to raise money for the Nelson Tasman Region Hospice. The lodge's master Paul Wigzell estimated about \$2000 was raised at the dinner dance held at the Boathouse.

Paul says that because the Free Masons are a male-only organisation the "Ladies Night" is an evening where members could treat their ladies to a night out. Friends were also invited.

Partway through the night an auction was held with one of the main prizes donated by Air New Zealand, which included tickets to Auckland and accommodation at Sky City.

Paul says the event has been held before and it was possible it would be held every two years. Previous charities who had benefited included The Ark. "We had a fun night. That was one of the objectives - to have fun and raise money for the hospice and treat our friends, partners or wives to a nice evening."

Nelson Leader

appropriate music to dance to, interspersed by a well-supported auction of some high and low value items and a few surprises. The Worshipful Master, his committee and Wor Bro Peter Sheriff in his role of Master of Ceremonies must be congratulated on the organisation of this wonderful event. *(Continued over)*

RE-JUVENATION PLAN

It is important to tie all the components of a strategic plan together.

Not like this 😞



Like this 😊



Orderly and surrounded with lots of support

For further guidance on strategic planning please contact

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Lodge Rejuvenation

Starts with a plan of

"Strategic Direction"

Get yours now before it's too late

"Much discussion, during and afterwards, produced many ideas of the way forward in Freemasonry for the brethren to take home to their own Lodges."

AN ADDRESS BY THE MW PRO GRAND MASTER PETER LOWNDES - JUNE 2014

Brethren, over the last year or two there has been a certain amount of correspondence in the various masonic magazines regarding the pros and cons of reading rather than reciting our ritual.

One correspondent suggested that as ritual was read throughout European Grand Lodges, we should follow. I am not sure all our politicians would agree with that! Certainly it is true that reading ritual is prevalent in many European Grand Lodges, however it is not universally so, and, in any event, there surely is no good reason for us to follow their example. Indeed, I have many friends in European Lodges who envy the way we deliver our ritual.

You will note, brethren, that I said that they are envious of the way we 'deliver' our ritual and, in my experience, ritual that is recited has much greater meaning to the candidate than ritual that is read, although I am pleased to say I have not been present on many occasions that it has been read.

I entirely accept that learning ritual is time consuming and time is at a premium in today's hectic schedule of life. But how often is it true that the busiest people are those who find the time to learn it. I am not going to pretend that I have ever found ritual learning easy, and, as time goes by, dare I say, I find learning new ritual more difficult, but, nonetheless, I shall never forget the satisfaction of carrying out a second degree ceremony at the first meeting that I was in the chair of my mother lodge. To be told by an extremely demanding DC that it had been adequate was as good as it gets! I should add that this was a great deal more complimentary than anything he ever said to me during the year that he taught me classics.

By definition reading means looking at the book and, if the deliverer is looking at the book, he is not looking at the candidate or



the brethren to whom he is speaking. To read a text well is in itself a skill that not everyone has. Good reading needs preparation and unless our ritual is understood by the deliverer, what chance is there that it will be understood by the recipient. For the reader to have a good understanding of what he is saying he will have had to have read through the text on several occasions and it is most certainly not a case of turning up, opening a book and reading.

Our ritual is to be treasured and there are few better experiences than seeing and hearing a really well conducted masonic ceremony.

One of the prime reasons that lodges are being encouraged to share the workload is so that members should spend time really learning and understanding what they are delivering and not just reciting ritual parrot fashion. It is inevitable that some members will find ritual easier than others and it is incumbent on all of us to ensure that as much help as possible is given to those who need it, thus giving everyone the opportunity to take pride in their delivery, however short a piece it may be.

I don't expect what I have said today to be universally accepted, but I would be surprised if the majority do not agree with at least part of it.

cont... At the Last count the Hospice Trust should benefit by at least \$2,000.00. The news of the function even made it to a local newspaper - see opposite.

Lastly I recently visited the Forest Lodge No116 here in Nelson for a presentation and seminar by Wor Bro Alistair Church PDistDGC NZC on "Craft Lodge Strategic Planning" (see opposite)

This was a most interesting and interactive

seminar which involved all the attending brethren from a number of different Lodges and Constitutions. Much discussion, during and afterwards, produced many ideas of the way forward in Freemasonry for the brethren to take home to their own Lodges.

Alistair is hoping to take his presentation/seminar to other Lodges in the Canterbury area shortly, so if you are able to, it is well worth attending.

"Our ritual is to be treasured and there are few better experiences than seeing and hearing a really well conducted masonic ceremony"

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION
OF THE DISTRICT GRAND
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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

SITUATIONS VACANT

TEMPORARY NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Would there happen to be a Brother out there who would be prepared to take up the mantle of Editor of Degrees South for the coming 12 months or so?

Winston Peters has sent me a Super Gold card this year and Elaine and I have now sold our wonderful shop and gallery in Geraldine.

Consequently we are now free to set out on our planned odyssey of a circumnavigation of the West Island in as comfortable a Motorhome as we can justify to the bank manager. We expect this trip to take up to a year or more so this would involve the incumbent editing 4 or 5 issues.

I would be happy to spend time handing over this awesome responsibility and showing how I go about this task.

Computer literacy is quite an essential attribute although it might well be that a child or grandchild would be happy to transpose the penned words into digital bits and bytes on your behalf.

All being well we should be back by summer 2015/16.

Please give this some serious thought - I would hate to see the work of the last four years splutter out of existence due to lack of interest.

If interested please contact me at the above e-mail or telephone.

Richard Taylor
Editor

There was an attendance of twenty four brethren plus occasional morning visitors made up of all ranks from new Master Mason to District officers and from all twelve Lodges - over double the turnout of last year. Unfortunately there were none from the ranks below Master Mason.

The plan for the main thrust of the morning was to firstly, air any grievances or queries and secondly, gauge the feel of progress in the lodges of Mentoring over the past year and what changes might be continued to be made.

Discussion

Although there were issues that were clearly still needed to be raised the general feeling this year appeared more upbeat. Most of the brethren present contributed.

Some of the early items raised were:

- **Would it be possible at Installation ceremonies for District Grand Lodge not to leave the Lodge after the Risings as it generally leaves the Lodge quite empty?**
- **Why can we not include 'Air' along with 'Land and Sea' in the Tyler's Toast?**
- **The procedures of the after-Meeting refectory in particular speech making.** We were fortunate that at this point the Rt Wor Bro Friend was present to give his view.
- **Some Lodges were having a problem with new candidates understanding English and in particular responding to the Candidate's questions.** I quote from the United Grand Lodge of England:

"A candidate must have an adequate understanding of what is going on in the ceremony. It is altogether unacceptable to carry out a ceremony in a language other than English (English Constitution Lodges - with a very small number of closely controlled exceptions - work only in English). Therefore if a candidate cannot follow the ceremony in English, he should not be initiated into an English Lodge."

The problem is clearly one of language and most definitely not one of race, creed or colour. If one cannot understand the content of our ritual then there is no point.

The lack of communication back to the lodges of details of the Boards Meetings.

Whilst I pointed out (as at previous

Fora) that it was the responsibility of the Lodge representative to report back it was asked if a summary could be included in the Degrees South magazine.

I promised to bring all these items before the District Grand Master.

Notwithstanding the above I asked those present how it was felt that Lodge Mentoring was progressing. Generally a mentoring procedure appeared to be in place but there were still problems. One brother appeared quite angry and frustrated that he had been coerced from going from Initiate to Worshipful Master in **four** years! Whilst totally loyal to both Freemasonry and his Lodge he clearly believed he had missed out and that his Lodge had rushed him through. I thoroughly sympathised with his predicament and pointed out that his Lodge was one of those who had not yet invited me in my office of District Grand Mentor to give my guidance on mentoring which includes this very issue. He promised to invite me soon.

The issue remained however that if a candidate is not to be rushed through what does a Lodge do to productively fill out its year other than a Tracing Board or lecture? I advised those present that I was currently using my Lodge, Southern Star, as a 'guinea pig' whereby the meeting after each Degree ceremony we take the candidate around the Lodge again in the same Degree but with a commentary by a senior brother in plain English explaining the significance of his attire, perambulations and any questions put to him. Similarly, when it comes to the point in the ceremony where a Charge is to be delivered then the brother who delivered that Charge comes on to the floor of the Lodge and re-delivers it in plain English explaining its meaning. The idea being that not only is it helpful to the candidate but it makes the deliverer of the Charge think about what he is actually delivering. (This is still a work-in-progress but so far has been well received).

This concept was extremely well received by the attendees of the Forum and I promised to get back to all the Lodges once I was happy with the working and had the blessing of the District Grand Master.

W Bro Peter Sherriff
District Grand Mentor