

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

DEGREES SOUTH



MAY 2015

WELCOME TO WESTPORT 2015

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IMPORTANT DATES

- Thursday 6th June - Phoenix Lodge Installation
- Monday 22nd June - Winchester Lodge Installation
- Wednesday 15th August - Dunedin Lodge Installation
- Tuesday 26th August - Clifton Chapter Rose Croix Installation

Fraternal greetings to all Brethren and their families.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our Annual Communications Meeting - this year to be hosted by Phoenix Lodge in Westport. We are very grateful to the Lodge for stepping in and offering their hospitality again this year as the original plan had to be discarded.

I would remind all brethren of the rank of Master Mason and above that this is your meeting and your opportunity to have your say in the way forward for our District.

Especially we extend an invitation to the Worshipful Masters and their Wardens to attend as the official Lodge representatives.

As I stated last year, the Saturday morning meeting will be hosted by Wor. Bro. Peter

Sherriff and all are welcome to attend. I would point out that the only part of the meeting from which Entered Apprentices & Fellowcrafts are excluded is the Communications Meeting itself as this is conducted in the Master Masons Degree. E.A.'s & F.C.'s are most welcome to attend the Friday night "Meet & Greet" and the morning meeting as well as the Evening Festivities.

Please be aware that should those not yet Master Masons attend the morning session then questions should be prepared so as not to broach the higher degree. If there are questions of this nature then I would expect those below the 3rd Degree to withdraw temporarily

I look forward to seeing you all here - drive safely and enjoy yourselves!

Yours fraternally

Geoffrey W Rowe

District Grand Master

GRAND CHARITY DONATES \$100,000 TO RED CROSS FOR THE NEPAL EARTHQUAKE

The Grand Charity in London has donated \$100,000 to the Red Cross in response to the Nepal Earthquake last month. So far it has been reported that over 8,000 people have been killed and over twice that number injured. The earthquake, the worst to have hit in 81 years, measured 7.9 on the Richter Scale and struck the Kathmandu Valley at 6am on 25 April. More than 140 aftershocks have been felt and are still continuing, with further damage still a threat. It is estimated that 2 million people have been affected. The capital continues to function but are stretched to the limit. The humanitarian situation in towns and villages closer to the epicentre and beyond the Kathmandu valley is still a major concern. Accessibility to and information from

remote affected areas are major challenges, hampering relief efforts.

More information about the Red Cross relief efforts: www.redcross.org.uk



...AND THE LODGE THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

Since reporting on Greymouth Lodge's charitable donations in the last issue, the Lodge has received a request from the West Coast Cuddle Cot Appeal, being administered by a local Lions Club.

The money requested was to purchase a cuddle cot for the Obstetrics ward at Greymouth Hospital. A cuddle cot is a small

cot type bed, with cooling facilities built in, enabling a deceased or stillborn baby to be placed in it, preventing deterioration of the body for a longer period and allowing the parents/family to take the infant home and extend their grieving time. The lodge agreed to donate \$2000 to this very worthy project, and have applied to the S.I.D. Masonic Charitable Trust for a subsidy.

THOUGHTS FROM THE D.G. MENTOR - PART 2

Following on from Part 1 (November 2014)

With greater worldwide communication and openness the public at large became suspicious of any organisation that had secrets in some instances to the point of paranoia. Some may recall that back in the 1980's the U.K. government of the day brought in a ruling that if you wanted to apply for a job as a civil servant or indeed were a civil servant you had to declare if you were a Freemason or not. Fortunately, after a court ruling, this was eventually rescinded. Within the Craft this was exacerbated by traditional undue secrecy and an inherited arrogance which in turn begat indifference and apathy. For example not long after joining Southern Star I was in discussion with a senior member regarding new applicants to which he proudly advised me that ".....I would not consider anyone for membership unless they had approached me on at least three separate occasions to join". Another time I witnessed a situation where a newly made brother was attending for the first time the refectory dinner and he was sat at the dining table with his wife eagerly awaiting proceedings to commence when a very senior brother accosted him with the barrage of "What on earth are you doing sat here when you should be up there stewarding?!" That particular new brother nearly left Freemasonry there and then and it was only because others intervened that the situation was pacified. High handedness and indifference further assisted the decline in applicants and contributed to the falling away of new brethren.

Suddenly District and Province started to panic and no less the Lodges themselves. There were dictates from 'on high' that increased membership was to be achieved but with little direction as to how. Lodges themselves were starting to become less viable. What did this lead to? It led to what I call the 'desperation factor' which still exists in many Lodges today. Grab a member at any cost and for any reason. Existing members were now clutching at all and sundry to become Freemasons which compromised the quality screening but not only that there was now a push to fast-track the new candidate. Fear of non-survival prevailed with some elder brethren saying that if we do not process the candidates straight away then they will go to another Lodge. Or, if we do not process them soon then we will have all past-masters in the officer roles. Or, the Worshipful Master should do all three Degrees in his year. And many more spurious excuses for fast-tracking. I visited one Lodge and was happily enjoying the refectory table when one brother boasted he had gone from candidate to Worshipful Master in three years! Appalling!

When presiding over the Forum at our Communications weekend last year I had three Senior Wardens who all were unhappy at being processed so quickly and felt they were not only not ready for the Chair but were not enjoying their Freemasonry as much as they would like to. Two of them had been jumped from Junior Deacon directly into the Senior Warden's chair, another felt that he was not advised enough on what was required to undertake the Master's role, indeed he offered his resignation because he was led to believe that to be Worshipful Master would cost him personally thousands of dollars. He was put right and his resignation withdrawn and the lack of input from senior brethren attended to for the future.

So what is now happening here? Well, in general a candidate will be rushed through from signing his application to his First Degree even to the point of being balloted on the night he is to be Initiated. The next meeting is his Second and if he is lucky at his third consecutive meeting he might get a Tracing Board, at the fourth meeting it's his Third and by the next meeting he's at best Inner Guard and maybe Steward as well. There you go, brethren, what in the 'old days' you did in seven to ten years you are now doing in five to ten months!!! Why then do you think we, as an institution, are frightening away so many new members? All rhetorical of course because it is obvious. Ask yourselves what is more important: is it that the worshipful Master does three Degrees in his year or that he doesn't but paces the Lodge so that the new candidate can assimilate everything he's being taught and remains a long serving, loyal and supportive member of his Lodge. For the sake of the survival of your Lodge forgo the perceived loss of pride that past masters do roles in the Lodge. Don't do boring lectures about obscure rituals in ancient Gaelic lands using words no longer understood but if you must do a lecture do not deliver it in a monotone, carefully pick the speaker and make it more relevant and interesting. Your candidate must want to come to the next Lodge meeting because he enjoyed himself at the last one not because he is being forced to go out of some sense of guilt or duty to his proposer.

A Lodge Mentor is required today to ensure that all the above pitfalls are avoided and that the candidate is carefully guided at a pace that he can handle and that he understands and enjoys his Freemasonry. We cannot for the foreseeable future recreate the circumstances that existed at the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century but we can go a long way to redress the balance if only we can change our attitudes.

"Your candidate must want to come to the next Lodge meeting because he enjoyed himself at the last one not because he is being forced to go out of some sense of guilt or duty to his proposer."



See over...

Adopting a Mentoring programme is the basis of stepping forward, changing our attitudes will promote it to a giant stride.

To all the Worshipful Masters and all the senior Lodge members I would say –

Remember the training of the ‘old days’.

Do not be indifferent or high-handed.

Do your best to ensure the quality of candidate.

Always ask yourself if you are acting as a result of the ‘desperation factor’.

Make non-Degree-work meetings interesting.

Be inventive. Think outside the box.

Make sure your Lodge has a proactive Mentor.

Most of our Lodges now have a mentoring plan in motion and my feedback is that so far it is working well, however if you require any further guidance on Mentoring in your Lodge then please do not hesitate to contact me on pesan@xtra.co.nz

FROM THE DEPUTY DIST. GRAND MASTER

Greetings Brethren. It appears winter has arrived a little earlier than usual so I suspect that the winter woollies will have been dusted off.

We were saddened by the passing to the Grand Lodge above of Wor Bro Russell Stocker and W Bro Ken Trumper of the Winchester Lodge. Over many years they both gave outstanding service to Freemasonry and will be sadly missed by the Brethren of the Midland District.

The 150th celebration of The Lodge of St John 1137 was a pleasant and enjoyable occasion. I felt that the attendance was extremely disappointing to celebrate such an important milestone in the history of the lodge.

The Ancient Degree worked at Palmerston was once again successful and enjoyable .

Barbara and I extend best wishes and greetings to you all and look forward to renewing friendships at the Communications in Westport. *Cheers Ken*

ASSISTANT DISTRICT GRAND MASTER TAKES ON ANOTHER ROLE

When one retires it's normal to look forward to a quiet life with no pressure and the chance to do as one pleases. However, how often do we hear of the complaint that there is not enough time in the day for doing what one wants to do. We get involved in organisations such as Freemasonry, and before you know it you have discovered just where those lost hours have gone. This is precisely what happened to me, some

years ago having joined a well organised Lodge and working my way up to the Master's chair. District Rank followed which eventually lead to my present position of Assistant District Grand Master. I am very happy in this role, having got over all the early nervousness and perceived expectations of this position.

It's not unusual that during that period one would join another part of Freemasonry and, in my case, it was the Scottish Royal Arch. Once again, having worked my way through the principal's chairs, I then ended up with District Rank. Nice and quiet, and an enjoyable situation to be in – then Wham – the quiet enjoyment came to an end in August 2013 when I was asked to take the position of Grand Superintendent, District Grand Royal Arch Chapter, New Zealand, South. After quite a long contemplation, I decided to turn it down. That situation didn't last long as the current holder of the position became very ill and I was approached again, but this time with a little more vigour. So having touched my soft nature, I accepted. Hence on December 14th 2014 I was made Grand Superintendent designate. A date was set at May 2nd 2015 for my Installation and as Scotland was unable to send any officiating officer, Most Excellent Companion Ron Sutherland was asked to undertake the ceremony. Arrangements for the ceremony itself were carried out by Ron and myself, but for the Ladies afternoon and the installation dinner all the organisation was undertaken by my wonderful wife, Fran. What a fabulous job she did, particularly with every little detail for the decoration of the dining table placings and the creation of a true Scottish flavour at the Boathouse on Wakefield Quay. She also took on registrations and finance for the whole function. A most memorable day for me, particularly having been invested by 3 past Grand Superintendents and installed by Most Excellent Companion Ron Sutherland. An added highlight was the surprise arrival of our son from Auckland for the evening function.



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Degrees South Deadlines:

July 31st for the August edition
Oct 31st for the November edition
Jan 30th for the February edition
April 30th for the May edition

EDITOR'S RETURN

Elaine and I made it back safe and sound after six months across the ditch. We visited fascinating places, met interesting people, sang with a few choirs, played with a few uke bands.

At the moment we're in the middle of a house move and are drowning in a sea of boxes. I would like to apologise for any submissions that haven't made it into this issue and, as soon as I've found the box that they're in, I'll rectify the situation. See you at Westport. *Ed.*

WINCHESTER LODGE IN MOURNING

Winchester Lodge is reeling after losing three members in the space of as many months to the Grand Lodge above.

W.Bro. Jim Leishman

Ceased Labour on 4th December 2014

Originally from the West Coast Jim had only joined the Lodge in 2012, having been a member of the Geraldine Lodge No 28 (NZ) for many years where he was Master in 1975 and served as treasurer for much of his time there.

Wor.Bro. Ken Trumper PDSGW

**Ceased Labour on 24th February 2015
Aged 90**

Ken was Winchester's longest serving member having been initiated into the Lodge on 19th December 1960. Ken was an exceptional ritualist and, as one member pointed out, spent very little time in the East after serving as Master in 1970. Over the years Ken would go on to fill almost every office in the Lodge but it was as Chaplain that he is remembered best.

AN INNOVATION IN THE EMULATION RITUAL

What has changed in the Emulation Ritual? Nothing!

But we have an innovation that brings it firmly into the twenty-first century. The ritual is now available as an eBook that can be read on your favourite electronic devices.

How can this help with learning ritual? You can now have your ritual book on your smart phone, your tablet, your Kindle, or your laptop. So wherever you go, you have the ritual should you wish to practice.

What does it mean in the Lodge room? Nothing should change during a regular meeting. Just because you can now read the ritual on your phone is no different from reading it from the book. You should still strive to first memorise the ritual and then practice delivering it with meaning and passion so that it sounds like you are speaking personally to the candidate and not reciting something. One place where this might be useful is in the Third Degree where the prompter could have his own backlit copy of the ritual and not rely on a torch. But practice first to ensure that the light is not too bright.

What does it mean for Lodge practice? Again nothing should change. If it is your custom to allow open books at practice then this can continue. Check the timeout settings on your device, you don't want to be restarting your device and keying in a password while

the brother giving the charge is waiting for a prompt.

How can I best use read my eRitual? Use your device in "Flight Mode". This will disable Wi-Fi and Cell which means you won't be distracted by incoming messages and your battery will last longer.

Which format should I buy? The ritual is available in both ePub and PDF formats. But both formats are locked so you can't copy or print from them. The theory is that ePub format is the best for viewing as this allows your document to resize to fit your screen better than the PDF version. But I found the PDF version to be best with the Bluefire app on my Android phone.

Should I buy this? Only if you want to. The readers are still a bit clumsy and you need to be comfortable using a smart phone of other device to get the best experience. A couple of features that I hoped would be present are not. You cannot highlight a word and search for its meaning as the books are locked against copying. And in Bluefire you cannot highlight all occurrences of (say) JW so that you know you have not missed any of the work for that office.

This can only get better with time, and until it becomes compelling to buy, there is always the old paper copy.

Submitted by W. Bro Phil Jackson, PDGTreas.

W Bro Russell Stocker Ceased Labour on 30th January, 2015 Aged 78

In the autumn of 1989, when Russell Stocker was Initiated into the Pareora Lodge No 134(NZ), with the enthusiastic support of his father W Bro Joe Stocker; his uncle VW Bro Stan Moyle; and brother W Bro Ken Stocker; little did they realise the service to Freemasonry that he would give to his beloved Craft, over the next quarter of a century. On joining The St George Lodge No 29(NZ) just one year later, he quickly moved into office in both of these Lodges; only to be told, that he could not occupy the Chair of both, concurrently.

And move to the Office of Worshipful Master, he most surely did; serving the Office of WM in: The St George Lodge No 29 in 1996, 2001, and 2003. The Midland District Lodge of Research No 436 in 1998, 1999, and 2002. and the Winchester Lodge No 1737 English Constitution 2010 and 2013. Eight years of sterling service, freely given, and rarely, if ever equalled. Many a mile

was traversed, both within and beyond the Midland District, with pleasure to himself, usefulness to the Craft and advantage to his Lodge.

Although short of stature, he would make his presence known, with a forthright opinion on the standard of Ritual work, and general demeanour in the Lodge, often with scant regard for the Rank of whom he was addressing.

Russell's contribution to the Temuka Royal Arch Chapter No 43 as First Principal in 2002 and for subsequent services to his Chapter, was recognised by being awarded a First Grand Principal's Special award.

Sadly, after extensive surgery, and a prolonged period of hospitalisation at the end of last year, Russell has passed to the Grand Lodge Above.

To the Stocker family, and to his Partner, Elaine, to whom he owed so much, we extend our condolences.

*(Russell's Obituary contributed by VW Bro Ray Gudex
PDist GM (NZ))*