

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

DEGREES SOUTH

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 2



JUNE 2020



COMMUNIQUÉ FROM THE DISTRICT GRAND MASTER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

BOARD OF GENERAL	3
"...WITHOUT EVASION, EQUIVOCATION OR MENTAL RESERVATION..."	4
CANTERBURY RAC 1048	5

IMPORTANT DATES

-
-
-
-
-
-

Greetings Brethren, I trust that you are all weathering these difficult times in good health, good heart, good humour and good fortune. I would like to thank all of you for the manner in which you have adapted to this period of lockdown and for all the messages of support that Elaine and I have received from so many of you. As far as I am aware our members within the District have managed to avoid the harmful ravages of Covid-19 and it is my sincerest hope that we will all continue to do so.

Brethren, it seems such a long time ago but it was only last June that I attended the quarterly Communications of Grand lodge. In an unusually well attended meeting for that time of year I was singled out for an "individual" welcome from the Pro Grand Master which added to the privilege I enjoyed in representing your District in London. As you will be aware I was planning to reciprocate that welcome at our Communications this month, when we were expecting to host not only the Pro Grand Master, but the Grand Secretary, Grand Director of Ceremonies together with one of his Assistants. Sadly this honour for our District was not to be as global events tore through our best laid plans. It is those plans that I wish to mention at this point.

Firstly I wish to express my personal gratitude to the Greymouth Lodge for their cooperation and understanding in having the hosting responsibilities snatched away from them at short notice, in order to facilitate the move of Communications 2020 to Christchurch, also for their readiness to host a visit of the Rulers to Greymouth on the day following the meeting. Whilst on the subject I would like to also offer up thanks to the Project Team, very ably led by W Bro Frans van Zoggel,

who rapidly managed to put all the arrangements in place for, not only the VIP visitors but also, the entire Communications weekend in the space of a few short weeks. Those team members I would like to mention here along with their responsibilities:

- W Bro Sutherland (Ceremonial)
- W Bro Moen (Administration and London interface)
- W Bro Woolcott (Accommodation and hospitality)
- W Bro Soper (Transport)
- W Bro Stenning (West Coast arrangements)
- W Bro Kelson (Finance)

To all of you my gratitude for what I'm sure would have been a memorable weekend for all involved and for all the time you dedicated to the project, predominantly over the holiday period. Fantastic effort.

Moving on, another welcome I had been planning to express at Communications was to RW Bro Brian Westhead. Brian will be relinquishing his role as District Grand Master of the District of the North Island this year. I would very much like to thank him for his support at our Communications meetings, his wise advice, and above all, his friendship. I wish him the very best for the future and extend a warm invitation to continue to be a part of our annual get-together. Brian's successor is to be W Bro Warren Weir who has already expressed his intention to continue Brian's close relationship with the District of the South Island and I have had regular phone calls with W Bro Weir since well before the lockdown.

2019/20 has been a very positive year for the



District and we have welcomed several new members, many of whom have seriously contributed to lowering the average age of the membership. This resurgence has been appearing in all parts of the District from Phoenix to Amberley and Southern Star to the Lodge of St John. A great effort and congratulations to all concerned and I look forward to a flurry of work in the Lodges as our new members work through their degrees.

Speaking of which, the District Grand Lodge is always available to carry out any Degree Ceremony on behalf of a Lodge should they wish to involve us. It is important that the Lodges feel able to call on the District for this type of support and I have enjoyed my involvement with Conyers and Winchester on two of these occasions.

This year has seen the Lodge of St John re-invent itself as a Daylight Lodge, meeting on a Saturday afternoon. This change was brought about by some of their members considering their future with the Lodge due to night time driving becoming more and more difficult for them. Since this decision they have had two joining members and an initiate as well as a resignation withdrawn. Signs that would vindicate this radical change but it is early days so far.

Brethren, all the signs suggest that our wonderful country is well on the way to eliminating Covid-19 but the warnings are apparent that we are unlikely to return to our previous "normality". I truly believe that this situation could bring about some real positives for New Zealand as a country and a place to live. There is a great opportunity to look at what hasn't worked well in the past and change it for the better, after all it makes far more sense to aspire to a better future than to try to reconstruct the past. In many respects we have that same opportunity to review how we wish to rebuild English Freemasonry on the South Island after the current hiatus. We have a real chance to think hard about how we would like the District to look in the future and to chart a road map as to how we might achieve that vision. What I would like each Lodge to do, as we exit the lockdown and commence meeting once more, is to set aside one of your meetings to discuss and describe a vision for your particular Lodge and to formulate a plan that will carry you forward toward that vision. Either myself, the Deputy DGM or the Assistant DGM will attend these sessions to help facilitate the discussion and work with each Lodge on the project. Remember nothing should be off the table, think outside the box and innovate as much as you are able, within the bounds of the Book of Constitutions. I really hope that each Lodge be able to complete a Lodge Plan this year and review it each subsequent year, adjusting it where necessary so that your vision might be achieved. Please remember the vast on-line resource that is Solomon, available to you to assist your deliberations.

Finally I would like to thank all those District Officers who are taking office this year and thank them for their contributions to

their respective Lodges and the District Grand lodge during the past 12 months. For those standing down my heartfelt thanks for a job well done. A very special mention for W Bro David Stenning PAGDC who has contributed so much, first as Assistant DGM and then as Deputy DGM. On behalf of the District I thank you for your unstinting care of Nelson and the West Coast Lodges, you have played a pivotal role in the ongoing success of the District.

A notable thanks to W Bro Murray Tasker, the new editor of Degrees South, for relieving me of that responsibility after 10 years. I hope that Murray enjoys the role as much as I have done and I wish him the best of luck for the future.

W Bro John Woolcott has continued to carry out the role of President of the Board of General Purposes with his characteristic good humour and unparalleled adherence to the agenda and the clock. We are always grateful for these special skills.

W Bro Steve Kelsen, our Treasurer, has enjoyed a spectacular year up until March. He now faces the difficult job of navigating our resources through the financial recovery to come. I know that he is the man for the job.

W Bro Bruce Russell PAGDC, District Grand Almoner, has been busy this year and we are grateful for the comfort he has been able to extend to our members and their families. Once again the right man for such a sensitive role, Thank you Bruce on behalf of the whole District for all that you do.

W Bro Nigel Paterson, District Grand Charity Steward, has thrown himself into the role with his typical enthusiasm. He has represented the District on the Board of the Teddies for Loving Care project whilst still finding time to be a Fundraising Ambassador for St John and embarking on a new career. Thank you Nigel for your contribution.

To the new Deputy DGM, W Bro John Soper PAGDC, congratulations and my personal thanks for your hard work and support throughout the year, we are lucky to have you in this responsible role.

To the new Assistant DGM, W Bro Frans van Zoggel, congratulations on this significant promotion, I look forward to working closely with you over the next year.

Lastly my grateful thanks to W Bro Karl Moen CBE, District Grand Secretary, a veritable powerhouse of administrative support, guidance and wise counsel for all of us.

My thanks and best wishes to all of our members and I'll close this note with the immortal words of Dame Vera Lynn "We'll meet again..."

Fraternally,

Richard

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARDS

Subject: President of Boards Annual Report as at 5/5/20

Good afternoon

Unless you are living in a cave or a time warp, you will all be aware that the last twelve months have been completely different to most previous years

At the time of writing we are in level 3 of the Covid 19 Virus emergency, which has swept the world

For the first time ever our Annual May Board meetings are to be held remotely via computer screens using a product named zoom

As well as resulting in Masonic meetings and activities being cancelled in the interim, the virus situation has had a huge downward effect on the world's economy

Although The South Island English District Charitable Trust has accumulated funds of approximately one million dollars, it has been reduced by over \$89000 in the last quarter due to the financial times affecting all investments at present

The trustees of the Trust are convinced that this will bounce back in time as predicted by leading economists and Craig's investments, who administer our funds

As Masonry has been in existence for so many years and all indications are it will continue exist, we have the luxury of time to wait for the financial market and our funds to grow again

Sadly in 2019 we had the Mosque tragedy and to alleviate the pressure lodges contributed amounts of money to assist members of the Muslim community with food vouchers for those in direct need

The trust has earmarked a considerable sum of money to assist in regard to the tragedy if and when required

At present we are waiting to ascertain the best way to assist and our District Grand Master is in conversation, with our sister constitutions re a joint approach to offer whatever is required

During the year the Trust approved grants requested at our August meeting of \$15430 and also donated a further

\$13500 to various causes including St Johns, plus the Sam Chew Lain appeal to restore a tomb of a very prominent Mason in Laurence, who was a benefactor to the district.

Board of General Purpose

In my opinion the Board of General Purposes is functioning well and there are no immediate problems that I'm aware of.

A major disappointment was that English South Island Lodges were going to receive a visit to NZ From high ranking Grand Lodge officers from England including the Pro Grand Master Peter Geoffrey Loundes

As this was to coincide with our annual communications District Grand Lodge with assistance from the Board were going to underwrite and coordinate this event

The executive of the board along with WBro Sutherland spent numerous hours on organising what I'm sure would have been a magnificent occasion, only for it to all be cancelled due to Covid 19

Thanks to WBro Tasker volunteering we now have a new editor for our newsletter, which must be a huge relief to RWBRO Taylor who along with his District Grand Master duties also attended to the newsletter

I urge anyone reading this if they have anything suitable for the New letter, please forward it to murray.tasker@gmail.com

One item that has appeared on the agenda in recent years has been the Teddy Bear appeal

I'm delighted to advise that we have now joined The TLC appeal is now up and running with our District Charity Steward involved and that in the last month 4560 Teddies have been distributed throughout The South Island

In conclusion I sincerely thank all members of The Boards for their contributions and offer my best wishes to those leaving and my welcome to those joining

Fraternal Regards

John Woolcott JP
President of The Boards
South Island English District Grand Lodge

I often get distracted when researching material for discussion papers.

Over the years I've "earmarked" subjects to return to and the following is my "Zoggified" interpretation of a short paper which had no source references as to the author but has been presented and interpreted in many forms, the earliest I can find is from 1969.

The sentiment has resonance with me, and I hope it is of interest to our readers...

...F.K.M van Zoggel 2020

"...without evasion, equivocation or mental reservation..."

Freemasonry is a splendid Fraternity, it has proud traditions, many great men of the past and present are counted amongst its members, it has a uniquely beautiful ritual and it's a great honour to be a Freemason; we ought to all agree on these points.

We should also consider that the future of the Craft cannot depend on these things alone but also relies on the influence of the Craft in the life and actions of each of us.

For any society to survive it must live and breathe the principles on which it is founded.

Simply, it must be workable; the individual members must live in the Spirit of its Tenets and know the difference between "Doing" and "Being". They must have an inherent passion to **Do** the work, not just **Be** a member.

This applies to every Society, Club, Organisation, Group or Association and it applies to us!

To have knelt before your Sacred Text, in front of your equals, and obligate yourself upon it to the strongest bonds of Fidelity, Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love; to reaffirm your faith in your God and then not practice the same in your daily life makes your solemn promise just empty words lost forever in the restless winds of untruths.

Your Lodge isn't just a room, nor merely a place to enjoy fraternal fellowship. It isn't an organisation which replaces or becomes your Church. It isn't the means of promoting yourself or your business. It's none of these things!

What your Lodge really is, is a group of men, your Brothers, who have dedicated themselves to a common task, and that is to Build.

In this sense, we present-day Masons should consider ourselves "Operatives".

You see, a Freemason is a builder; a builder of his own character; a builder of a better community; a better nation; a better world in which to live; a builder of an internal Temple for the dwelling of his God. His Brothers once took him by the arm and brought him into Light so that he might in turn show that Light to others through good works, faith, truth, and decency. This is the true meaning of Freemasonry and should be so for each of us.

If it isn't, we should immediately consider re-dedicating our lives to those principles of Freemasonry to which we once obligated ourselves. Thereafter we should consciously accept, learn, keep to, and exemplify them.

This will draw people to the Light of Freemasonry.

If we can't at least set that example, then we risk dooming Freemasonry to becoming just a dusty fraternity, with outdated traditions and a once great history, an inconsequential organisation with quaint rituals.

I'm absolutely certain that isn't our intention and we won't let it happen on our watch.

An interesting item from a Greymouth Lodge

Bro I.E. Lord

The death recently of Bro Edward Iveigh Lord ends a family history within freemasonry on the West Coast that spans 136 years.

The first Edward Iveagh Lord was initiated into Greymouth Lodge age 25 years in July 1880. He was a surveyor, and became Master in 1884. he was very prominent within Greymouth Royal Arch Chapter the Lewis Mark Lodge. Following his death in 1923 a Lodge of sorrow was held.

His son with the identical name also initiated into his father's Lodge in July 1908, aged 29 years and a civil engineer.

He wrote the classic west coast book "old Westland" in 1939. He was also town clerk for Greymouth.

To the third generation Edward Iveagh Lord was Master of the Pacific Lodge of Hokitika. He later became Past D.G.Std.B.

57 Quinns Rd, Shirley
Christchurch
8013

Phone: 03 386 0001

Mob: 027 257 6339

E-mail: murray.tasker@gmail.com

The views expressed in these pages do not
necessarily reflect those of the District Grand Lodge

Degrees South Deadline:
August 31st for the September Edition.



Quite a lot has happened in the Chapter in the past two years. Firstly with the retirement of E Comp G.W. Rowe as Grand Superintendent of the South Island District of New Zealand in November 2017 the District Grand Chapter was closed and E Comp R.M. Taylor appointed as Grand Inspector of the Canterbury Royal Arch Chapter. The Chapter has now become a Chapter Abroad Not Under District.

The next major event was the move from the Ferry-mead Masonic Centre to the Shirley Freemasons' Centre in January 2019 and Meeting days altered to the fourth Tuesday in February, April, July and October. The Chapter has settled in well and apart from a few grunts from the disgruntled everyone seems happy with the new arrangements. With great thanks to E Comp Jackson we have new white platinic bodies and similarly with thanks to E Comp Stewart and Anne the robes have been repaired and cleaned. The Candle Sticks and Alter have also been spruced up so once set up the Chapter looks very smart and tidy

In May last year a Convocation was held in Ashburton in association with the Annual Communication of the District Grand Lodge attracting a number of visitors from the North Island District and EC Lodges from regions in which there is not an English Chapter. It is understood that this may become the standard in future years. It is also hoped that the Chapter may meet, on occasions, in other than Christchurch to give companions outside Christchurch to attend a Convocation.

Our numbers are increasing with several exaltations and a few Companions re-joining after lengthy absences. This year there will be two new Companions exalted and we are looking for more Master Masons prepared to join us in our adventures. If you are interested you can find more out about the Royal Arch by going onto "Solomon" or by asking a Companion.

Karl Moen Scribe E Canterbury RAC No 1048

