

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

DEGREES SOUTH

MAY 2016



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IMPORTANT DATES

- **Thurs June 11th - Phoenix Lodge Installation, Westport**
- **Monday June 27th - Winchester Installation**
- **Wed 17th August - Dunedin Lodge Installation, Blenheim**
- **Tues 24th August - Clifton Chapter Rose Croix Installation, Ashburton**

WELCOME TO COMMUNICATIONS 2016

Greetings Brethren to you and your families. Welcome to our Annual Communications meeting. For those of you who do not normally attend this is the only time during the course of our Masonic year where Members and their wives and partners can meet up and renew old friendships and make new ones. Thank you for taking the time and the effort to attend this important event in our calendar. Especially I welcome those of you who are Master Masons. This is your opportunity to voice your opinions about any matter pertaining to Freemasonry and the administration of the District Grand Lodge and/or Grand Lodge. You may have believed that this meeting is only for Past Masters/Past and present District Grand and Grand Officers however this is not the case – we value the input of our newer members as you are the future of Freemasonry in our District. Unfortunately the meeting is not open to Entered Apprentices and Fellowcrafts as all District meetings are held in the 3rd Degree.

This year with the retirement of Worshipful Brother Ken Borland there will see an Installation of a new Deputy and Assistant District Grand Master. On behalf of you all I would express my thanks and gratitude to Ken for a job well done. Ken has represented me and the District on many, many occasions and has always been welcomed and spoken of most highly by my counterparts in our sister constitutions. At the same time I would like to acknowledge the support and assistance given to him by Barbara – her efforts have been much appreciated by us all.

As most of you will know the United Grand Lodge of England celebrates in October 2017 the 300th (Tercentenary) of the formation of the Ancient and Moderns into one unified body – UGLE.

We are going to hold our own celebration in conjunction with the Annual Communications in May 2017. I have appointed a



working party under the guidance of Worshipful Brother Bruce Russell to arrange details for this meeting so if you would like to have an input into how we celebrate this occasion please contact Bruce. I know that originally I had suggested that we form a travelling party to attend the celebrations in England in October of 2017 but it now appears that numbers will be strictly limited and we will possibly receive an allocation of only 5 invitations which will be for Masons only i.e. not their wives or partners. This of course will preclude many of you who have expressed an interest in attending however if you still wish to attend there is no doubt that one of the participating Lodges would welcome you to come and celebrate with them.

Brethren, we have a very busy time ahead of us over the next 12 - 18 months. By the time you receive this issue we will have held the Installation of Amberley Lodge and the “new” Canterbury Lodge, domiciled in Ashburton and now a Dining Lodge.

I look forward to our next year together.

Geoffrey W Rowe
District Grand Master

A CANTERBURY TALE

"When April comes with his sweet, fragrant showers, which pierce the dry ground of March, and bathe every root of every plant in sweet liquid, then people desire to go on pilgrimages."

The opening words of Chaucer's great, medieval masterpiece have proved remarkably apt as Canterbury Lodge No 1048, after 152 years in Christchurch, ups sticks and heads south on its own pilgrimage to Havelock Street in Ashburton. On April 9th its first (emergency) meeting was held at the Ashburton Masonic Centre to discuss and agree on the necessary amendments to the By-Laws to enable the Lodge to meet at Ashburton on a regular basis.

This meeting was the culmination of three months frantic activity to ensure the continuation of our premier Lodge on this side of Island and to offer a new type of Freemasonry to our local members.

I first heard, at the Board of General Purpose meeting last November, of a notice of motion being published by the Canterbury Lodge to surrender their Charter and close the Lodge. The entire Board regretted this move but deeply respected the fact that it was the decision of the Lodge and recognised that there was no provision in the Book of Constitution for intervention from either District or Grand Lodge.

On the 31st of January, at the Pacific Lodge of Hokita's Sesquicentennial Banquet, I suggested to a number of people that there could well be a future for Canterbury as a dining lodge in Ashburton where it could draw members from Christchurch, Ashburton and Timaru, if structured in the right way. The response was positive all round so, four days later, I made a proposal to the Lodge at their February meeting, having enlisted the support of Worshipful Brothers Borland, Donehue, Russell and RW Bro Rowe as well as one or two current Canterbury members. Alas, my powers of persuasion were not up to scratch, the Lodge listened politely and then voted to close.



All was not lost however as over the next ten days, armed with a suitcase full of AR1 forms, we were able to sign up another 16 joining members. This convinced the Lodge to hold an emergency meeting to rescind their closure vote and ballot for a host of joining members, as well as a Master Elect and Treasurer. At our meeting at Ashburton on April 9th it was agreed that the Lodge would meet at 6:00pm on the first Saturday in March, May, July and September and at the time of writing we have some 27 members already which includes, I'm thrilled to say, a number of existing members who have decided to remain in the Lodge. By the time you read this article W Bro Ken Borland will have been installed as the new master at a special meeting, called for May 10th.

Apart from this special Installation meeting where we can welcome visitors "en masse" for future "dining meetings" we ask that visitors attend by invitation only so that the dining arrangements can be made in advance. Anyone wishing to visit, including wives and partners, will be made extremely welcome but please contact a member of the Lodge first, who will invite you and take responsibility for your dining fees.

We now look forward to the next 150 years of the Canterbury Lodge with a certain amount of optimism and excitement. *Editor*

"Alas, my powers of persuasion were not up to scratch, the Lodge listened politely and then voted to close."

WWW.SIFREEMASONS.ORG.NZ

The newly re-vamped website went live in March with, what those of us in the IT business call, a soft launch. That is, if you don't shout about it too loudly then not too many people notice the errors before you've had a chance to sort them out. Fortunately it all seems to be in good order and therefore I would appreciate that the word be spread around and that the Lodges start to make more use of it.

Apart from the two lodges currently running their own sites, each Lodge has a page at its disposal that could be used for information about the Lodge, its members and its approach

to Freemasonry.

I can't emphasise enough that this site is an important tool in marketing Freemasonry to potential members, communicating the benefits of joining and how the individual Lodges contribute to the community. In effect it is your Lodge's shop window to the world and I urge you to each review your current page content and consider how it might be improved.

If any part of the site looks to be of poor quality or unprofessional it can only reflect badly on the Order as a whole. Thanks for your support for this project. *Editor*

FROM THE TOP OF THE SOUTH

Brethren I greet you well and hope you are prepared for the colder days that are about to descend upon us. We in the Top of the South have been enjoying a long hot summer with three short bursts of heavy rain which has just about kept the water tanks full. However now as autumn is with us and the evenings are drawing in and getting cooler we need to keep an eye open for our older Brethren and help them to get to and enjoy their Lodge evenings.

Freemasonry in our area has been keeping on a steady course, with a few new members which have been keeping our lodges busy with work throughout the year. However, we do have the problem that many of our older Brethren appear to be holding the fort when our younger element are either away or working and cannot attend. This is where it is so important that Freemasonry makes the effort to attract new members and to find a way of fitting in with their requirements and keeping their interest. Although we in Southern Star have recently attracted three new members who are in the process of going through their various degrees, and also have a couple more in the wings (one about to sign and another thinking about it), we can't relax and hope that it will all happen. Recruiting is important and we all need to take part and do our bit. This is probably where each Lodge needs to appoint a Press Officer as we have done at Southern Star, and a very good one at that. Our Wor Bro Mac Mackay has the knack of leaning heavily on the local press and gets good results.



Brethren, enough of my preaching. As I've just about come to the end of my term as your Assistant District Grand Master, I would now like to say that the last five years have been an extremely busy time with a very steep learning curve to start with, but slowly becoming easier. I would particularly like to thank all those District Grand Officer who have solidly supported me so well in all my duties and visiting during the period. It has been so reassuring to know that I have had you there behind me. Now to wish my successor Wor Bro Richard Taylor, Assistant District Grand Master elect all the very best and I hope Richard, that you get as much enjoyment out of the privilege as I have had.

"Recruiting is important and we all need to take part and do our bit."

FROM THE PRESS



The Ashburton Guardian writes...

Ashburton's Masonic Lodge has become a hotbed of cultural diversity. The local lodge now has members from a number of different countries outside New Zealand including Brazil, South Africa, the Philippines, America and Scotland.

Deputy District Grand Master for the South Island, Ken Borland, welcomed the multi cultural aspect of the Lodge and said it was ben-

eficial in many ways. Freemasonry is practised worldwide and is non religious, welcoming members from all different backgrounds and cultures, he said. Not only was it helping to increase numbers after a recent slump, it meant that there were now younger members on the books. The trend, visible across New Zealand, could be seen as a throwback to the Masonic Lodge of old, Mr Borland said.

One of Ashburton Lodge's latest recruits, Henrique Gervason Marco Bourges, joined with the help of his father. Based in Brazil, his father's Lodge made contact with the local Lodge which subsequently reached out to Mr Bourges. That was a common way members joined, Mr Borland said, and was a good way to feel at home in a new community. All in all the new multicultural nature of the Lodge was very positive, he said, and something he hoped to see continuing. "It's a reflection of how society is changing...I think it's a jolly good thing.

Bro Bourges is pictured here with DDGM and WM of Ashburton Lodge, W Bro Jim Donlan.

**THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION
OF THE DISTRICT GRAND
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The views expressed in these pages do not
necessarily reflect those of the District Grand Lodge

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

**PHIL JACKSON ON
COMMUNICATIONS**

Communications – is it still relevant?

We've been doing the exact same thing for 30 years now, so should we still do it. Why should we?

You rock on up to a motel, go to a Friday night gathering and then the next day you have an early lunch and scramble to get your wife onto a bus while you are "looking forward" to two and a half hours in a stuffy lodge room with no air-conditioning. Why?

Well there are some formal reasons why but here is an informal look at it.

First, things have changed over the years. And quite significantly. At my first communications as a Junior Warden, while entering the Lodge room was given a slip of paper and told to second the two names when they were nominated. The brother handing me the paper thought he was conferring an honour to a junior member and completely failed to understand when I said that I would only nominate or second somebody that I knew. That was the way it was done. All Board positions were "decided" beforehand and the meeting was a rubber stamp. That has changed. And for the better.

On the Saturday morning there is a new members' forum. And last year after 30+ years in the craft I heard a really good new idea about explaining the ritual to new members. You are never too old to learn and you never know where or when it will happen.

AND IT'S GOODNIGHT FROM HIM!

Greetings Brethren. This being my final report for Degrees South as your DDGM I thought it appropriate to comment on how I see the state of our district in 2016 and freemasonry in general.

Firstly one must remember that the Freemasons in Mother England have a far different lifestyle and aspirations than their Masonic brothers 12,000 miles away in what probably most of them consider is a distant Colonial outpost. Therefore we need to adapt our policies and bylaws to suit the brethren of our nation. Our younger modern masons have far different obligations and commitments than our elderly brethren. We must understand that many of their wives or partners are in full time employment, they have young families and probably large mortgages thus making visiting other lodges a low priority in their busy lives. For this they should not be criticised.

In any company, organisation, government or local body where leaders have been in office in excess of 7-10 years complacency and stagnation settles in. I believe this is the situation we find ourselves in today. Change is necessary to stimulate and rejuvenate our organisation. New ideas are required to encourage progress. We need to implement changes to show our younger brethren that there is a transparent positive process of succession through the district lodge offices. I suggest that the terms of office for the DGM, DG Sec, and District Grand Treasurer should be for five years only with all other offices being for a two year period in

any one position. This would result in developing new ideas.

Perhaps thought should be given to divorcing the ceremonial section of the district from that of the Charitable Trust and board of General Purposes. The Board and Trust could be efficiently managed by a committee of 5-6 brethren all with solid financial or business backgrounds and an independent, non Masonic (if necessary) qualified accountant to be the secretary treasurer. Communications within the District struck an all time low prior to this year's Communications meetings. The reason I know not why. Maybe we should look at shelving the email and text messaging and revert to the more personal reliable telephone or snail mail.

Recently a considerable amount of money and time has been spent on introducing an elaborate mentoring system which I felt was a waste of time and effort as lodges already had senior members organised to look after and advise new members.

I wish to thank all the District Officers for their support, friendship and cooperation over the past 5 years. To the Masters and Brethren of all our lodges thank you for the warmth of your welcomes, support, hospitality and cooperation. It has been really appreciated.

The assistance and friendship I have enjoyed with our sister constitutions has been outstanding, especially in the Midland and Otago Districts.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my years as a District officer, satisfied with what I have achieved, and look forward to the challenge ahead of developing Canterbury 1048 as a dining lodge.

Over and out.

Ken

The formal meetings have been streamlined. The DGL officers now practice so that it is carried out with aplomb and dignity. And that is "new".

Care is taken arranging the wives program to be interesting and accessible to all. Does it suit everyone perfectly, no, but it is a great chance for our partners to catch up.

And then there is the best bit for me; the Friday night get together and Saturday night meal. This is the opportunity to make new friendships and renew old ones. To see others that live further than a cable tow away.

So is Communications perfect? No. But for only one weekend a year it is a great way to support and be supported by the craft. See you there!

Phil Jackson

**MANAGING THE FUTURE
OF FREEMASONRY**

A Book of Optimism by David Best. I cannot recommend this book highly enough as a fascinating articulation of Freemasonry's place in today's society and its role for the future. Bro David Best takes a serious, academic look at Freemasonry's origins and future from a philosophical and sociological perspective. He states "Our challenge will be to renew our ideals and bring them to the attention of a new audience, one that we as yet know little about. This will require hard work, open-mindedness, creativity and, above all, leadership"

The book is published by Hamilton House and sold by Lewis Masonic (see link on District Website).
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