

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

# DEGREES SOUTH



NOVEMBER 2016



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## IMPORTANT DATES

- **Sat 3rd December - Conyers Lodge Christmas Dinner. (027 220 1001 by 30 Nov)**
- **Mon 6th February - Pacific Lodge of Hokitika Installation**
- **Sat 4th March - Canterbury Lodge Installation (Ashburton)**



UNITED GRAND LODGE  
OF ENGLAND

13th May 2017

## DISTRICT GRAND MASTER'S MESSAGE

Greetings Brethren to you and your families. As the year draws to a close it is appropriate that we look back on a year which has seen new initiatives for the future of English Freemasonry in the South Island.

Currently we are working towards a new marketing plan under the guidance of the ADGM, Richard Taylor and his team. We are confident that the efforts put in in this area will show positive results which will be communicated to you in due course.

Arrangements for the 300th Anniversary in conjunction with the Annual Communications are well in hand under the guidance of Bruce Russell and his team. As part of this celebration you will all no doubt be aware of the charity that we will be endeavouring to support along with our counterparts in the North Island. At a recent meeting Rt. Wor. Brother Frank Griffin of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ireland gave an undertaking to join with us in this project – an offer we were delighted to accept.

We have been very pleased with the way all the Lodges have come on board with this project and we are well on the way to achieving the \$100 per member that we have asked for.

This Communications and the Tercentenary are the most important events in our calendar for the coming year and I ask you all to make the greatest possible effort to be part of these celebrations by attending all the functions associated with it. It may be that you have never attended a Communications meeting in the past and you certainly won't have been at a tercentenary so why not take this opportunity to be part of these celebrations?

Brethren, Bev and I take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you and your families all the very best for the coming festive season and the year ahead. I trust that you are looking forward to it as much as we are.

**Geoffrey W Rowe**



## BERRY STEPS DOWN

Christmas concerts came to a close for a Timaru Freemason this year. Midland Masonic Choir Charity Concert organiser Berry Mitchell will stand down after about 25 years.

"I've been organising every one of the concerts and I announced to the choir at our Sunday night practice that I was finishing as the organiser of the concert this year." The choir has been running for the past 30 years. "It's for the love of music and the fellowship that goes with it."

The evening included Christmas carols, sing-alongs, raffles and entertainment from the winners of Masonic music scholarships. "We give a \$500 music scholarship to a student from each of the 11 secondary schools in our district and they come along and entertain at the concert, so there is a good variety." Money raised from this year's concert will go to the Cystic Fibrosis Association. Berry said funds raised went to a different charity each year. Berry said he had enjoyed his time in charge but it was time to step aside and let someone else take over.

He still intended to be involved in concerts. "Oh heavens yes. I'll still be in the choir. "I've really enjoyed my time organising the concert and it's been challenging but it's very satisfying when I see the enjoyment we give the audience," he said. Working together as a team was a highlight of being in the choir, Berry said. "The club members get a terrific amount of pleasure out of singing together. I sometimes think the world would be a far better place if everyone could work together like a choir." The choir has about 18 members. At its peak it had 32. (Timaru Courier)

## PRO GRAND MASTER IN THE UK PRESS

Older freemasons are being told to smile, look like they are enjoying themselves, and avoid criticising as the movement seeks to keep millennial masons happy and halt a decline in membership that has seen lodges closing at a rate of nearly 100 a year for the past decade.

Pro Grand Master Peter Lowndes, said "I am not for one minute suggesting we try to turn our meetings into a pantomime, but most certainly I am saying there is no harm in being seen to enjoy ourselves."

Mr Lowndes, 68, an Old Etonian chartered surveyor, issued his plea as English and Welsh freemasonry takes the extraordinary step of welcoming in a documentary film crew while preparing to celebrate its 300th anniversary against a backdrop of steadily declining membership numbers.

"We have come a long way since the time that I was initiated 44 years ago. I enjoyed my early meetings, but possibly despite some of the more elderly members rather than because of them. In those days it was nearly a capital offence to smile in lodge.

"We can probably all cite instances when a more senior member of a lodge is less than sympathetic to a newer member who has, perhaps, had a few lapses during the ritual. In my view exactly the opposite reaction has the right effect."

"I am in absolutely no doubt, brethren, that, if we encourage and congratulate, rather than routinely castigate our new members we will go a long way to retaining them as members and finally turn around our drop in numbers, which, incidentally, is already happening in some provinces and districts."

The Pro Grand Master also told the brethren inside the Grand Temple in Freemasons' Hall that lodges with dwindling numbers could learn from the jollity of members in affiliated districts abroad. "I have often thought," said Mr Lowndes, "that if a lodge in this country has lost its way, it could do a lot worse than to get some members to visit some of our districts, particularly, dare I say in West Africa and the Caribbean, to see how much enjoyment can be derived from their meetings."

Allowing in Sky's cameras is also part of the UGLE's recent attempts to shed a reputation for secrecy and conspiracy which has led to masons being unfairly implicated in countless political



intrigues, and in more recent years to concerns about freemasonry in the police.

The transparency, however, did not extend to Grand Secretary Willie Shackell confirming to The Independent what the initiation ritual involved. He suggested they try Google: "During our rituals, we are sworn to abide by certain standards. Certain information we keep to ourselves." Mr Shackell, 75, did reveal: "I find it slightly surprising, but a lot of the young people love the ritual.

"They also enjoy the comradeship. A number of young masons clubs have been springing up in London and the provinces – members from different lodges gathering for social activities like barbecues. "We all enjoy our masonry," he insisted. "We enjoy it in different ways. There are, I suppose, some older people who do find it difficult to smile, but it doesn't stop their enjoyment. "It's important in masonry to retain the dignity of what we are doing, but that shouldn't stop the charity steward – towards the end of the lodge meeting rather than during the ceremony – making some little quip about old Fred, and everybody laughing. It's not frowned upon to laugh. If a member says something amusing at the end of the meeting, then fine."

Nor, he added, was there any suggestion that millennial masons were part of some sort of oversensitive 'generation snowflake'.

"Delicate?" he said. "No. They are a pretty tough lot" Adding that the UGLE were also keen to attract "over-55s with time on their hands", Mr Shackell said that because of freemasonry's charity work and general outlook, "we are as vibrant and relevant now as we have ever been".

*(Reprinted from the Independent Newspaper)*

*"I enjoyed my early meetings, but possibly despite some of the more elderly members rather than because of them."*

### NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings Brethren. This issue marks the start of my seventh year editing your newsletter. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who take the time to read it and all who have contributed over the years.

Next year presents an exciting opportunity for all English Freemasons to take stock of the last 300 years and look forward to the next 300 - full of hope and optimism.

Elaine and I would like to wish every one of you, and your families, a very Happy Christmas and a healthy and rewarding 2017. Ed



## FROM THE ASSISTANT DGM

One of the results of my having taken on this role is that I have, on a number of occasions, been asked to respond to the toast to "Our Sister Constitutions".

My reflections on this task have led me down the path of contemplating the fact that, here in New Zealand, we are very much in the minority of global Freemasonry by having the opportunity to propose, honour or respond to that particular toast.

The quirk of a few Lodge members 127 years ago, taking a decision not to join the new Grand Lodge of New Zealand, has presented us with this opportunity.

At St Patrick's Lodge installation in Dunedin this year we had representation from both North and South Island District Grand Lodges of Scottish and English Constitutions which, along with the local NZ Grand Lodge District and the Irish Province, meant that we had six Grand Lodges in total. Notwithstanding the fact that it took the best part of an hour to receive everyone, we were treated to a greatly enhanced evening which most Freemasons back in the "Mother Countries" would never get to experience.

We are encouraged at every opportunity to visit and fraternise with our Sister Constitutions. In fact, on occasion, we are taught NZ Constitution Installed Master signs so that we will not be embarrassed when attending a NZ Lodge Installation. Personally I would suggest that it would be the responsibility of the host Lodge to ensure that their visitors are not embarrassed; but I digress a little.

Along with the encouragement to visit our Sister Constitutions we also make much of celebrating the differences between the various workings, culture and etiquette. How many times have you heard members eulogis-

ing the merits of a Scottish 3rd Degree for example or attending an Irish Lodge and being tested during the Lodge opening? I agree with the assertion that experiencing these differences "enrich" our Masonic life and add to our interest. However, I have started to wonder whether we are doing the right thing by "celebrating" only the differences in the way that we do. I would contend that by focussing only on the differences between the Constitutions we are emphasising that we are not the same and therefore, we are somehow estranged from these other Lodges by virtue of our roots.

What if we spent more time also "celebrating" the similarities of our respective Freemasonry? Those parts of the ritual, for example, that are common to other Constitutions - showing that we are indeed "sprung from the same stock". Surely this approach would be far more beneficial than spending our time looking for differences. Isn't this where dogma sets in? Surely we should be asking ourselves how we can work closer together?

We should not lose sight of the fact that, regardless of Constitutions, we are all New Zealand Freemasons. That is to say we are New Zealanders who happen to be Masons. The public don't have an inkling that there are different "types" of Freemasonry here and for us I see little benefit in distancing ourselves by focussing only on our "differences"

We should draw inspiration from Rt. Wor. Bro Frank Griffin of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ireland who recently, unhesitatingly, asked that his Province join with us in our 300th Celebration charity. Thereby giving more authenticity to the label on the Teddy Bear "DONATED BY LOCAL FREEMASONS "

*Fraternally, Richard*

*"We should not lose sight of the fact that, regardless of Constitutions, we are all New Zealand Freemasons."*

### W BRO BILL MOFFATT

CEASED LABOUR 7/11/16

Bill Moffatt grew up in Stoke, Nelson and attended Stoke School and Nelson College. He served a plumbing apprenticeship with the Nelson Hospital Board and then set up his own very successful plumbing business.

Bill was initiated in Southern Star Lodge on 27th September 1966 and was Master of the Lodge in the 1977-78 year. He became a member of the District Board of General Purposes in 1982 and was appointed Assistant District Grand Master in 1987. In 1992 he was promoted to Deputy District Grand Master and held that position until 1997 when health issues led to his resignation. In 1998, when the charter of Lazar Lodge was removed from Greymouth to Nelson, in order to assist in the smooth transition of the move, he took on the

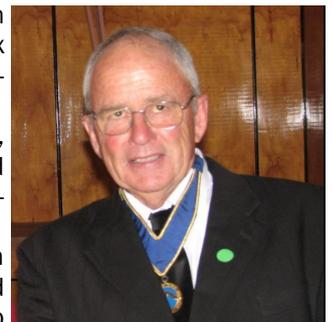
position of Master of the lodge. Bill was active in other branches of Freemasonry. He was a Past First Principal of Trafalgar RA Chapter 157SC, a Past Most Wise Sovereign of Nelson Sovereign Chapter of Princes Rose Croix 35SC, and a Past Sovereign Grand Commander of Nelson Sovereign Grand Council 51SC.

In his younger days Bill was a keen cyclist, reaching National level on both road and track. Later in life he was a better than average golfer.

As an individual, a sportsman, a businessman and a freemason Bill was liked and respected by all who had dealings with him. His down to earth common sense, his fairness and his straight talking won him many friends. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him well.

Bill is survived by wife Margaret, children Diane, Andrew, Jill and Peter, and 10 grandchildren.

*Ted Anderson*



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

**Degrees South Deadline:**  
Jan 31st for the February edition



## FROM THE DEPUTY DGM

Brethren, you are probably all aware that in October 2017 the United Grand Lodge of England will be celebrating the occasion of its tercentenary (300<sup>th</sup> anniversary). This will also apply to all English Constitution Lodges throughout the world and naturally will involve both North and South Island Districts of New Zealand. Although the main functions will be held in London, Provinces and Districts elsewhere are being encouraged to arrange their own ways of marking the occasion.

As part of this celebration the District Grand Master of District Grand Lodge South Island NZ, Rt Wor Bro GW Rowe, has asked that all the Lodges in this District take part in a significant charity appeal. This charity is to raise funds for TLC (Teddies for Loving Care)

### What are TLC Teddies?

TLC Teddies are a small Teddy Bear bearing a label simply stating 'Donated by local Freemasons' which will be distributed to the Hospital Emergency Departments throughout New Zealand and are given at the medical staff's discretion to young patients to help alleviate distress. The Teddy helps to distract the child and give them a friend to hug, while allowing the medical staff to get on with their urgent work.



### How are they funded?

The beauty of this appeal is in its simplicity. The fund collects donations from both Lodges and individuals and turns the money into Teddies; these Teddies are then distributed amongst the DHB Accident and Emergency units throughout the Country. The success of the project relies on annual donations from each Lodge within the two Districts of New Zealand to raise an equivalent of \$100.00 per member. It is envisaged that the two Districts, both North and South will work closely together on this project and that it will initially run for three years.

### What to do about this Appeal.

In the meantime it is hoped that Lodges will start talking about this appeal and looking at ideas and ways of raising funds for this worthy charity. Already some Lodges have made a successful start in fund raising and with substantial pledges, which is great news. Further information will be disseminated to Lodges following upcoming District Board meetings and discussion between the members of the working party.

### Success of this appeal!!

Brethren the success of this appeal is in your hands, so at the cost of one cup of coffee every two weeks I'm sure we can do something very valuable for these vulnerable Children. I look forward to your assistance.

**Dave Stenning**

## THE ELECTRONIC MASON AND THE SECRETARY -PART TWO

...continuing from the last issue

### The Recipients

Or how you enter the email addresses. There are three ways to enter email addresses, in the "TO" field, in the "CC" (or carbon copy) field, or in the "BCC" (or blind carbon copy) field. (Those terms come from the days of typewriters, but I digress...)

Using the TO field means that it is address to you and you need to read it. Use this field if you want a response or an action, like attendance at a meeting of a reply to a question.

The CC field means that it is sent to you for information but that you should not have to take action, so it is not urgent.

The BCC field is the most interesting. Addresses in this field cannot be seen by other recipients and normally it is not

good manners to hide from some that you are also sending it to others, however in the context of an email group it gains another use. When sending to a group, using this field means that addresses remain private, allowing others to forward to the email without exposing the addresses. Which field you use is up to you but PLEASE, when forwarding emails delete all of the old addresses from the body of the email.

### The Content

This is the bit that people think about, a bit. How do you want your Lodge Notice presented to your members and the wider fraternity? What image do you wish to convey? Think about what quality you would expect of a printed document and then ask why you should not expect that of an electronic one.

There are some simple things you can do to make the quality great. First is the formatting of the docu-

ment, is it made to be read on screen or printed? There are two different answers here. Do you want to see the back page first? Why, if you are not going to print it? How crisp does your lodge coat of arms look and how well formatted are the office bearer's names around it? How well formatted is the content? Is it all in one font to look sharp? And what format is it in? WORD documents do not always display correctly on all devices, so a PDF file might be better to use.

What is your summons designed to be? It is an invitation, and an attractive invitation can only lead to more visiting, and that is beneficial for all.

Secretaries if this sounds like gobble-de-gook, then get alongside a tech-savvy member and I am sure they could help you out.

As Freemasonry moves into its fourth century, so too will our communications move and convey the pride that we hold for our organisation.

**Phil Jackson**