

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

DEGREES SOUTH

FEBRUARY 2017



COUNTDOWN TO THE TETERCENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

FROM THE DEPUTY
DGM 2

WEST END HALL
UPDATE 3

FROM THE
ASSISTANT DGM 2

300TH
CELEBRATION
PROGRAMME 4

"THE SHERIFF
LEAVES TOWN" 4

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Mon 27th February - Pacific Lodge of Hokitika Installation**
- **Sat 4th March - Canterbury Lodge Installation (Ashburton)**
- **Wed 8th March - Conyers Lodge Installation**
- **Mon 13th March - Lazar Lodge Installation**
- **Mon 8th May - Amberley Lodge Installation**



UNITED GRAND LODGE
OF ENGLAND

13th May 2017

A Happy New Year and Fraternal Greetings to all brethren and their families

As I write this I have half an eye on the television watching another disaster hit the South Island – this time Christchurch. Earthquakes, floods, drought and this latest – an out of control fire taking away people's homes and treasures.

It seems to me that we as Freemasons are going to need to look to that part of our ritual where as an initiate we were taught to "especially maintain in their fullest splendour those truly Masonic ornaments 'Benevolence and Charity' – there has never been a greater call on our ability to give freely and without prejudice than now!

With our Tercentenary coming ever closer now is the time for all of us to commit to our Tercentenary Charity Project with the Teddy Bear program. You will no doubt remember that I asked that each Lodge prepare to donate the equivalent of \$100 per member so that we can make the biggest impact possible.

Our teams have been working very hard behind the scenes and all is now in readiness for the big day. What we need from you is a commitment to join in the celebrations by registering and attending the functions that have been prepared at Christs College on the 13th & 14th May. Personally, I would like this to be the largest gathering of South Island English Freemasons that we have ever had – I need your commitment to achieve this end.

We have a busy time ahead of us over the next 3 months with Installations at Pacific Lodge of Hokitika, Canterbury, Conyers, Lazar and Amberley Lodges as well as the regular lodge meetings that we all attend. Your efforts on behalf of your Lodges will see that they continue to prosper.

I have been pleased to note that there are a number of new and joining members in our lodges and I bid a very warm welcome to each and every one of you.

See you all in May,

Geoff Rowe
District Grand Master



Christs College Dining Hall

Probably the most significant year since any of us were initiated into the Craft is upon us. 300 years ago on June 24th (Feast of St John), at the Goose and Gridiron Public House in St Paul's Churchyard, a group of members of four local, London Lodges came together to establish a "United" Grand Lodge with the intention to meet four times a year "in communication" and to feast.

The four original Lodges which effected the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge are referred to as 'The Four Old Lodges.' They were known by the names of the taverns or ale houses where they met.

Dr Anderson listed the 'Four Old Lodges' as:

1. At the Goose and Gridiron Ale-house in St. Paul's Churchyard
2. At the Crown Ale-house in Parker's Lane near Drury Lane
3. At the Apple-Tree Tavern in Charles Street, Covent Garden
4. At the Rummer and Grapes Tavern in Channel Row, Westminster.

Here we are 12000 miles and 300 years on about to pay homage to those fascinating visionaries who laid the foundations of the Fraternity which each of us hold so dear.

Brethren, these are our Lodges, our District and our Grand Lodge. Let's not simply leave it to someone else to celebrate this momentous occasion. Register now and be a part of it.

A full programme for the celebratory weekend is published on page 4 of this Newsletter and, by now, every member should be in receipt of a registration form or be aware that they can be downloaded from the District website. *Ed*

DEPUTY DGM

Greeting and a Happy New Year, to you all from the Top of the South.

Since my last missive from this part of the South Island we have gone through a period of sad loss of a number of well-known Brethren who have departed this life.

Namely:

Wor Bro Bill Moffatt, PGSD, PDDGM.

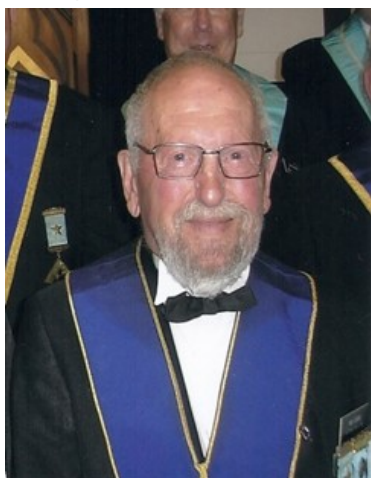
M Ex Companion Alastair Lowe, 1st Principal Trafalgar Royal Arch Chapter No 157 SC

Wor Bro Bill Sibly, Worshipful Master, Lazar Lodge No 1689, and lastly

Wor Bro Jim Clarke, of the Phoenix Lodge No 1690.

They will all be sadly missed.

On a brighter note, at our recent meeting of Southern Star Lodge I had the honour to present a 50 year badge to W Bro Rex Lucas PDSGW.



Rex became a Freemason and was initiated into the Lodge of St John in Timaru on the 12th December 1966. After an excursion to the United Kingdom, he returned to New Zealand, joining Southern Star Lodge No 735 in September 1978. Thus following in the footsteps of his father, who had joined in June 1971. Rex worked his way through the Offices of the Lodge and became Worshipful Master in October 1998. Since then Rex has served in many other Offices of the Lodge notably as DC and more recently as Charity Steward. He wrote articles for, and edited the District Grand Lodge News Letter, (UGLE SINZ) for a number of years. For this and his work towards Freemasonry he was promoted to PDSGW in May 2006.

Rex is a very prominent and regular attender of his Lodge and visitor of many other Lodges in the region. He is also a member of two other Lodges of our Sister Constitution.

Rex served as the Southern Star's representative on the Board of the Nelson/Marlborough Masonic Trust for a good number of years, having retired from that position about a year ago.



However he has volunteered to take it up again to fill a vacancy which has recently arisen.

We congratulate Rex on his last 50 years as a Freemason and we hope there will be many more happy years to come.

"Rex, by command of the Worshipful Master and in the presence of the Brethren Southern Star Lodge, you have been Honoured with the 50 year badge to wear proudly on your lapel."

Fraternally yours,
W Bro Dave Stenning.
PAGDC, DDGM.

ASSISTANT DGM

I thought that this issue I would dip into the early results of the Market Research, carried out last September/October and let you have some early feedback of the more significant findings thus far. The final report will be available in a few days time and we will publish our findings shortly after.

The first headline finding from the research amongst our members is that 95% of us are quite or very satisfied with their experience of Freemasonry - that is indeed heartening.

The most satisfying aspects were found to be around the sense of Brotherhood and bonding with others as well as the social aspects of membership. The least satisfying was found to be around the future direction of Freemasonry and the degree to which Freemasonry is promoted to others.

Some elements of dissatisfaction were also expressed concerning the physical condition of our facilities, the quality of our ritual and our leadership, including communication within the District.

As part of the project we also explored non-masons' perceptions of Freemasonry among two groups, those aged 21-39 and those 40+. Here are a few interesting extracts:

"My great grandfather sparked my curiosity. All the Freemasons I've met are kind, loving, well dressed and well presented, well spoken

"We know more what the Lions and Rotary do. We are guessing about the internals of the Freemasons.."

WEST END HALL UPDATE

and interesting. Freemasons themselves are very likeable people who help one another. The masons have been popping up in my life, all of that stuff was in me as a kid and I've slowly had it come back.

Doing this (group discussion) has helped me get back on track, it's about me becoming me... Aged 21 - 39"

"Similar to a political association. I have a feeling the Freemasons are less transparent than the Lions or Rotary. We know more what the Lions and Rotary do. We are guessing about the internals of the Freemasons."

"Missing transparency. Needs far more transparency. Needs to open the cloth. Really good stuff they are doing in their immediate community. All successful organisations need transparency. They could do more things in your community. Aged 40+"

It goes without saying that our secrecy does create an atmosphere of mistrust amongst potential candidates. We certainly need to move the discussion away from "What goes on in the Lodge Room?" and start to create an interest in the Values and Principles of Freemasonry.

Instead let's talk about why we become Freemasons - not how. Let's talk about our founding principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. Let's prove to our potential Brethren that we are decent people in whom they can trust and from whom they can learn.

Holding Lodge open days are helpful up to a point but their value will lie in the opportunities to meet and question Freemasons, not in being introduced to rough and smooth ashlar and deacon's wands.

The research thus far shows that there is no big demand from within the organisation to change our ritual or what happens in our ceremonies. However there is a demand from outside of the organisation to know more about these ceremonies, simply provoked by a curiosity centred on our secrecy. Hence we have to consider how we manage that gap between an interest, passing or otherwise, in what we do and encouraging and nurturing it so that it becomes an interest in why we do it.

Much work now needs to be done to interpret the vast amount of data that we have been able to gather. Then the challenge will then be how we translate that information into successful strategies that will lead to transforming English Freemasonry on the South Island into a vibrant and sustainable District.

Fraternally, Richard

The West End Hall on Maltby Ave in Timaru was gutted by fire in June, with both its kitchen and roof suffering extensive damage. It is now set for a major rebuild, to the tune of \$792,000.

The West End Hall fire started in the kitchen at the back of the hall. The adjoining Lodge Room was damaged by smoke during the blaze, forcing members to use others facilities in the interim.

Timaru District Council corporate Services group manager Tina Rogers said the rebuild presented the opportunity to make some improvements to the hall which would increase its value to the community.



"With the hall undergoing major work to reinstate it to its original state we thought it would be prudent to fund some upgrades to bring it up to the standards expected by our users, and make it an even better resource for the community."

The improvements would include the installation of heat pumps, double-glazed windows and insulation.

They would also include a new wall to create a hallway outside the bathroom area, and a cage for the waste bins to help ensure the hall was better protected from fire in the future.

The project would be jointly funded by an insurance pay-out and council funds.

Work on the hall started in January, and is expected to be completed about the end of June.



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"...let's talk about why we become Freemasons - not how. Let's talk about our founding principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth."

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

FAREWELL PRESIDENT OF THE BOARDS

It is with deepest regret that I must advise you that the Sheriff family are moving away from Nelson and The South Island. There are lots of private reasons for this and not the least that our daughter Frances is going to Massey University. We will in fact be moving to the Cambridge area on The North Island. I am sure there will be many of you who will be horrified that Team Sheriff has the temerity to move off of The Mainland but there you go I have no other excuses other than to say at least we're not leaving the country although I expect some of you may think that we are!

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time both at Southern Star Lodge and District and have few regrets. I have been honoured by my lodge allowing me to be Master and honoured by the District Grand Master for first giving me the role of District Grand Mentor and latterly President of the Boards. I trust that I have done a reasonable job but that is for you guys to judge. The Boards, though, have got their size reduced and therefore more effective, got the 'teddy project' into operation and hopefully made more money available for charitable use in the time I've been there.

I will maintain my membership at Southern Star and therefore my connection with The South Island District. It is definitely Sandy's and my intention to attend the tercentenary celebrations in Christchurch in May which will be my last presiding over the Board of General Purposes unless the boss kicks me out beforehand!

I do wish you all well for the future and look forward to seeing you in Christchurch in May, I'm sure I leave the District in good heart. Amare et Servire (look it up!)

Peter Sheriff



UNITED GRAND LODGE
OF ENGLAND

District of the South Island New Zealand Tercentenary Celebrations Programme

All activities will be held at Christ College, Rolleston Avenue, Christchurch.

Saturday 13th May 2017

Venue: Assembly Hall

8.30am to 9.45am – The Forum

10.00am to 12.00pm – District Communications

All reports to be circulated prior to Communications and only commented on at the meeting.

2.00pm to 4.00pm – Formal Lodge Meeting

District Grand Master to receive Sister Constitutions and Distinguished Grand Lodge Officers.

Lodge will then be called off.

Ladies and non-Masons enter Assembly Hall.

District Grand Orator W. Bro Karl Moen CBE to present the 300th Address.

Ladies and non-Masons exit Assembly Hall and will be served a light afternoon tea.

Lodge will be called on and any remaining business completed.

Lodge Ceremony concluded by 4.00pm.

Venue: The Miles Warren Building

Pre-Dinner Drinks at 5.45pm for 6.00pm, concluding at 6.45pm.

Suitably attired (Dinner suits) pre dinner drinks and canapes will be served.

6.45pm walk across quadrangle to be seated in dining room by 7.00pm.

(Seating Plan will be available to view at pre dinner drinks and also in the dining room.)

A buffet meal will be served with drinks.

Each table will be hosted by an officer of Grand and District Lodge.

The top table of 20 invited guests will be hosted by the District Grand Master.

Degrees South Deadline:
Apr 31st for the May edition

Sunday 14th May 2017

Venue: Chapel

9.00am

Suggest family members and guests be dropped off at the entrance to Christ College and make their way to the Chapel before parking cars in the Christ College car park Cranmer Square.

9.15am

Brethren will fully dress in regalia at the car park.

9.30am

Leave car park to march down Montreal Street to the Worcester Boulevard onto Rolleston Avenue arriving at Christ College at approximately 9.45am.

10.00am

Church Service at Christ College Chapel to be taken by the College Chaplain with Masons taking part. The college choir will be in attendance and the service will be open to all, so please bring your friends.

Venue: The Miles Warren Building

Morning tea will be served at the conclusion of the service bringing the end to the 300th Celebrations. Hoping all have had an enjoyable and memorable weekend.

