

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

DEGREES SOUTH



AUGUST 2018



IMPROVING OUR COMMUNICATIONS

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A TRADITIONAL CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION RE-OPENED

The research work that was carried out in 2016/7 revealed that a significant cause of dissatisfaction amongst members was the quality of communication from the District Grand Lodge. Unsurprising when there has been no obligation for the secretary to read any of the District communications in full and aloud to the Lodge members.

The tradition of the three risings at the end of a Lodge meeting probably has its origins at the Union of the Grand Lodges in 1813, or soon afterwards.

It was quite likely introduced to enable the Senior Warden to "ensure that every brother has had his due" (...opportunity). Opportunity to make proposals, initiate discussion or introduce matters of interest, coming as it does immediately prior to closing the Lodge.

In modern times the risings have been adapted so that now it is standard practice, recommended by Grand Lodge, that the risings are used as follows:

First Rising - Communications from Grand Lodge. Read aloud to members by the Secretary.

Second Rising - Communications from District Grand Lodge. Read aloud to the members by the Secretary.

Third Rising - Propositions for membership, notices of motion, general communications, apologies for absence, other matters raised by members of the Lodge.

The influences of the other Constitutions on the English Lodges here on the South Island has meant that our individual risings have lost their true purpose and now reflect those of the other Constitutions, to a large extent.

The District Grand Master would strongly urge all Lodges to revert to the traditional practice, in an attempt to improve the quality of communications from both the Grand Lodge as well as from the District.

As well as a reading of the District Communications aloud in Lodge, the Second Rising will be reproduced in full in the following issue of Degrees South. This means that any members unable to attend the Lodge meeting will have the same access to the information as the other Lodge members.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Saturday 18th August - Dunedin Installation**
- **Sat 1st September - Greymouth Installation**
- **Monday 10th September - Lodge of St John - Installation**
- **Tuesday 16th October - Ashburton Installation**
- **Thursday 18th October - St Alban's Installation**

2nd Rising No 1 (July 2018)

For some years now it has been the practice of the South Island District Lodges to adopt the example of other Constitutions, by inviting the District Grand Lodge to conduct the ceremonies of Installation. This practice has had a detrimental effect on the Lodges' confidence and ability to deliver ritual in general and Installations in particular. It cannot be the wish or intention of Grand Lodge that Provincial and District teams be responsible for these ceremonies. This deprives the sitting Master of the satisfaction of completing his year by installing his successor, as Masters have done since time immemorial. The 13 Lodges on the South Island of New Zealand are, in all probability, the only English Constitution Lodges who operate this system.

In future the District team will not be available to take responsibility for the ceremony of Installation. The District Grand Master, Deputy District Grand Master or the Assistant District Grand Master will attend every Installation, if invited, accompanied by any number of Grand and District Grand Officers that may wish to attend.

This does not mean that the Lodges will have no support from the District in the future. Rather than invite the District team to carry out the entire ceremony it will be expected that the DGM or his representative will be invited to attend. At the same time the Lodge will detail those parts of the ceremony where they might feel that they have a deficiency and request that the District representative arrange for a District Grand Officer to deliver those elements. Over time it is expected that these requests will become less frequent as each Lodge builds capability.

A copy of the Inner Workings has been sent to each Lodge to facilitate this change.



FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARDS

Having completed my first year as President of the Boards it gives me pleasure to advise that in my opinion and hopefully in the opinion of a few others that the board has functioned reasonably well.

Two major reasons for the Boards running so well have undoubtedly been due to the sterling efforts of our Secretary and Treasurer, W Bros Sutherland and Drummond, both of whom have announced they will be retiring. Everyone on the board, plus I'm sure all who know them, wish them all the very best and appreciate their hard work over so many years.

RW Bro Rowe after fourteen years retired from the Boards last December when his successor, RW Bro Taylor, was appointed. It has been said many times but must be said again RW Bro Rowe was a very hard working dedicated board member and, along with W Bros Sutherland and Drummond, will be much missed at our meetings for their valued input.

During the year, as we are all aware, RW Bro Taylor was installed in his position of District Grand Master and the Board agreed to be responsible for any shortfall in respect of his installation, which thankfully it is pleasing to report, was a minute shortfall to compliment what was a wonderful occasion.

Although he is now well installed we once again congratulate W Bro Taylor on behalf of the board for his instalment, during the Board's year

The Board of General Purposes functioned well throughout the year with one of the major tasks being involved engaging one of New Zealand's most significant Public Relations Companies, Convergence, who we have tasked to market Freemasonry in a more professional and positive way than we are capable of achieving on our own

Our District Grand Master who initiated the conversation with Convergence is at present discussing the way forward with them to maximise what they have to offer in the way of publicity etc., now that they have had an in depth look at our organisation.

Our newsletter Degrees South is looking very slick, except at times there is a lack of new information included. This situation is in the hands of the lodges and any craft members who have something worthwhile to contribute.

Therefore can I please ask that if you have any information for Degrees South or change of contact details etc for the website that you forward these to Rt W Bro Taylor whose email address is districtgrandmaster@xtra.co.nz.

At the Annual Communications, you will receive the financial reports of The South Island English District Masonic Charitable Trust, which I'm confident will be well received with a healthy accumulated funds balance

One item of concern that has arisen at the Trust meeting is the distribution of our Teddy Bears being by far our largest project for some years.

A number of bears have been distributed, but there is still a huge quantity in storage. It is important that they don't just sit and gather dust, but equally important that they are distributed in a manner to derive maximum exposure and benefit to our organisation.

There are various reasons why the project has not worked as well as hoped, with one of them being the lodges not following the correct guidelines of filling out a form advising who the bears would go to, how many required and what publicity would be expected to derive from it?

At our board meeting this week the matter will be discussed again and I'm sure action will result to resolve this ongoing problem in the very near future

Also Just a reminder to all that at our August meeting any requests for charity will be discussed and considered.

Because of the retirement of some of our most senior board members, plus this year we have had a number standing for the boards which required a ballot, it is obvious we are going to have a new look board which will bring new excitement and challenges.

It was pleasing to note that apart from December when a number of members were away for the Tercentenary in London, that during the year we had very few apologies, with most members attending all meetings.

In conclusion I sincerely thank all board members for their assistance throughout the year and for the assistance they have also personally provided to me.

John Woolcott
President Of The Boards

"...it is obvious we are going to have a new look Board which will bring new excitement and challenges."



MW Bro Mark Winger at the Timaru rededication ceremony

(Pic Timaru Courier)

A VISIT TO THE UGLE LIBRARY & MUSEUM

During a recent to London, I took the opportunity to visit the Library and Museum of Freemasonry at Grand Lodge. The Museum was absolutely fascinating with many interesting exhibits from throughout the many years since UGLE was formed. I was fortunate to be there while a special exhibition "Brethren Beyond the Seas" was taking place.

After the formation of the first Grand Lodge in the world in London in 1717, Freemasonry spread from Britain into Europe and then, following trade and expanding empires, across the world. As countries within the British Empire gained their independence from the late 1700s, they established their own masonic jurisdiction or Grand Lodge.

In the period of the First World War, the relationship between the English Grand Lodge and these overseas "daughter" grand lodges developed and strengthened. For

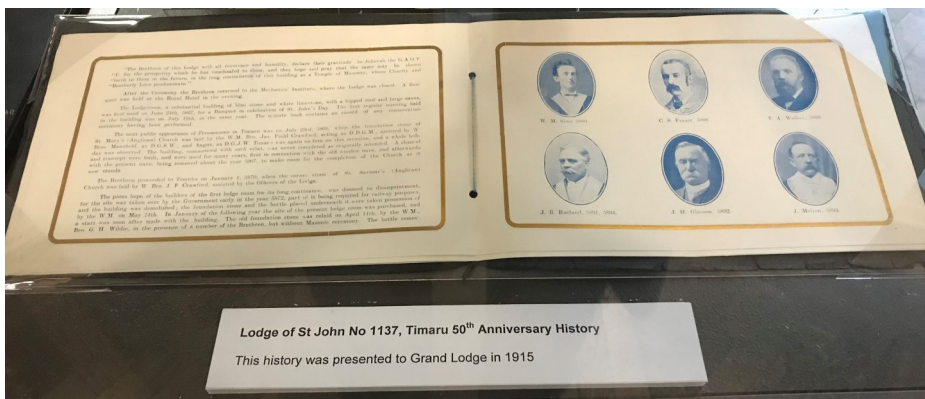
the individual countries the experience of fighting in the war was often a landmark in the creation of their national identity. For the individual fighting men the experience of travelling to foreign countries, the comradeship and the trauma of war were significant in their personal development.

This exhibition explores the development of many of the Grand Lodges within the British Empire and marks the contribution of their forces to the First World War. It features objects, books and documents from across the world.

Specifically, one case was devoted to New Zealand and I was somewhat stunned to see not one but two items from the Lodge of St John 1137 on display - the 50th Anniversary booklet and the Medal for Bravery issued in 1882.

It was quite amazing to travel halfway round the world and see two items from my lodge on display in London.

Tony Mansfield



FOOTNOTE

There is an example of this same medal in the South Canterbury Museum. In this case The Freemasons of the Lodge of St John awarded this silver medal to T. Martin for his lifesaving efforts after the wreck of the 'Ben Venue' on 14 May 1882.

On the obverse is a depiction of a lifeboat rowed by several figures and tossed about by waves. Above the lifeboat is an all-seeing eye with rays coming out from it. The image is signed 'S. Reading.'

The reverse features two laurel branches, around which is written, 'Presented by Freemasons of St. John's Lodge 1137. E.C. Timaru.' Inside the branches, the medal reads, 'To - T. Martin - for- Bravery - in - Saving Life - Timaru Roadstead - 14 May - 1882.' **Ed**



TIMARU REDEDICATED

The Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand, MW Bro Mark Winger, was in Timaru recently to rededicate the West End Lodge Rooms following their refurbishment after the fire. (Pictured left)

He was assisted in the ancient ceremony by RW Bro Neville Patrick (Corn), RW Bro Rob Angelo (Wine), RW Bro Eoin Miller (Oil) and RW Bro Richard Taylor (Salt).

Under the auspices of Lodge Koranga No 197 and VW Bro Peter Smith, Midland District Grand Master, the ceremony was well attended by members of the public including the deputy mayor of Timaru, Richard Lyon.

The Midland Masonic Choir provided some outstanding musical items which added so much to the afternoon.

The occasion was marked by the coming together of the Midland Mason Charitable Trust, the Sophia Street Car Park Trust, The Freemasons Charity and the South Island English District Masonic Charitable Trust to provide 150 long life smoke alarms for use in needy homes.

The NZ Fire Service was represented by the same Watch who responded on the evening of the fire and it was fitting that they were there to receive the smoke alarms.

www.sifreemasons.org.nz

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

Degrees South Deadline:
Sept 30th for the November Edition.

FROM THE DEPUTY DISTRICT GRAND MASTER

Greeting's Brethren. Just a short note from me at this time, as we have a house in a state of turmoil and packing boxes. Yes, Fran and I have decided to sell up our 'House that Dave Built' on our acre and a half in Upper Moutere and move to Richmond, closer to civilisation. It will mean much less travelling to get to important destinations including Lodge meetings.

However I must give a short report on some of our Masonic happenings in this area. Much effort has been put into raising funds for the rebuild of the Nelson Hospice for which Nelson Lodges and Chapters have made generous donations. Teddy Bears are still being distributed with the biggest effort being made by the Dunedin Lodge in Blenheim, most recently to women's refuge where they were greatly appreciated. Our efforts in these fields of charity are mainly going unnoticed recently as the local media don't want to know, despite the valiant efforts of our Press Officer. However we can only rely on word of mouth which can be quite effective.

In June W Bro Ray Moroney was installed into the Chair of the Phoenix Lodge, in Westport for the second time. He was not only supported his own Brethren but by a big crowd of visitors from both the Nelson, West Coast and Canterbury areas, and those who attended were well and truly treated to a typical West Coast welcome.

BLACK SUNDAY BRAVERY

The events of 14 May 1882, known as Black Sunday, were described in the Timaru Herald as "a series of disasters which made strong men wring their hands in impotent despair." Nine men, including Harbourmaster Captain Alexander Mills, died when heavy seas in Timaru harbour wrecked the ships 'Ben Venue' and 'City of Perth.' Without the lifesaving efforts of men like Thomas Martin, the recipient of this medal, the number of casualties could have been significantly higher. When the heavy seas caused her cargo to shift, the 'Ben Venue' began to drift, so her crew abandoned ship and rowed to the nearby 'City of Perth.' Unfortunately, the 'City of Perth' also started to drift, and the combined crews took to the boats and rowed to the breakwater. Before leaving, they had managed to stall her drifting with an anchor.

Mills decided that an attempt must be made to salvage the 'City of Perth,' so three boats set out to begin the effort. While the salvage crew were on-board, however, the rope holding the anchor snapped and the 'City of

Perth' began to drift again. The boats immediately started back to the shore but became swamped.

A crew manned the landing service surfboat and attempted to go to their rescue, but had to anchor after picking up only three men. Then, the harbour lifeboat 'Alexandra,' which had not been used since she had capsized and drowned one of her crew 13 years before, was pressed into service to pick up men from all four boats. She made three trips, capsizing repeatedly in the process. Martin was an oarsman with the first crew.

In the midst of significant public uproar, the Harbour Board held an enquiry into the events of Black Sunday, resulting in the recommendation that the Board subsidise a trained lifeboat crew. Ironically, such a crew had existed until 1877, when Mills was asked to disband it due to lack of funds.

The survivors of the rescue crew were awarded medals for gallantry by the Lodge of St John, of which the one overleaf is an example, on 3 July 1882 at a memorial service in St. Mary's Anglican Church, Timaru.



Ben Venue and City of Perth after they broke loose from their moorings
Alexander Turnbull Library, Layton Collection Reference: 1/2-056547:F

Following that meeting, I made a quick visit to Greymouth on the Sunday to meet up with some of the Greymouth Lodge Brethren. I wanted to have a chat with them to get a feel for the situation regarding their Lodge, having heard of their plight regarding lack of membership, and talk of handing in their charter.

This meeting was most fruitful especially after a number of exchanges on a few ideas of ways forward for the Lodge. Membership is their main issue, I urge all brethren of the South

Island to offer support to the brethren of the Greymouth Lodge in whatever way they can. Membership would be most appreciated. I have since heard that they are now planning for their Installation in September, with a Brother named as Master Elect, so now is your chance to help out.

Brethren keep healthy and warm at this time of year and I look forward to catching up with you especially at the Greymouth Installation in September. Kind regards and best wishes.

W Bro Dave Stenning