

MAY 2004

Extracts and abridgements from an Address given at the Canonbury Masonic Research Centre, London

by R.W. Bro. Michael W. Walker, Grand Secretary

The Home Grand Lodges of England, Ireland and Scotland can claim to be the very cradle of the speculative Craft, which has now spread to all corners of the Terrestrial Globe. We take an immense pride in this and we are entitled to be concerned in the growth and development of that which we claim to have initiated.

In the matter of regularity and recognition of Sister Grand Lodges, one can either stand fast with colours nailed to the mast and demand full compliance with established practice or one can compromise one's position by accepting less with ever-increasing demands for lower and lower standards. Regularity is the central supporting column of our Masonic structure. Damage it and the building collapses. Remember the biblical story of the blinded Samson's revenge on his captors when, with his strength restored, he dislodged the central pillars of the great building where the



top echelons of the Philistines were celebrating. Down it came, taking thousands of them with him to their doom. Brethren, we can close ranks and cheerfully face the enemy without, but it is much more difficult to deal with and counter the attacks of the enemy within.

We are a fraternal organization, the aims of which are brotherly love, the relief of our distressed Brethren and their dependants and the search after "Truth" which we may express as, and expand into, public and private morality, the knowledge and fear of God and, following on from that, respect for, and love of, our neighbour. This respect includes toleration of his personal viewpoint, his religious beliefs and his political opinions. If we pursue these aims of the Order, our search should widen, yet focus our vision, whilst ever making us more deeply aware of, and closer to, the Great Architect of the Universe, heightening our spirituality and deepening our insight into that which we may never hope fully to understand. There is so much more to Freemasonry than the shallow depth of today's assessment and its scant inspection by today's society, obsessed as society is with material success for the individual rather than his contribution to society.

The Masonic Order is not just another organisation like Rotary, Round table, Chamber of Commerce or any other; all designed to meet differing particular needs and carry out distinct functions. If Freemasonry were any or all of these then they would not have come into being. We are what we are; and any attempt to assume the mantle of others detracts from both.

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APPOINTMENT OF NEW GRAND SECRETARY

I have to advise you that the Grand Secretary will retire from Office at the end of June, 2005.

R.W. Brother Michael W. Walker has served the Office of Grand Secretary with distinction, since 1981.

Applications are invited from subscribing Past Masters and fuller details will be sent out with the Grand Lodge Summons for June 2004

The position offers a five-figure salary and Written Applications should be received by the 31st October 2004

> and addressed to: D.G.M. – APPOINTMENT, Freemasons' Hall, 17 Molesworth Street DUBLIN 2.

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It is true to say, that within the Masonic Order, numbers are falling. Reasons for this are not hard to find and are based largely on the superficiality of today's society, the many pressures on individuals and the multiplicity of discernible opportunities for disposing of leisure time.

Any pastime which makes substantial demands on time available, or which is not perceived to give a fair return however that may be measured - will not be favoured and, in Masonic terms, this will be evidenced by reduced attendance, no matter how honoured a Brother may feel, in being a member of the Order. We all know the annual attendees at the Installation Dinner, who come, bring guests and thoroughly eniov themselves and are then not seen for another twelve months. They are acknowledging their "belonging" to the organisation without it providing, or seeming able to provide, the stimulation necessary to encourage regular attendance.

Our predecessors, apart from their Lodges, probably had few outlets for leisure time and the monthly Lodge meetings were looked forward to as opportunities. Nowadays there are a host of activities open to all strata of society, which a few years ago would not have been the case.

Freemasonry is a fairly stable product in itself - very little can be done by making alterations without changing it entirely in both essence and appearance. Its principles and precepts have stood the test of time and are as valid today as ever. What we have and what we stand for will always be right, even if its acceptance rises or falls on the scales of time.

What we can do is upgrade the packaging, and make it more attractive to potential and present members. In the former case we can actively adopt a higher profile; and gently but firmly "let our light shine before men". The candle in the window is the invitation symbol understood by all; and some will accept and knock on the door.

Hard-sell is not for Freemasonry however you may try to dress it up. Freemasonry is there to be adopted and savoured by those with minds attuned to, or even seeking, its attainment and what it provides. Freemasonry is not for everyone; but within all populations and at all times there will be those to whom it will appeal. Let us identify "the positives" about the Order, then talk openly about them and try to promote them, leaving it up to Grand Lodge, of course, to deal with the media so that a constant and coherent message comes across.

In order to try to rejuvenate interest in Lodge attendance and to encourage those defaulters to become active members again, α definite programme of action must be undertaken. This has only one aim to make Lodge meetings attractive, as something to be enjoyed; and not something to be endured. One may look at this from many angles but it must be realised that, in the long run, it is something which every individual Lodge has to solve for itself.

In time-immemorial days, before Grand Lodge systems were developed, every Lodge was an independent autonomous Body. As speculative masonry took over from operative masonry, a code of ethics and conduct had to be instituted. Grand Lodge is an administrative and regulatory Body with a hierarchical structure down through Provincial Grand Lodges to the Subordinate Lodges. Within this framework, however, each Lodge is still an independent, autonomous Body responsible for its own activities, its functions and ultimately its very survival. Nowadays, brought up on the ubiquitous Welfare State System, everyone everywhere expects somebody else to spoon-feed him and shoulder all the responsibility.

Grand Lodge is not an Entertainment's Committee and though it may make suggestions or give rulings, in the end the buck stops on every Master's pedestal. He must ensure that the ritual is well done; the business is conducted efficiently and effectively; that the business content is of interest and not mere routine; but above all that certain Brethren usually the same Brethren - do not hog the floor. Poor speeches, overextended, particularly at the Festive Board following the Annual Installation of Lodge Officers, are a sure recipe for "I'm not going there again" - such a pity when the effect could and should be "Do we have to wait a whole year for the next one?"

As indicated earlier, I believe that the masonic product cannot be changed, so we must improve the packaging. The packaging elements have been identified in the Grand Lodge of Ireland discussion document "Programme for Change - the Way Forward" as - Public Image; Membership; Charity; Policy; Administrative Development and Communication. It is up to us all, from bottom to top, preferably in that order and direction, to decide on the right "mix" to achieve our purpose of creating a Masonic revival for our own and our future generations' benefit.

"It is not easy in the modern world to convince people that while Freemasonry as a Body is not for anything - and it is certainly not a pressure group - its influence on the personal standards of its individual members must be good for society in general and should be welcomed". We must try to correct the false perception of us held by the media and the Churches for they are the prime agencies who can and do formulate and direct public opinion. We recognise and deplore the cross we have to bear in this connection.

Brethren, we practise a special Craft or Art. We strive to do that which is right - to be open and honest - to deal fairly, justly and equitably with all men irrespective of colour, race or creed. One of our most famous Masons, Daniel O'Connell, referred to "Philanthropy, Freemasonry as unconfined by nation, colour, sect or religion". We strive for perfection maybe the unattainable - we endeavour to make of the rough stones that we are, the perfect ashlars ready to take our place and be used by the Great Architect – the Master Builder - in the construction of that great edifice, not made by hands, eternal in the Heavens.

Freemasonry is for all, but all men are not for Freemasonry. To be a Mason you must already be a good man, and then you have continually to work and strive to make yourself even better, so that you may interact with others with perfect ease and mutual benefit – not benefit in the physical sense of profit or financial advantage, but in the intellectual and spiritual sense of those who have glimpsed Nirvana and are at peace with themselves, and thereby at peace with all others.

There can be no compromise with quality in any facet of our Institution. Michael Mac Liammoir was once accused by a critic of being "square". "Yes" said Mac Liammoir, "perhaps you are right, but so much better to be square than shapeless". How appropriate for Freemasonry at this time - let us hold firm to the symbolism of the square and the compasses and let them be the means of restoring "Ordo ab Chao" order out of chaos - as we strive to readjust emotionally to the pressure and stress of modern life.

CHARITY CORNER

ChildLine Presentation



Following the December Installation Communication of Grand Lodge, it was decided to donate the Charity Collection to the ChildLine Charity. Pictured above is R.W.Bro. Dennis Millen, Past Grand Steward of Charities and Provincial Assistant Grand Master of Antrim handing over a cheque for £500 to Martin McClure, Business Manager of ChildLine Northern Ireland.

A similar amount was also presented to the ChildLine office in Dublin, which co-incidentally happens to be situated next door to Freemasons' Hall.

547 Supports **Combat Cancer**

Members of Newtownstewart Lodge 547 presenting one of their members, Bro. Hamilton Hassard (Chairman of the local Branch of Combat Cancer) with a cheque for £1,265, which was raised at a Ladies Night and Bingo Evening, held in support of the Worshipful Master's selected charity.



Picture shows: L C J McCormick (Lodge Treasurer); John Dunbar (W.M. 2003), Mrs Hassard (Secretary of Combat Hamilton Hassard Cancer); Bro. (husband and Chairman of Combat Cancer); Robert Donald (local Charity Organiser) and J O Lyons (Lodge Secretary).

Golf Competition supports **Diabetes UK**

The Annual Golf Competition for the Grand Master's Cup, organised by R.W.Bro. Noel Simpson under the auspices of the Northern Provinces Committee and held in September 2003 at Killymoon Golf Club, Cookstown, raised £4,000.

Pictured below is the Chairman of the Northern Provinces Committee (2003) R.W.Bro. Harry Weir (PGM Tyrone & Fermanagh) presenting a cheque for £4,000 to Mrs Dinah Short (Fermanagh Branch Diabetes UK) and Mrs Marian Doherty (Diabetes Health Specialist).



The R W M Strain Masonic Charitable Trust

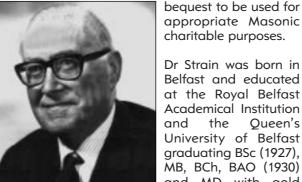
Dr Strain was born in

Queen's

the

A gift of two garden seats, with cushions and a DVD player were presented to the Corinthian Housing Association at Ashlev Lodge, Dunmurry, by the Provincial Grand Master of Antrim. Adam R.W.Bro. McKinley, on the 7th November 2003. This presentation was made

on behalf of The Queen's University of Belfast Masonic Lodge No. 533 members of which are the Trustees of the R W M Strain Masonic Charitable Trust. This trust was established following a generous bequest in the will of the late Dr Strain, a member of Queen's Lodge from 1937 until his death in 1999, the proceeds of the



and MD with gold medal (1933). He was a hospital consultant and the Lecturer in Medicine to Dental Students and the Esquire Bedell of the University. His successor in the latter office was Dr John Colhoun, another member of the Queen's Lodge. During the Second World War Dr Strain served in the RAMC attaining the rank of

Lieutenant Colonel; he was also a Commander of the Order of St John of Jerusalem.

Dr Strain was closely involved with the Belfast Charitable Society (Clifton House) at which he was a visiting physician and was its President from 1971 until 1982. This interest led to the award of a Ph.D. degree by Queen's in 1961 and he published subsequently his researches in a book entitled "Belfast and its Charitable Society - a Story of Urban Social Development". This excellent publication not only deals with the foundation and functions of the Belfast Charitable Society but also deals with the social and political history of Belfast early in the last century.

W.Bro. Dr J Fearon Secretary

Don't forget to visit the Grand Lodge Website at: www.irish-freemasons.org

New Deputy Provincial Grand Master and Assistant Provincial Grand Master for North Munster

R.W. Bro. Geoffrey G. Ashton, Provincial Grand Master, had the pleasure of installing his new Deputy Grand Master and an Assistant Grand Master of the Province of North Munster on Thursday 26th February 2004. The installation took place at the quarterly meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge in the new North Munster Masonic and Community Centre in King's Island, Limerick.

The occasion was, however, tinged with a little sadness. R.W. Bro. Ashton paid tribute to the generous and unstinting assistance that R.W. Bro. Cyril R. Foster had given to him and to the Province in general over the previous 8 years as Provincial Deputy Grand Master, and said that he was saddened that R.W. Bro. Foster had felt it necessary to stand

Past Provincial Grand Master Honoured



R.W. Bro. George Ginnelly PGM Congratulates R.W. Bro. John Greer PPGM on his installation as Grand Junior Warden of the most worshipful Grand Lodge of Ireland and on having served 62 years in the Order.

down from the office. He would be a hard act to follow.

R.W. Bro. Ashton welcomed the new Provincial Deputy Grand Master, R.W. Bro. G. Hugh Milne and the new Provincial Assistant Grand Master, R.W. Bro. John R.P. Mitchell to their new Offices saying that he felt sure that they would fill them with distinction, and that they would have the whole-hearted support of the brethren of the Province.

R.W.Bro. G G Ashton, P.G.M. N. Munster



R.W.Bro. G H Milne; P.G.M.; R.W.Bro. J R P Mitchell.

Bi-Centenary for Lodge No. 155



R.W.Bro. Armstrong along with the W.Master; Secretary & Director of Ceremonies and Ladies.

In 2003 Independent Loyalist Masonic Lodge 155 Rathfriland celebrated 200 years of continuous labour, having originally sat at Hilltown under a different Warrant and subsequently moved to the "town on the hill". To mark this significant milestone the WM, W.Bro. James Harbinson (who was in the chair for his second time) along with the officers and Brethren of the Lodge thought it appropriate to organize a number of suitable events.

At the June communication, the Lodge had it's annual closing night before the summer recess. The Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Robert Armstrong was in attendance and enjoyed an evening of fellowship and entertainment Rathfriland style!

In September a "Ladies Night" was held at the Kilmorey Arms Hotel, Kilkeel with Brethren and their partners in attendance. Once again the Provincial Grand Master was present accompanied by his wife on this occasion. The evening was a tremendous success enjoyed by all.

The celebrations culminated in October when Brethren of the Lodge again accompanied by their partners travelled to Dublin. While the ladies perused the shops, the Brethren held a special communication in Freemasons' Hall, Molesworth Street. Several Brethren joined us from our Sister Lodge No. 80. The day was rounded off with dinner and refreshments at the Masonic Hall, Newry.

Lodge 155 currently has a total of 56 members who are determined that this old and venerable lodge will continue to go from strength to strength.

W.Bro. Derek Moorehead P.M.

The Provincial Grand Lodge of North Munster was honoured by the presence of M.W. Bro. Eric N. Waller, Grand Master, when it held its quarterly meeting in the new Masonic Centre in King's Island Limerick, on Thursday 25th September 2003. This is the first time that the Provincial Grand Lodge of North Munster could be held in the



The Grand Master with the P.G.M. of North Munster.



The Grand Master, P.G.M. & Brethren in the new Lodge Room.

new building, and the Grand Master was delighted to accept the invitation to be present to mark the occasion. The move from the old premises in O'Connell Street had been completed by the end of August, and the first floor with its meeting rooms is now available for use.

Having followed the progress of the construction of the new building over the years, the Grand Master was keen to see the premises in use at the earliest opportunity. He was most impressed with the spaciousness of the new Lodge meeting room with its open-truss wood ceiling, and he congratulated the Province and its Officers on the excellence of the work so far. He added that he was looking forward to the Official Opening in 2004 when the ground floor would be completed with its dedicated museum and library, kitchen and function room.

R.W.Bro.G G Ashton PGM

Prestonian Lecture Delivered at First Lodge of Ireland

At the November 2003 communication of the First Lodge, W.Bro. Charles Wallis - Newport, a P.M. of the Lodge and of Lodge No.187, Bristol (E.C.), Prestonian Lecturer for 2002 delivered his excellent paper entitled, "Anglo Irish Connections" to a very well attended meeting. The subject chosen by W.Bro. Wallis-Newport is of great personal interest to him as his forebears lived in Co. Cork, mostly in the magnificent estate at Drishane near Millstreet, until the early years of the last century.

Some of his ancestors were members of the First Lodge in the 18th century and it was because of, and to continue this connection that he joined the Lodge some years ago. When elected to the chair he faithfully travelled from his home in Weston-Super-Mare every month to preside over the lodge. His Brethren in Munster were delighted when he was appointed Prestonian Lecturer in 2002. He made 5 "official" deliveries of the lecture in Lodge of St. Michael No. 2933 (Eastern Archipelago), University Lodge of the West Indies, No. 7128 (Jamaica & the Cayman Islands), Euclid Lodge of Installed Masters, No. 7464 (London), Bristol Installed Masters Lodge No. 8168 and Senatores Lodge of Installed Masters, No. 8966 (West Lancashire). He also delivered the lecture on 27 other occasions throughout the English Constitution and finally at his spiritual home in the First Lodge in Cork.

The Prestonian Lectures commenced in 1818 when an endowment of £300 was bequeathed by Bro. William Preston. His instructions were that "some well informed Mason deliver annually a lecture on the first, second or third degrees of the Order of Masonry according to the system practiced in the Lodge of Antiquity during my mastership"- in fact his own system.

The lectures were delivered until 1862 when they ceased but were revived in 1925 and given their present basis. Since then (except for the war years 1940-46), the annually chosen Lecturer has delivered a paper of his own on a subject of Masonic educational value. "Official deliveries" are given to at least 3 Lodges, one in London and 2 in the Provinces. In addition, by invitation, the Lecturer may travel elsewhere in Britain and Ireland.



The photograph shows the Prestonian Lecturer, W.Bro. Charles Wallis-Newport with W.Bro. Christopher Newenham, W.M. of the First Lodge and R.W.Bro. Alan J Campbell, P.G.M. of Munster.



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Richhill 328 Celebrates Centenary

Richhill Masonic Lodge No. 328 celebrated 100 years continuous labour last September. The Lodge first met in Richhill in 1759 but the Warrant was returned during the Potato Famine when the Lodge suffered a considerable reduction in numbers. The present Lodge was constituted on 28th. August 1903 and has flourished since then.

The Centenary of the Lodge was celebrated on Saturday, 27th. September 2003 with a Service conducted by R.W.Bro. Charles during McCurdy the Stated Communication. The Lodge was honoured to have in attendance The Deputy Grand Master, R.W.Bro. George Dunlop as well as The Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro. George Miskimmins, who. incidentally at the same meeting, was proposed as an Affiliated Member of the Lodge. Also in attendance were the Provincial Deputy Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Dermot Hill and the Provincial Assistant Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Leslie Johnston. R.W.Bro. Johnston, a frequent visitor to Lodge No. 328, had been installed as Provincial Assistant Grand Master at the June Communication of Provincial hosted by Richhill Lodge 328 as part of their Centenary Celebrations.

After the Communication, as in 1903, the Lodge Members and their visitors



Officers & Brethren of 328 along with the P. Deputy Grand Master; The Deputy Grand Master; the W. Master; P. Grand Master and P. Asst. Grand Master.

took the short walk to Richhill Castle and had their photograph taken. The photographs of the assembled Brethren in 1903 and 2003 now adorn the Lodge Roam in the village, which is probably unique in Masonry as it is not square in structure.

The Lodge Members and their guests completed the day with a celebratory Festive Board in nearby Markethill Masonic Hall, where the W.M., W.Bro. Geoffrey McHugh presided over an enjoyable social hour.

The Lodge was further honoured when the mentor of the Lodge, V.W.Bro. Sam Craig was appointed as the Grand Master's Standard Bearer for 2004. V.W.Bro. Craig is the second Member of the Lodge to be honoured with a position in Grand Lodge. Probably our most famous Member was the Late R.W.Bro. Thomas Stevenson Hoey or 'Steenie' as he was better known throughout the Order. R.W.Bro. Hoey set a record that is likely to prove unique, in that since he joined in 1922 he had attended every single meeting of the Lodge until 1982. Unfortunately, R.W.Bro. Hoey, a Member of the 33rd. Degree, died in hospital one day after the May meeting in 1982.

A booklet detailing the Centenary of the Lodge has been compiled and some copies are available for purchase by contacting the Secretary, W.Bro. Denis Robinson on 028-3884-1459.

W.Bro. Denis Robinson, Secretary

St. Finbar's No. 129 Rossburgh, S. Africa

Five years ago the Lodge was facing an uncertain future, mainly as a result of falling membership and declining attendance at meetings. Indeed, at one stage if there were no visitors present the Lodge could not open and unfortunately this was



Mrs S Langley; Mrs B Davies; Mrs J Espag; Mrs E O'Reilly & Mrs D James.

happening all too frequently. Also, there had not been a Candidate in the past 12 years and the Brethren were beginning to wonder if "it was worth carrying on".

After some discussion and a radical rethink of our position, it was decided to form a "Daylight Lodge" which now enjoys regular attendance of 20 Members and 14 Visitors from our Sister Constitutions in the area. Recently we have had 3 Initiates and coupled with our Ladies now joining us at the Festive Board, the future of the Lodge is looking a lot more positive.

The highlight in our Masonic Calendar is the "Christmas Social" and again attendance is on the increase, as evidenced at the 2003 function where we had the company of 75 Brethren, Ladies & Visitors. The photographs show some of the Brethren and Ladies of the Lodge.

R.W.Bro. M P Gwynn



Back Row (L to R): R.W.Bro. Peter Marx, PGM; R.W.Bro. Jack Mok W.M.; R.W.Bro. Michael Gwynn PDGM. Front Row (L to R): Bro. E Metcalf S.C. P.M.; Bro. B Fine DGM, S.C.; R.W.Bro. R Warren PPGM; W.Bro. R Wilson P.M. & V.W.Bro. J Brown

50 Year Jewel for Maghera Mason



(L to R) W.Bro. Bradley; W.Bro. Houston; W.Bro. Dripps and R.W.Bro. John Graham (P.A.G.M.).

During the December communication of Maghera Masonic Lodge No. 42, we had the honour to present a 50 year jewel to one of our more senior Brethren. The Lodge's most senior member, W.Bro. William P Houston, who was Worshipful Master 50 years ago, was in attendance and presented the certificate.

W.Bro. Robert Hugh Dripps was initiated, passed and raised in 1953 and has remained a staunch supporter of the Lodge ever since. W.Bro. Dripps was presented, with due ceremony, to the Worshipful Master, W.Bro. Uel Bradley, who presented him with his jewel. The Worshipful Master congratulated W.Bro. Dripps on his dedication and wished him many more years of fraternal Brotherhood.

History Made in Lyons Memorial Masonic Lodge No. 778

The December Communication of Lodge 778 was a special occasion for the Worshipful Master, W.Bro. John Moore as he had the honour and privilege to present his Grandfather, R.W.Bro. William G Giboney with his 50-Year Jewel.

The R.W. Provincial Grand Master of Londonderry & Donegal, R.W.Bro. Robert G Quigley was also in attendance at his mother Lodge for this special occasion and was delighted to present R.W.Bro. Giboney with his Certificate.

R.W.Bro. Giboney had risen through the ranks and branches of our Order. He was W.M. of Lodge 778 in 1974. Was Secretary of the Lodge for 13 years and Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden of The P.G.L. of Londonderry & Donegal. He also achieved the post of Foreign Representative of the Grand Lodge of Senegal to the Grand Lodge of Ireland.



(L to R) W.Bro. J Moore (W.M.); R.W.Bro. W G Giboney and R.W.Bro. R G Quigley (P.G.M.)

He is one of Lodge 778's most respected senior Brethren who continues to receive candidiates and has conferred degrees on most of the Brethren of the Lodge.

W.Bro. Tom Daly, Secretary

3rd Generation of Lodge Members Receives His 50 Year Jewel



Included in the photograph of the presentation of a 50 year Jewel are R.W.Bro. A J McKinley P.G.M. of Antrim, Bro. J C Apsley and W.Bro. A Morton W. Master of St. Patrick's Union Masonic Lodge No 175. Bro. Apsley was initiated in St. Patrick's Union Masonic Lodge, which then sat at Mounthill, outside Larne, on 15th December 1953. The presentation was held within one day of the precise 50th anniversary. Bro. James Apsley is a great nephew of W.Bro. Charles Apsley who held the office of Lodge Secretary for many years just prior to the First World War.

R.W.Bro. McKinley said he had known Bro. Apsley for a long number of years and outlined his activities over those years. Bro. Apsley thanked the P.G.M. and the Brethren and later mentioned that he had got married and joined the Lodge both in the same year; happily both unions still flourish.

ARTICLES WANTED • ARTICLES WANTED • ARTICLES WANTED • ARTICLES WANTED

The success or otherwise of this type of publication depends upon the quality and variety of articles it contains. "Grand Lodge News" is not solely for the promotion of Grand Lodge matters, rather it is there to serve Provincial Grand Lodges and Subordinate Lodges alike. The editorial team will be glad to receive interesting articles regarding functions / special anniversaries / letters etc. We would ask that the "kiss" principle is recognised - "keep it simple and short" - and forward your articles (supported by a photograph or image) to:

The Editorial Team, Grand Lodge News, c/o 115 The Mount, BELFAST BT5 4ND

or by e-mail to: w.clarke@5hoots15.freeserve.co.uk