

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

DEGREES SOUTH



OCTOBER 2012

'MAKING THE CRAFT RELEVANT'

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IMPORTANT DATES

- 2ND/3RD NOVEMBER - SESQUICENTENARY OF PORT CHALMERS MARINE LODGE No 942 IN NAPIER
- SATURDAY 24TH NOVEMBER - MEETING OF THE BOARDS
- SATURDAY 26TH JANUARY - WINCHESTER STRAWBERRY NIGHT

W Bros C. E. Lord and J. R. Soper, the National and the London Chairmen of the Universities Scheme, were privileged to address Grand Lodge at the September Quarterly Communications on the results of their research into how best to attract younger men into Masonry. To set things in context they quoted some dismal statistics:

- Of our members only nine per cent are aged under 40. And to put that percentage in perspective, it is 3,000 less than the number of members we have aged over 80!
- The vast bulk of our members, some 65 per cent, are aged between 50 and 80
- The average age at initiation is 44 and the average age of those attaining the chair over the last four years was 63

Whilst not saying there is anything wrong with that in principle, but with 55 per cent of our members in, or reaching retirement, it does set a generational challenge. Also if the average age of reaching the chair is 63, one can assume that most of the decision makers in a Lodge are near to, or in retirement, which leads one to question the degree of representation that younger members have in a Lodge. They believe the findings – based on qualitative research, having consulted a range of Provincial leaders and lodge secretaries – are relevant to the vast majority of lodges, as are sure that every one of us will be keen to expand our lodge's membership and encourage participation, as individual circumstances permit.

The research found that one crucial element is recognising that masonry is in increasing

competition with many other calls on the leisure time of prospective members. It is also clear that working patterns have changed significantly and it is less easy for those in employment to leave their workplace early in order to get to a lodge meeting. Nor for that matter do younger brethren (especially those with growing families) want to stay late all the time – something that is equally true of more senior members.

Many successful lodges don't start their work until 6 or 6.30 in the evening and they still finish in good time to enjoy their after-proceedings and get home at a reasonable hour. They do this by taking a number of simple steps that cut out time consuming yet peripheral activities. Some, for example, don't process in and out of the lodge. Most circulate rather than read their minutes, and do the same for the Almoner's and Charity Steward's reports as well as much of the business normally done under the risings. Ceremonies can be reduced in length too, without taking out any of the essential elements that make our ritual so special. For example at installation there is no necessity to present the working tools or to formally re-invest those officers being re-appointed. At the meal, there are opportunities to shorten proceedings, and we would make a plea that all long speeches should be avoided - with no exceptions(!).

All of the above not only cuts down the time taken by the formal proceedings, but also increases the pace of a meeting, which is important if one wants to keep the attention of a younger member. The "impatience of youth" is something we can all remember, and need to acknowledge!

The address touched on a number of ideas and initiatives on recruiting and retaining younger members and makes interesting reading. It is available on line at the UGLE website:

<http://www.ugle.org.uk/news-events-page/all-quarterly-communication-speeches>

RICK WAKEMAN TALKS TO DEGREES SOUTH



By a bizarre coincidence, after briefly mentioning the interview with rock legend and broadcaster Rick Wakeman on YouTube in the July issue, the man himself suddenly appears on a

whistle stop, three day visit to New Zealand. His three shows in Wellington, Auckland and then Christchurch – "An Intimate Evening With..." featured just Rick and a grand piano during which he played several of his compositions interspersed with stories from his career as a classical pianist, session musician to such greats as Cat Stevens and David Bowie, composer and member of progressive rock band Yes.

Despite his incredible schedule, plus his resolve to maintain his UK time zone body clock, Rick agreed to meet with your editor immediately on his arrival in Christchurch in order to share with us his views on Freemasonry and his experiences as a member of Chelsea Lodge No 3098.

Continued over

Having been initiated into Chelsea Lodge some five years ago, Rick now finds himself occupying the Junior Warden's chair of this renowned "Entertainers' Lodge" and looks forward to being installed as WM in 18 months time. "I'm not the sort of guy to join something simply to say I'm a member - I have to involve myself as much as possible"

Contrary to what you might first imagine the Lodge derives its name not from any links to that part of West London but from a group of entertainers who, in 1905, were appearing at the old Chelsea Theatre in London's West End and sought dispensation to form a new Lodge.

I asked Rick how he manages to fit his masonry into his working life. "It helps that my manager, Roger de Courcey, is also a member of Chelsea and a Grand Officer. I live in Norfolk and Roger tends to arrange all my work related meetings for a Wednesday morning. I have kind of set up office at Wolfe's Restaurant on Great Queen St so I'm able to have meetings over coffee or lunch and then, in the afternoon, step across the road to Grand Lodge for Chelsea's LOI."

The Chelsea Lodge meets five times a year but holds 42 LOI's. They work the Logic Ritual that demands a very high level of competence, particularly in floor work. Renowned for their charity efforts the Lodge has raised over £100,000 (\$200,000) in the last five years and this is one aspect of Freemasonry that appeals to Rick. He went on to quote many examples of the Lodge coming to the aid of members as well as a wide range of Charities that includes the London Masons Cyberknife Appeal, Prostate Cancer, Brain Tumour UK, Mercy Ships and Forces Children's Trust. The Lodge also contributes an annual bursary to the Sylvia Young Theatre School. Much of the money is raised through the Chelsea Lodge Road Show, a loose grouping of Lodge Members who will attend a Lodge Meeting and give a talk on the history of Chelsea Lodge followed by cabaret at the Festive Board.

Rick went on to talk with some affection of the current WM of Chelsea Lodge, W Bro Mick Abrahams. Mick was the original guitarist with the band Jethro Tull and went on to form Blodwyn Pig. Two years before his installation, at the age of 65, he suffered two heart attacks and a mid-brain stroke and has had to learn to walk and talk again. However he was determined that his installation should go ahead, as were the Lodge members, he stayed focussed on



Two aging rockers reminisce!

recovery and eventually was able to walk unaided up to the pedestal to take his obligation.

Currently the lodge has around five candidates awaiting initiation, another six or seven awaiting their second degree and five more ready to be raised. Rick has four sons and would not be surprised if one or two of them followed him into the craft.

Regular meetings of the Chelsea Lodge feature a post festive board cabaret and, with a dining fee of only £40, on average the Lodge hosts around 200 visitors at each meeting which I suggested might give the "ostensible steward of the lodge" a few headaches.

He pointed out that Chelsea was the only Lodge that had to issue tickets to visitors and that the biggest problem was people without tickets who just turned up on the day. "For next year's installation we have been allowed to move to the main temple in Great Queen Street. This was because at previous installations we have had to cap numbers due to space limitations. We have already sold a number of tickets, we expect over 700 to attend and there is no other room with that capacity."

Rick makes a point of visiting other Lodges when time permits and will often take an acting office where the Lodge might be struggling in terms of numbers. He feels that often a Lodge might need a helping hand through a quieter period and hopefully recover as more candidates are found. He is also a Royal Arch Mason as well as having joined the Knights Templar. Both these orders, he believes, hold synergy with his strong Christian faith. And finally Rick was eager to hear something of the history of the South Island District and of the Lodges therein. Consequently the interviewer became the interviewee and our allocated half hour session drifted into one hour, resulting in a very harassed promoter calling time on two aging rockers' reminiscences.

"I'm not the sort of guy to join something simply to say I'm a member - I have to involve myself as much as possible"



IN BRIEF

Southern Star Lodge put on a very well attended Ladies Evening at the end of June, arranged and organised by Jeff Grimmett, Peter Sheriff and their ladies. Sandy Sheriff and her team of helpers did a tremendous job of catering for the hungry. An auction of worthy and not so worthy items was ably attended to by Peter Sheriff which was intermingled with dancing to live music. All monies made from the evening were presented to the WM's charity appeal, The Nelson Ark.

At the end of July, Lazar and Dunedin Lodges got together at the Havelock Hotel for a wonderful Sunday luncheon, with over forty brethren and their Ladies joining in a most enjoyable day out.

Members of the Lodge of St John and the Winchester Lodge came together for Sunday Lunch at the Levels Golf Club in Timaru in July. An excellent meal was enjoyed by around forty members and their partners.

At the August meeting of the South Island English Masonic Charitable Trust 10 Lodges applied for support for 14 worthy causes. These applications were met in full which amounted to \$13,380. Beneficiaries included West Coast RSA's, Volunteer Fire Brigade at Ward, St John's Temuka, Life Education Trust, NZ Foundation for the Blind, Heart Foundation, Volunteer Fire Brigade at Governor's Bay, Nelson Ark (see back page) and others.

FROM THE DISTRICT GRAND MASTER

Greetings to all Brethren and their families, Freemasonry seems to be going through a very busy time at present with a number of Installations, Enthronements, Initiations and Exaltations which means that our Lodges and Chapter are starting to show positive signs of growth.

It has been particularly pleasing to see Lodges that have been devoid of new members for some time – Greymouth 1233 is a case in point, that have now new initiates and others waiting in the wings.

Along with this growth comes a new responsibility from its existing members to see that the ritual is given in the best possible manner (preferably without being read) and that these new Freemasons are given the benefit of proper mentoring by a qualified Brother from within the Lodge.

Brethren, should you need help with your mentoring program please give Wor. Bro. Peter Sheriff, District Grand Mentor, a call – he will be only too pleased to help. Shortly Peter will be attending the first “Mentors Conference” to be held in the Pacific area and I am sure that we will all benefit greatly from this experience.

Brethren, I bring to your attention a matter that is causing some consternation amongst the Brethren within our Lodges, this being the alarming trend of members falling behind with their dues.

In the Book of Constitutions it quite clearly states that if a Brother is 2 years behind with his dues he

should immediately be “struck off” – this may seem harsh but this is the rule. I don’t expect that this would take place immediately but the Brother so affected should be given every opportunity to remedy the situation himself, however, if through hardship he is unable to do so, I would expect the Lodge of which he is a member to come to his aid until such times as the Brother is able to again fulfil his obligations.

Another matter that was brought to my attention at the Annual Communications in Westport was the feeling of some of our newer Brethren that due to lack of numbers they were being “pushed” up the Masonic ladder to higher office before they were ready. Some Brethren have stated that this was one of the reasons for their absence or departure from their Lodge. Can I make this request of all Wor. Masters and their Lodge Committees that you ascertain from the prospective Lodge Officer if they are ready and more importantly willing to take higher office and if they show any reluctance whatsoever then they be allowed to stand down from the proposed office until they are ready.

In closing may I on behalf of Bev thank you all for the kind wishes extended by the District and our members and families to her during her recent surgery. Your support was very much appreciated.

Yours fraternally

Geoff W Rowe

District Grand Master SINZ

“Along with this growth comes a new responsibility from its existing members to see that the ritual is given in the best possible manner (preferably without being read)”

FROM THE DEPUTY DISTRICT GM

Greetings Brethren. No doubt you all realise that Christmas is only a few weeks away so hopefully your preparations are well under way.

How refreshing it has been for me when visiting a number of our lodges recently to see new members being initiated and passed. This all bodes well for the future of the District.

While some of the ritual work is not quite as good as it should be it is really pleasing to see the efforts of our master masons. These young men are obviously

working very hard to learn their work and maybe their enthusiasm will prick the conscience of some of our elder statesmen to lift their game.

I’m looking forward to visiting the Scottish Lodges in Dunedin during November and December as 2012 comes to an end.

Barbara and I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and festive season with family and friends.

Ken

FROM THE ASSISTANT DISTRICT GM

Greetings Brethren from the Top of the South. Winter at last seems to be lessening its grip on us after what seems to have been a very long and wet season, but we are aware it can still produce a nasty unexpected sting in its tail.

However Freemasonry in this area is going well and in good heart, with the Phoenix Lodge putting Kevin Slee back into the chair for another year, in June. Dick Williams, Phoenix’s hard working secretary, went into hospital for a quite a serious operation and we now hear he is up and about and doing well. We wish you well Dick.

On the 18th August we travelled over to Blenheim to install Chris Hobbs as the 150th Master of the Dunedin Lodge. The Installation Dinner afterwards was so well attended that a few more places had to be found for everyone. Well done Chris and your team. Following this, Fran and I took off in our mobile home and headed south, arriving in Christchurch for

a few days to stay with friends, have a look around and attend the board meetings. Having not seen a lot of Christchurch since the earthquakes we were quite shocked at what we saw and felt very sorry for those who were still suffering from the after effects. From there we headed over to the West Coast and, to cut a long story short, we slowly made our way to Greymouth via Hokitika. On the Friday, 31st August we met up with the gang from Christchurch led by Ken Borland for an evening meal at a well known watering hole, which was a most enjoyable evenings get together. On Saturday, ably assisted by the Christchurch fraternity and many brethren from other areas we put Jack Sheehan firmly into the chair of the Greymouth Lodge along with his new officers two of whom were new brethren to the Lodge. We understand the Lodge has two further persons awaiting initiation - well done Greymouth lodge, it’s great to see.

MASONS BACKING ARK DURING 2012

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION
OF THE DISTRICT GRAND
LODGE OF THE SOUTH ISLAND

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This year the Nelson ARK has been adopted by the Southern Star Lodge as the primary recipient of their Master's Charity. Support has included both monies raised not only by the Lodge itself but also from the English District Grand Lodge of the South Island. Featured amongst the fundraising efforts was a traditional mid-winter Masonic Ladies Night - a gala night of dine and dance at the Boathouse.

The Nelson ARK is a Charitable Trust dedicated to making a difference to both animals and humans. Youth at risk are professionally coached to help animals and each other through educational and rehabilitation programmes. Currently they are running APART (Animals People Rehabilitative Training) which heals hearts and changes lives through the power of human-animal relationships. APART is an 8 week course where a young person is paired with an older person (mentor) and shelter dog. Under the guidance of a professional dog-trainer the young person learns animal care including physical care, behavioural management, personality, safety, social organisation and developmental cycles. These young participants are responsible for training their dog over the 8 week course. Dog training is combined with character education and violence prevention programme that teaches lessons of character and compassion. Through the assistance of rescued dogs these students are counselled on how to understand and overcome abuse, neglect and grief. In the process they develop understanding and skills in self-esteem, conflict resolution, anger management, respect for others, and in gaining success through acts of compassion and responsibility. Dog training teaches the value of patience, discipline and hard work. It also offers young people the opportunity to learn co-operative and considerate ways of dealing with problems in the training, which in turn will provide alternative coping strategies in their own life.

WM Jeff Grimmett says "The thing I like about the ARK though is that the principles they teach these kids are so in synch with Masonry probably best summarised in the Exhortation from the 3rd degree "to seek solace from your own distress by extending relief and consolation to your fellow creatures in the hour of their affliction". The ARK is a great program, very successful and a worthy recipient of our Masonic charitable effort. It certainly struck a chord with Southern Star members - who have all dug deep and worked hard to achieve such a creditable result. And now especially with the help of DGL - \$7.5k total - must be some kind of a record for us."

Jeff is pictured with Karen Howieson (Founding Trustee of the Nelson ARK) "The dog doesn't seem too keen on the cheque but Karen is looking happy enough and me - well I am just there doing my thing on behalf of Southern Star - but it looks to me like I don't mind the role of big spender with a nice girl!"



VISIT TO SINGAPORE

A recent visit to Singapore by W Bro Graeme Gibbons, to watch his son participate in the international Masters Hockey Tournament, gave him the perfect opportunity to carry out a fraternal visit to a Singaporean Lodge. Graeme chose the Sir Stamford Raffles Lodge No 7444 and, having bumped into W Bro Murray Tasker at the hockey, the pair of them were picked up from Graeme's hotel by the Lodge secretary, Bro Andy Wong and taken to Freemason's Hall, where they were made most welcome by the Worshipful Master W Bro Jean Nasr. Also at the meeting, from the Hockey Tournament, one of the referees in

fact, was the WM of St David's Lodge in Northern Ireland. Approximately 50 Brethren attended the meeting which worked a Second Degree for one of four Brethren awaiting Passing. "It was excellent working and very similar to our own," remarked Graeme.

During the meeting a collection was made for a widow that realised some \$1200. W. Bro Graeme was presented with a book about the history of Freemasonry in the area. A four course meal was served in the refectory after the meeting at which a raffle raised a further \$700 for the widow in question.

"It was a meeting which W Bro Tasker and I will never forget", said Graeme, "the secretary took a liking to my Phoenix Lodge cap which I presented to him in recognition of his help to us".

Degrees South Deadlines:

December 31st for the Jan 2013 edition
March 31st for the April 2013 edition
June 30th for the July 2013 edition
September 30th for the Oct 2013 edition



Freemason's Hall, Singapore

Winchester Lodge's Annual Cheese, Wine and Strawberry Evening

SATURDAY 26TH JANUARY, 2013
WINCHESTER HALL, AVENEL ST, WINCHESTER

TICKET PRICE **\$20 PER PERSON INCLUSIVE**
Proceeds to the Winchester Lodge Benevolent Fund

6:30pm (Dress Informal)
Great food, wine, raffle and entertainment

Tickets from Stewart Stott 03 693 9952