

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

DEGREES SOUTH



FEBRUARY 2013

DISTRICT HIT THE ROAD

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IMPORTANT DATES

- 27th February - Pacific Lodge of Hokitika installation
- 7th March - Conyers Lodge Installation
- 11th March - Lazar Lodge Installation
- 26th March - Canterbury lodge installation
- 17th & 18th May - Annual Communications in Christchurch hosted by Conyers Lodge at the new Shirley Lodge rooms.

Greymouth Lodge moved their first meeting of 2013 to Saturday 2nd February and headed up to Westport in bright sunshine to pass Bro Tom Ealam in the immaculate Phoenix Lodge rooms.

This meeting however was made all the more unusual by the fact that Assistant District Grand Master W. Bro Dave Stenning had agreed to conduct the ceremony along with a team of District Officers. There being no end to the importance placed on this meeting, that the District Grand Master and Deputy District Grand Master were also in attendance.

"As a District we plan to visit a Lodge and work a ceremony at least once a year" said R.W. Bro Rowe "It is important that the District uphold the standard of our ritual and can demonstrate what is expected"

These visits will mean that the membership at all levels will get to know the District team and have an opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of masonry and our ritual.

The ceremony of Bro Tom's passing went off without a hitch and everyone gathered afterward in the refectory for some truly welcoming West Coast hospitality, that just had to include some excellent whitebait fritters!

Bro Tom is pictured here with his grandfather W Bro. George Crossley, a past master of the



Ashley Lodge No 28 (NZ), together with father Phil who is currently Junior Warden at Greymouth. Congratulations to Tom from Degrees South, you proved an excellent candidate and we look forward to you being raised to the third degree in the near future.

MENTORING CONFERENCE AT KUALA LUMPUR

The conference was represented by Lodges as far away as Hong Kong, Mumbai, Sri Lanka, Poona and of course, NZ. The majority as you would expect were made up of Malaysian and Singaporean Lodges.

Very Wor. Bro. Nigel Brown, The Grand Secretary kicked off the meeting and welcomed W Bro Peter Sheriff, District Grand Mentor, as the only representative of New Zealand and was delighted that we had attended, enquired after our District and Christchurch in particular.

He gave an overview of Grand Lodge aspiration as regards Mentoring and a general introduction to the meeting.

The Mentoring Lecture was given by Wor. Bro. James Bartlett, The Grand Mentor. Using visual and audio aids Wor. Bro James gave his views and thoughts as for the reasons for Mentoring and how we should address them and asked all those present for their views.

W Bro Peter reports "In a strange way it was assuring to know that the problems we have



on The South Island are not peculiar to us and not necessarily a result of the unusual logistic problems we experience here. Declining membership, attracting new members, keeping old ones, over-secrecy, misperception by the public are prevalent everywhere. The general message of the day was to be more supportive to our new members and to be less shy of the non-Masonic outside world."

DISTRICT GRAND MENTOR'S VISIT TO KUALA LUMPUR

It is a rare honour to be asked to represent one's District but a rarer honour indeed to in effect represent one's whole country which, de facto, is what happened.

The event though was just so much more than I expected. Not only was it an international Mentoring Conference but also The District Grand Lodge of The Eastern Archipelago's Communication weekend and the dedication ceremony of a grand,



spanking new Masonic Centre which has cost the best part of NZ\$6 million.

Where do I start?

When the District Grand Master, Rt. Wor. Bro. Geoff Rowe asked me if I would represent SINZ I was quite taken aback (in a good way!) especially as the venue is not exactly on our doorstep. How could I not accept? The District was happy to cover my costs for the travel there and back and my weekend's accommodation but thought it would be churlish, indeed tight-fisted, of me not to invite my other half, Sandy, and make a week's break of it and enjoy the opportunity, the different culture and the sights.

We did the touristy thing of course and Sandy had her plastic card making a recipe for hot, tired feet and a red bank balance. "It's Christmas" I was advised as though that was a universal panacea for all spending which was then further exacerbated by the discovery of that great British institution of Marks and Spencer!!

The new Read Masonic Centre (See Footnote) was on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur and part of new development. With one very large Main Temple, two smaller Craft temples and two Red Lodge temples, a Library, large accommodating changing rooms, a vast Dining Hall with a stage and all the lighting and sound equipment that goes with it, a kitchen, administration centre and not least an imposing Entrance and spiral staircase. I was greeted with warmth and generosity (I believe they were quite impressed that The South Island was represented) initially by Wor. Bro. James Valentine the District Grand Secretary and latterly Wor. Bro. Tong Yew Sum, who took me under his wing and gave me a guided tour of the complex and not the least his beloved Library.

Saturday was now the big day. I had the Dedic-

ation Ceremony and the Communications Meeting in the afternoon and Sandy would join me early evening for cocktails and the dinner.

The Dedication Ceremony was not quite what I anticipated. I had expected some salutary words from the R Wor. Bro. Jonathan Spence, Deputy Grand Master who together with The Grand Secretary and The Grand Mentor had come all the way out from England and a few more words from The District Grand Master, Dr. Yeoh Poh Hong, break open a bottle of Bollinger on each of the pillars and off we jolly well go. No, none of it. What we got was a traditional Chinese opening ceremony where very colourful dragons (manned by very able local school kids) and accompanied by loud drums and cymbals. Although afterwards I had to seek audio triage the ceremony was truly beautiful and meaningful even to a barbarian like me. The dragons once awoken then did an acrobatic display on top of two metre high poles which was no mean feat but the culmination of the ceremony was that all the above mentioned dignitaries and others had to light (one each) a three meter vertical strip of firecrackers, fifteen of them in all. Well. You would have thought it was a bad day in Damascus with royal blue diving for cover wherever they could find it, not dignified but absolutely hilarious!! The ceremony will be sure to be one of the outstanding memories of that afternoon, it was so spectacular that all the workers on the nearby fly-over construction stopped work to spectate. The massive Temple was opened at 2pm and Tyled.



There must have been 500 or 600 present. The more formal Masonic Dedication took place presided by Rt. Wor. Jonathan Spence. I was given what I considered a place of honour in the East along with others of a much more rarefied rank than I. The District Grand Master, Dr. Yeoh Poh Hong then took over the proceedings. Promotions were awarded to the various local Lodges and greetings were given by visitors. I gave greetings on behalf our District Grand Master, Rt. Wor. Geoff Rowe to which there was a general murmur of appreciation.

We eventually proceeded to dinner where 500 were catered for. This was the first dinner that had ever taken place here and given the number and opening night nerves there were a few problems but these were all overcome in good heart and we all settled down to a very convivial evening with a Chinese

"You would have thought it was a bad day in Damascus with royal blue diving for cover wherever they could find it"

group playing up on stage to give some extra ambience. After the first two courses (bruschetta followed by lobster bisque) Dr Yeoh through his District Secretary asked for certain nominated people to rise and take wine with the District Grand Master. I, much to my surprise was the last of these, and when he mentioned my name but in particular our District a low rumble of applause grew around the entire hall. The South Island New Zealand was certainly well received. *W Bro Peter Sheriff*



Footnote.

William Henry Macleod Read was born in London on 7th February 1819. His father had come out to Singapore in 1822 on business and 'W H' as he became to be known came out to join the firm to replace his father in 1841, just 22 years old. He spent the next 40 years in Singapore and became prominent in civic and commercial life in that colony and is regarded as one of its great characters. He became closely associated with horse racing and apparently was quite an able jockey. In 1845 the first lodge in Singapore was founded and Read was the second Initiate. In 1858 he became the first District Grand Master of the Eastern Archipelago. It is said that he had considerable influence on the rulers of the Malay States and also the King of Siam from whom he received a Siamese decoration. In 1886 Queen Victoria made him a C.M.G. in 1887 he retired back to London. He died in 1909 at the age of 90.

FROM THE DEPUTY DISTRICT GM

With the Christmas and New Year celebrations out of the way we can look forward to another busy year ahead. As a number of lodges have new candidates there is going to be plenty of work to be done. It is therefore very important that ritual work is learnt and delivered clearly to ensure the members are given the best possible start to their Masonic careers.

For Barbara and me it has been a very quiet festive season following our 25th wedding anniversary. The new year starts for me with a Scottish Installation in late January, followed by Winchester's very enjoy-

WINCHESTER'S BIG NIGHT OUT

It was that time of year once more and around 70 people gathered at the newly refurbished Victoria Hall in Winchester to enjoy some of the best cheese, wine, strawberries, cherries and dried apricots that Canterbury and Central Otago were able to provide. This year was the sixth running of this event and it is now firmly established in the calendars of many in both the SI District, the NZ Midland District and beyond.

On a typically sultry January evening all settled down to enjoy the fruits of the region and admire the refurbishments to the hall. These were recently completed by members of the Lodge and the Hall Committee, ably led by W Bro Stewart Stott.

Entertainment came in the form of Canadian singer/songwriter and recording artist Lorina Harding, who now teaches at the Geraldine Academy of Performance and Arts.



Pictures courtesy of Bro Dennis Flor Cruz



able Cheese, Wine and Strawberry evening. We in Ashburton are working a 3rd degree in February on Bro Gabonada which will be followed by a 1st degree initiation in March. Later we have the annual gavel exchange with Winchester where the Bruce Taylor gavel and case exchanges hands. No doubt the next time we all come together will be the Annual Communications to be hosted by Conyers Lodge at the newly completed Shirley Masonic Complex. Please assist the organisers by registering promptly. *Fraternally Ken B.*

Richard Taylor - Editor

85 Brophy Road

RD21 Geraldine

7991

Phone: 03 693 9111

Mob: 021 1589 021

E-mail: stay@taylorsatgeraldine.co.nz

Degrees South Deadlines:

March 31st for the April 2013 edition

June 30th for the July 2013 edition

September 30th for the Oct 2013 edition

December 31st for the Jan 2014 edition

COMPETITION

David managed to attract some sponsorship for Bubble's trip in order to raise some money for the Nelson Ark, a Charitable Trust dedicated to making a difference to both animals and humans (see the previous issue of Degrees South). Southern Star have adopted this cause and support them at every opportunity. Our competition is intended to add to David's total.

David has carefully logged the exact mileage that the Isetta covered under its own power to complete the journey from Nelson to Auckland. Please note that this is mileage and not kilometres as the car still has its original milometer fitted.

What we would like our over-18 readership to do is very simple.

1. Write your name and contact details on a piece of paper together with your mileage estimate.
2. Place those details in an envelope with a \$5 note.
3. Mail to the editor at the above address.

The nearest to the actual distance travelled will receive a bottle of Scotland's finest. The winner will be announced in the next issue. All proceeds will be passed to Southern Star Lodge, to be applied to the Nelson Ark.

BUBBLE'S BIG ADVENTURE



Some of you may not be aware that our District Grand Director of Ceremonies, otherwise known as W Bro David Marsh, takes pride of place in that long line of great English eccentrics, by way of his choice of road transport. David is the proud owner of an Isetta three-wheeled, "Bubble Car" built in the 1950's by BMW. The thought had come to him that, with the NZ Microcar Club presence at the big Classic Car show in Auckland in February each year, it would have been a great idea to take the Isetta to it. The plan was discussed and refined over several days and David decided that he would try to take the Isetta there under its own power. Now it was down to planning and logistics. Spare parts were acquired and everything overhauled to get the machine in the best possible condition.

"My best mate out here (Dave Stenning, an ex RAF engineering warrant officer and Asst DGM), would be my co-pilot. He is a whiz at all things electrical and mechanical and he has a motor bike licence so can legally drive the Isetta, if needs must. Booking the Ferry across the Cook straight was interesting, what was the Isetta classed as? Well a motorcycle (or motor cycle and sidecar) was the conclusion of the two ferry companies!

At 6:30 am on the morning of Sunday 3rd February he started the car and she fired up with a steady thud. Then with a farewell kiss to partner Ronnie, who would be bringing the back-up vehicle along, and "See you in Picton" he was off.

David joined the main State Highway and within a few minutes arrived at the foot of Gentle Annie, the first of the many hills in the Whangamoas. Not wanting to over rev the Isetta he changed down early from 4th gear at about 40 mph to third and keeping the revs up was able to make the first hill still in third gear at about 30-35mph. The majority of this section of the route was tacked in third gear at about 25-30 mph. The bends on this road are well signed with a suggested maximum speed (in kph); the sharpest 25 kmh and the

fastest 65kmh. In total you go from sea level to 268 metres and down again. The Whangamoas are really a series of hills, the final one being the Rai Saddle, this is the steepest of the hills and he was forced to take the final part of this in first gear. At 9.20am he arrived in Picton and rendezvoused with Ronnie and Dave an hour or so later for the ferry crossing. Leaving the ferry David mentions "With Dave Stenning in the Isetta with me it was quite noticeably slower" - a backhanded compliment if ever there was one! After overnighing at Paraparaumu the route selected that day by Dave Stenning and Ronnie was to travel North on Highway 1 through the towns of Levin, Foxton and Sanson, and Bulls where stopped for coffee and to get some rolls for lunch as they had now decided to try to make their overnight stop at Taihape.

The rain started early that evening and got steadily worse during the night. This did not bode well for the next day as they were going to drive across the Infamous Desert Road to Taupo. The first part of the trip that day in the rain was OK but as they approached the plateau the weather got colder; the inside of the Isetta is unheated, condensation ran down the windows and they fogged up again as soon as Dave Stenning had wiped them. After an hour and quarter of this we they arrived at the Army Museum in Wairau "Never in the field of human travel was a coffee and cake needed so much".

Setting off once more as they approached the great lake of Taupo the sun finally broke through the clouds. 20km later they were in Taupo town centre and checked into their motel.

Next morning they woke up to find the sun was out and they were off once more. They turned off from State Highway 1 to Highway 30. The road was undulating with several long hills but it must have been the sunshine as the Isetta seemed to go even better in the warmth, using third gear on most of the hills. However a really annoying rattle developed. Dave Stenning found that the handle of the sun roof was coming loose and the washer under the handle was rattling. They stopped and fixed it with a ten cent piece being used as a screw driver, the only tools used on the Isetta in the whole trip.

Having reached their planned overnight stop by 12:35pm they decided to push on to Auckland that day (Waitangi Day).

David's thoughts on the trip?

"First of all I am astonished at how well the Isetta did; its performance was faultless; it never missed a beat. The statistics on its fuel consumption were astonishing as was the fact that the whole trip was done in approximately 16 hours of driving. I am pleased that on this big adventure we met so many New Zealanders old and young who wanted to know about us and our very special vehicle."

