

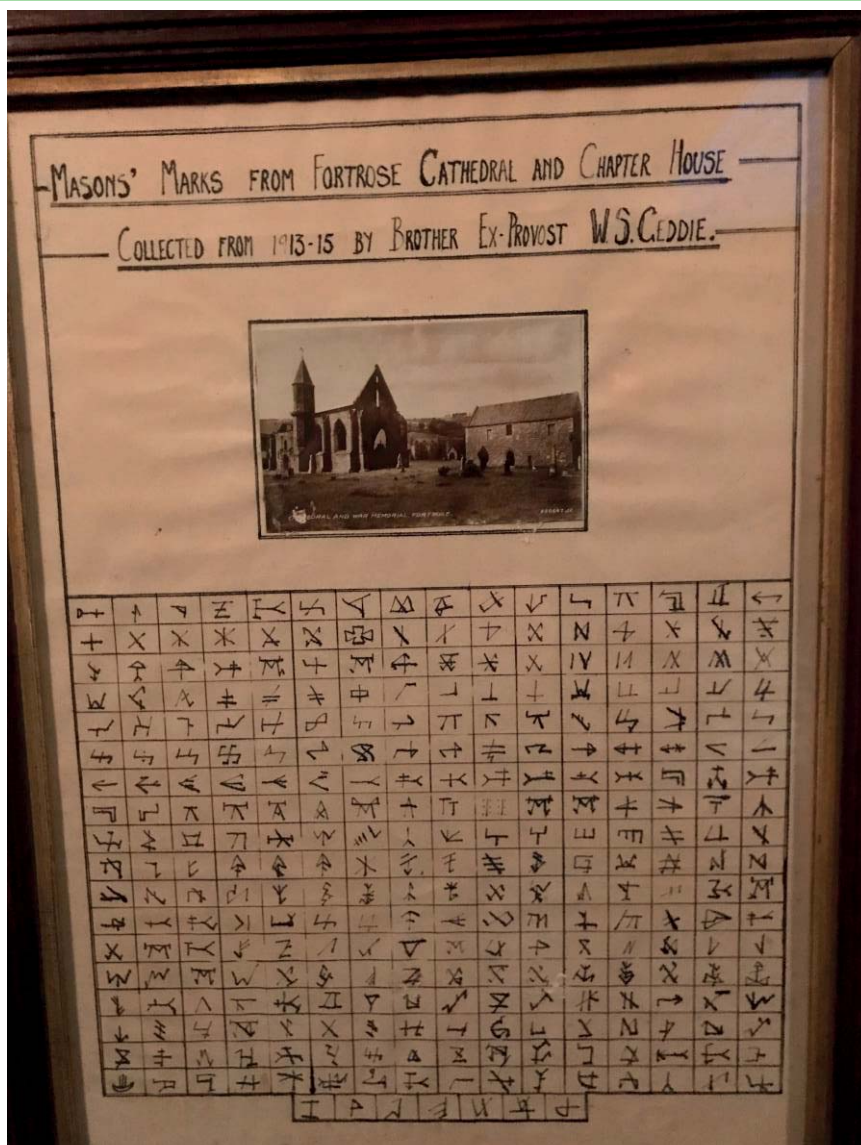
PROVINCIAL PATTERN

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Province of Ross and Cromarty

ISSUE NO 115

MAY 2023

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Editorial

Welcome to the 115th edition of the “Provincial Patter”

As I read through the articles for this edition of the Patter and likewise reflect on the recent tour I undertook to carry out Installations, Consecrations and Rededications around the world, I am greatly heartened by all that is happening in our Lodges, Provinces, and Districts. While we are all still mindful that Covid is still with us, it is so good to see Lodges welcoming new candidates and returning to something resembling normality. During the last week in April, I attended a Reigning Masters’ Degree in Bonnyrigg where 130 Brethren were present; the following day in Dysart, 120 Brethren attended the 150th Anniversary of Lodge St Clair of Dysart. It is good to see the Brethren respond to those important meetings. That said, I am fully aware that some Lodges, post Covid, are struggling. At the recent meeting of Provincial Masters’, it was encouraging to hear that there is much being done in most Provinces to assist and encourage the struggling Lodges. Now is a good time to consider a Lodge visitation to some of the struggling Lodges to work a Degree for them or to invite them to work a Degree for you. In the Rededication Ceremony we are prompted to remember that the jewels of Office bid each one of us to help and assist each other, in our own way, to upbuild those moral values upon which Freemasonry is built – during times that are proving difficult for some, let us all remember that valuable lesson.

Ramsay McGhee, Editor

Grand Lodge of Scotland



Only a month to go until we discuss what is probably the biggest issue in Grand Lodge in a long time. The motion to effectively change the Governance of Grand Lodge is vitally important to the future of Scottish Freemasonry – it is crucial that the motion succeeds in June. Simply, the Grand Committee will no longer exist – it will be replaced by a strategic committee which will be much smaller and will include the Chairmen of the Standing Committees. The Standing Committees will be open to all Brethren at home and Overseas who have the proper skill base, experience, and knowledge. This is a massive change from the present system whereby you can only get on to a standing committee if you are fortunate to be elected to Grand Committee. The Strategy Committee will prepare and submit to Grand Lodge, their proposals for the strategic approach to where we need to be heading along with the objectives that will flow from the strategy. Grand Lodge will decide whether the strategy is acceptable thereby retaining the democratic approach that we are so proud of. The big difference will be that when the strategy, which will be a rolling strategy, is agreed, the objectives will be converted into remits which will be given to the appropriate Standing Committee along with a timeline and budget and told to get the job done. This will do away with the time-consuming practice we currently have and ensure that results are achieved more efficiently and quickly.

The Strategy Committee will also be charged to produce an annual report to Grand Lodge to ensure transparency and an up-to-date report on how all matters are progressing.

Ed

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Provincial Grand Lodge:

The past three months have been busy with the Provincial Grand Lodge Annual Visitations to the Lodges in the Province, with only Lodge Fortrose No 108 and Lodge Allan Wilson No 851 remaining to visit to complete the round.

It has been pleasing to see that most of the Lodges are now witnessing attendances which are getting back to pre-covid levels. It is more encouraging to note that most lodges are initiating new members, with several lodges initiating four to five candidates in the past year. It must also be noted that, the standard of the degree work witnessed during the visits was of a high standard, and the impressive manner that many of the candidates presented themselves during the Test Questions was very heartening for the future standard of Freemasonry in our area.

It has been encouraging to note, that during the PGL inspections, it was highlighted in the Provincial Grand Secretary's reports that each lodge has been actively supporting local charities and causes. It is always good for the benefit of Freemasonry that the local lodges are seen to be assisting other organisations and good causes in their communities.

In the remaining visits by the PGL, it should be noted that on the trip to Stornoway on Friday 19th May, the Brethren of Lodge Fortrose No. 108 shall also be celebrating the 200-year anniversary of occupying the lodge building at Kenneth Street, Stornoway. The Grand Master Mason, Bro. Ramsay McGhee, and a Deputation from the Grand Lodge of Scotland are planning to visit and carry out a rededication ceremony to mark the 200-year occupation of the building.

Due to holiday commitments, the PGL visit to Lodge Allan Wilson No. 851 has been rescheduled for the regular meeting on Tuesday 8th August 2023.

The dates for the remaining lodges to be visited are,
Friday 19th May 2023 - Lodge Fortrose No. 108
Tuesday 8th August 2023 -Lodge Allan Wilson No. 851

Cyclone Freddy /

Cyclone Freddy

In mid-March it was extremely alarming to hear of the impact that Cyclone Freddy had on the Southern part of Malawi, and around the Blantyre area, which is also where Mountain View School is located. Cyclone Freddy turned out to be one of the longest lasting tropical cyclones on record, dumping some 400 - 500 mm on rain around the Blantyre area, which caused severe flooding resulting in a lot of damage to the infrastructure in the area, including damage to roads, housing, and the power supplies.

From reports from Bro Peter Curtis, the Grand Superintendent in Malawi, many of the Brethren from the local lodges had

helped initially by supplying meals, some 400 meals a day to some of the displaced persons and providing meals for Doctors and Staff at the Queen's Hospital.

The Grand Lodge of Scotland Benevolence and Care Committee has approved £15,000 of relief funding to be used in the area affected, which is being administered by Bro Peter and his team. Some of the monies have been used to support additional food supplies at Mountain View School, as the school has been used to house several families that were displaced during the flooding.

Bro Peter and his team have been visiting Mwanga Primary School in Chiradzulu, which has been housing 312, mostly women and children displaced by flooding, and the Providence Industrial Mission Church, also in Chiradzulu, which has been housing some 87 people whose homes were also destroyed, to make an assessment of requirements, and liaising with the elders to ensure that the aid reaches the beneficiaries without being syphoned off by officials.

Bro Peter and his team must be thanked, and admired, for their quick response and tireless work that they carried out in extremely trying and difficult conditions.

Bro. David Collings, Provincial Grand Master, Province of Sutherland

It was with deep sadness that, on the 16th of February 2023, Bro Andrew MacIvor, PG Director of Ceremonies, and me travelled North to Golspie to attend the Lodge of Sorrow and Funeral Service for Bro David John Collings, the Provincial Grand Master for the Province of Sutherland.

After Bro David retired from the aircraft manufacturing industry in the Midlands, he moved North and settled in Golspie with his family and got heavily involved in Freemasonry in Sutherland, eventually taking up the role of Provincial Grand Master of the Province of Sutherland in 2021.

The Lodge of Sorrow was held in St Andrews Lodge No.1318, followed by Funeral Service in the Fountain Road Community Hall, and from the large attendances on both occasions it was evident that Bro David was a highly respected and well-loved friend who will be sadly missed.

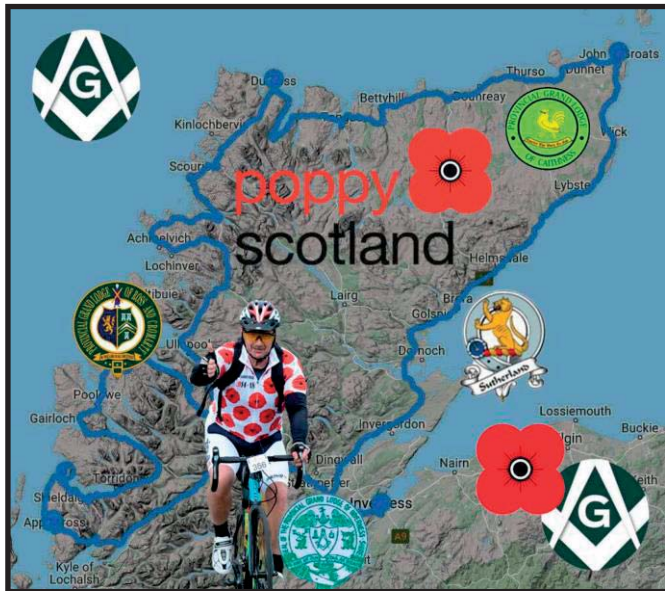
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North Coast 500 Sponsored Cycle for Poppyscotland



The four Highland Provinces of Caithness, Sutherland, Ross & Cromarty, and Inverness-shire are collaborating to cycle the North Coast 500 route to raise funds for the Poppyscotland appeal. Commencing on the 5th May and during the following three weeks, the cyclists will work in relay to cycle the sections of the challenging course that passes through their respective Provinces.

Any cyclists wishing to join in along the way will be most welcome, and more importantly if you wish to donate to this worthy cause, you can use the Just Giving Page by using the link www.justgiving.com/page/james-moodie-1673897726233 or by scanning the QR Code

SCAN ME!!!!



The first cyclists will be waved off from the Inverness Masonic Temple by the Grand Master Mason on Friday 6th May at 10:00am.

PGMs Meeting Update

On Saturday 15th April, I attended an interesting meeting of the Provincial Grand Masters in Perth, hosted by the Grand Master Mason, Bro. Ramsay McGhee.

A full agenda included an update on progress on the proposed Grand Lodge Governance Structure, which will be voted on in Grand Lodge in June, was discussed.

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An interesting new initiative to be rolled out over the next few months is to have a Prostate Ambassador / Champion in each Province in Scotland. A suitable volunteer from each Province shall be given training in the role by Prostate Scotland. It is expected that the Champion shall be a confidential point of contact for those seeking more information on prostate issues, aiding those with prostate issues requiring any support, and be a proactive promotor of prostate education, and the potential issues that men will experience with prostate issues as they age, both within our membership and the general public.

Due to the lack of response and publicity from the media to the Make it a Million Appeal, and the many millions of pounds donated by lodges all over the world, the Grand Lodge of Scotland are planning to invite the press and media to Grand Lodge to reinforce to them the amount of financial donations and other work that the lodges have carried out, to try to get them to publicise some good news, so the public can appreciate some of the work carried out by Scottish Freemasons.

The work continues in the roll out of establishing a Young Masons Group in each Province and District in the Scottish Constitution. A contact has now been allocated to each Province and Information Packs are being distributed. It is anticipated that all Provinces/Districts will have a group set up for the start of next season. In Ross & Cromarty, we already have a group up and running, which meets once a month by Zoom, and we look forward to the new initiative to refresh the format of our current set up.

The Grand Lodge Annual Raffle, which was suspended for the last three years due to Covid, is to be re-introduced this year. It will probably follow a similar format to previous raffles, but with possibly some interesting new prizes being introduced to refresh the format.

Raffle for Hospitality at Rangers Football Club

The PGL run raffle for hospitality for two persons at Club 72 and stadium tour at Rangers Football Club, Ibrox Park, Glasgow, was won by Bro. Stewart Bain, PM Lodge Fingal No.318. Bro. Stewart has indicated that he is going to try to catch a Ross County fixture for his visit.

I would like to thank all those who assisted in selling the tickets, and especially to those who bought them, and I am delighted to record that the proceeds from the raffle raised the sum of £1,030 for local charities.

Dates for Your Diaries

The remaining Provincial Grand Lodge visits to lodges are,

Monday 1st May 2023 - Lodge Kyle No.1117

Friday 19th May 2023 - Lodge Fortrose No. 108

Tuesday 8th August 2023 - Lodge Allan Wilson No. 851

The next Provincial Grand Lodge Communication, which will be the AGM and Installation of Office-bearers shall be on Wednesday 31st May 2023 at Lodge Fingal, Dingwall at 7:30pm. A good attendance of Provincial Office-bearers and Daughter Lodge Masters, and Wardens will be appreciated. The meeting is open to all Brethren in good standing.

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The Provincial Grand Lodge of Sorrow shall be on Sunday 11th June 2023 at Lodge Fingal, Dingwall at 3:00pm, and officiated by Bro. The Rev Iain Ramsden B Th, MStJ. This is a very important meeting to mark those Brethren who have passed to the Grand Lodge above in the past year. Following on from last year, the families and friends of those passed will be invited to attend this meeting.

A Provincial Grand Lodge Ladies Night is to be held on Friday 10th November 2023 at the Ben Wyvis Hotel, Strathpeffer. Details will be sent out to all lodges in the Province shortly.

As most of the lodges are going into recess as the season ends, can I ask that in these difficult and strange times that we find ourselves in, we remember to keep in touch with each other, and look out for those who may be in need of a chat now and then, it's good to talk.

Fraternal Regards

Raymond Mackeddie

Provincial Grand Master

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 1995

A KEY role at Aultbea

The Provincial Grand Master was in such a hurry to get into the Masonic Hall in Aultbea on the occasion of the Provincial Visit, that he managed to lock his car keys in the car. However, Past Master Colin Forbes of Lodge Loch Ewe came to the rescue with a nifty piece of breaking and entering thereby saving Brother Bisset the need to hitch hike back to Conon Bridge.

Young Masons Group

The young Masons continues to meet by Zoom on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

New members continue to join our group as they are initiated into their respective lodges, and recently we have had new members join us from Lodge Kyle No. 1117, Lodge Ness No. 888, and Lodge St Martin No. 1217.

We still have members joining us from Germany, Glasgow, the Isle of Skye, and the Western Isles, which just would not be possible with normal face to face meetings.

Recent topics have included presentations by Bro Michael Stanley from Boston, Maine, USA, who gave a talk on the work and history of the Shriners organisation, and Bro Dickon Sandbach, an affiliate member of Lodge St Columba No. 1295, who gave a talk on the “Winding Staircase”.

Last month the group recorded the milestone of meeting for the fiftieth occasion, which is quite remarkable for an idea that was originally thought would be a stop gap meeting to fill in a few months of lockdown until our Regular Meetings would restart.

If any recently joined masons, or if you know any recently joined masons, wish to join the Zoom meeting, and discuss any masonic topics with the group, please contact Raymond MacKeddie at raymond@mackeddie.co.uk

The Grand Lodge of Scotland continues to roll out its Young and New Masons Initiative, with a survey of the Provinces and Districts having been completed, to assess their individual needs. We now have a point of contact assigned, and Information Packs have been distributed to Provincial Grand Masters.

As the guidelines are communicated and considered, it is anticipated a meeting shall be arranged, inviting all new and young masons to attend, to establish how we as group wish to continue and how we wish to adopt the strategy guidelines set out by the Grand Lodge working party.



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This will be a very interesting initiative, which will help our current group to refresh its format, maintaining its current online activity and enabling us to participate in a wider scope of Freemasonry, and enable all young masons to meet in organised events which will help to build a positive future for our beloved craft.

If any recently joined masons, or if you know any recently joined masons, wish to join the Zoom meeting, and discuss any masonic topics with the group, please contact Raymond MacKeddie at raymond@mackeddie.co.uk

Raymond MacKeddie, PGM

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 1995

The Minutes of Grand Lodge and those of the principal committees were all approved but when the transactions of Grand Committee, embracing certain recommendations was reached on the agenda, an unexpected objection was raised by our own PPGM, Brother Iain MacLean, when he questioned the morality and principle of granting a Charter to a proposed new Lodge in Keith - Lodge Aurora Borealis No 1809 - who intend to impose a £600 Initiation Fee. Brother MacLean proposed that the matter should be returned to Grand Committee for further thought and consideration and was duly seconded by a Brother from the floor of Grand Lodge. One of the Founder Members of the proposed new Lodge, and it is worthy of note that there are 87 Founder Members, responded by explaining that the Lodge was being set up as a Lodge of Research and as such they did not want any Candidates as they had no intention of working degrees. Their sole remit was one of Research and the Lodge would be populated by Affiliate Members. The issue went to a vote as a result of which the Lodge was granted its Charter.

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From the Provincial Almoner

The following have sadly passed away to the Grand Lodge above.

On Wednesday 8th March 2023 Brother Sinclair MacIvor, MM of Robertsons Lodge No. 134, passed away suddenly in Raigmore Hospital, Inverness. He was the brother of Andrew MacIvor, PM of Robertsons Lodge No. 134.

On Friday 14th March 2023, Brother Donald J Smith (Bodach Dubh) MM of Lodge Fortrose No. 108, passed away after a long illness.

On Saturday 1st April 2023, Brother Graeme Ross (Rossie), passed away in his home as a result of an accident.

On Thursday 6th April, Brother Thomas Kenneth Fraser, MM of Lodge Seaforth No. 854, (ex Harbro storeman), passed away in Raigmore Hospital, Inverness.

On Sunday 16th April 2023, Brother James (Jimmy) MacKay, MM of Lodge St Duthus No. 82, passed away in the County Hospital, Invergordon.

I also report on the following:

On Tuesday 21st February 2023, Irene Henderson, sadly passed away. She was the beloved wife of the late Andrew (Andy) Henderson, PM of Lodge Loch Ewe No. 1551, and Lodge Fingal No. 318.

On Sunday 19th March 2023, Mary (May) Dunlop, beloved wife of the late William (Bill) Dunlop, PM of Lodge St Duthus No. 82 passed away.

Brother Cyril Halliday MM of St Duthus Lodge No. 82 has been in Raigmore recently but is now recovered and has now managed to attend the recent Lodge meeting.

Carol, wife of Brother George Robinson, is attending Raigmore Hospital for tests.

Brother Duncan Munro, PM of Lodge Averon No. 866 is at home but has not made any further improvement as yet.

Brother Bill Niven PM of Lodge St Kilda, No. 881, is now in Invergordon Hospital and has recovered to a certain extent and is able to move about under his own steam.

Brother John MacKenzie PM of Lodge St Duthus No. 82 is suffering from the likelihood of Covid 19.

I will close by asking that, should any Brother require my assistance, please get in touch with me. I would also ask Lodge Almoners to please keep me updated on any Brother with health issues. Thank you.

Fred T Fraser PM Prov. Grand Almoner fraserft@yahoo.com 01463 870307

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FROM THE LODGES

Lodge St Duthus No 82



Brethren welcome to another Provincial Patter update from Lodge St Duthus No 82.

The month of May sees Lodge St Duthus in recess for the summer break having had our last craft meeting on the 3rd of April. This was a unique meeting as it saw a deputation from Lodge Averon No 866 led by their Right Worshipful Master Charlie Carrison confer a Fellowcraft degree on his own son.

This was an excellently worked degree where all the office bearers of Lodge Averon took a part in and presented an excellent execution of the degree. It is not often you get to see a father confer a degree on his own son and this made the night more memorable. Lodge St Duthus would like to wish the newly made fellowcraft Bro Carrison a long and happy future in freemasonry.

The month of April also saw another momentous occasion for Lodge St Duthus when it was asked on the 8th April to host the Installation Ceremony for the Provincial Grand Superintendent of Ross & Cromarty MEC Morris M Downie and his Commissioned Office Bearers. This ceremony was carried out with the utmost dignity and precision by a deputation from The Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter led by MEC Joseph J Morrow CBE, KC, LLD, First Principal of the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland.

I am sure that the Provincial Grand Superintendent will have given a write up of the ceremony in this edition of the Patter and I won't duplicate that here. Lodge St Duthus No 82 was however extremely proud of all the compliments paid to the brethren and Companions about the condition and decoration of the building, this is something that we at St Duthus take great pride in and our thanks must go to Bro D Johnstone WJW and 1st Sojourner for all his hard work in maintaining the building in such good condition.

That Brethren is all the news for this month, with Fraternal greetings from Lodge St Duthus No 82.

Yours Faithfully & Fraternaly

Bro Dave Macrae PM

Secy.

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Lodge Fortrose No 108

Firstly, I must apologise for the briefness of this quarter's report and that I have no photographs as I'm on holiday and things haven't gone quite according to plan, however I've managed to get a large dram to make things feel better.

I don't believe I mentioned the passing of past master John (Chew) Macdonald to the Grand Lodge above in the last Patter, we were all shocked and saddened by his sudden death.

John (Mono) Mackenzie and James Macleod were advanced to their mark degree in February, we had expected 5 brethren, so it looks like we'll be having another mark degree soon. Sandy Mackenzie has carried out the duties of Mark Master for the last 25 years and the brethren expressed their appreciation by presenting him with a bottle of his favourite tipple.

In April Kenny (Pegleg) Murray was raised. At this time, we now have no candidates left waiting in the wings apart from those waiting for their mark.

On Friday 5th May we are expecting a large deputation from Lodge Doric Kilwinning No 68 accompanied by other Clyde Lodges, usually with this visitation there can be up to 40 in the group, so watch this space.

We're now looking forward to our visitation by PGM Raymond Mackeddie on 19th May who will be accompanied by the Grand Master Mason and other members of Grand Lodge who will be rededicating our Lodge building which is 200 years old this year.

Donnie Macleod
Donald Macleod PM



Robertson's Lodge No 134

Sincere and Fraternal Greetings Brethren,

Lodge Members are pleased to be back holding meetings in the Masonic Temple in Duke Street, Cromarty, after the trials of the Covid Pandemic. However, we are aware that there are still members getting issues, and the threat has not fully gone yet.

The February Meeting that we held was a Fellowcraft Degree for Brother Ryan McManus, where Brother Ryan was passed on his second regular step in Freemasonry.

For the March Meeting, which was our Visitation Meeting from the RW Provincial Grand Master, Brother Raymond A. MacKeddie and his deputation, Brother Ryan McManus was the stand in candidate for the exemplification Fellowcraft degree, where Brother Ryan was raised again. It is understood that he gained more understanding this time.

For the April Meeting, Brother Ryan McManus was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, taking his third regular step in Freemasonry in what we expect to be a long and eventful career in Freemasonry.

Following that meeting, the last of this season, brethren are taking part in the remaining Masonic Meetings and Celebrations with other Lodges, and not just in our Province. Past Master Andrew MacIvor was up in Thurso last weekend for the Installation of Brother Denny Morrison in Lodge John O'Groat No. 1333. Members of our Lodge are still taking part in Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodge Visitation Meetings, for which the schedule is not yet complete.

The Year 2024, which is only next year, where the Lodge will be celebrating the 250th Anniversary is less than a year away. This will give members lots to do to prepare for this wondrous event. The Grand Lodge Deputation is arranged for the 27th of April 2024 and so far, we have booked the Victoria Hall for the occasion.

For the summer close season, the Lodge will not be meeting, but there is still much to do for the Lodge and all our members.

Please stay safe and well Brethren.

Peter K. Ratcliffe.
Lodge Secretary.

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Lodge Fingal No 318

At the February meeting, we worked a Master Mason Degree for Brother Martin James Robertson. The Degree was witnessed by 15 members and 10 visitors, collection amounted to £136.

The March meeting was our annual Provincial Visit. The Provincial Deputation was led by the Provincial Grand Master of Ross & Cromarty, Brother Raymond A MacKeddie, accompanied by sixteen Provincial Office-bearers. During the meeting, we worked a Master Mason Degree for Brother David John Noble. At the conclusion of the Degree, Bro Noble was welcomed and congratulated as a Master Mason by the Master of the Lodge, Brother Gunn accompanied by the Provincial Grand Master, Brother MacKeddie.

The Degree was witnessed by 15 members and 14 visitors, and the collection amounted to £200. A most enjoyable harmony ensued in the Logie Lounge.

The final Regular Meeting for the season was a Mark Master Mason Degree for Brother David John Noble and Brother Martin James Robertson. The Degree was witnessed by 19 members and 21 visitors, and the collection amounted to £230.

As the Season comes to an end, on behalf of the Brethren of the Lodge, may we wish all Brethren, Wives, Partners, and Families a relaxed summer recess.



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A year ago, on Tuesday 19th April 2022, to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee, the Lodge participated in the Queens Green Canopy project by planting a tree. (it is an Amelanchier, flowers in April, and grows to a height of 10 metres). See the photo on the previous page of the worthy Brethren, who participated in the planting.

Sadly, the tree is no longer there, and neither is the plaque which marked the spot. The plaque was sabotaged, and found, (not in the rubble), in the boating pond by Brother Andrew MacIvor. Well done Andrew for retrieving same.



On a happier note, on Saturday 22nd April, accompanied by Brother Roy MacIver PM, I attended the Installation of Brother Euan Alexander Mackay at Lodge St. Peter`s Operative No. 284, Thurso. He is the fifth generation of Mackay`s to be a Freemason. In the picture is his father, Brother Colin Mackay, installed as DGM, fourth generation.

Fingal and St. Peter`s have always kept up a relationship, which dates to the days when PM`s Logie, McRae, Walker to name but a few, represented Fingal.

It is interesting to note that almost all the trees planted around St Andrew`s Church in Fortrose have also been totally vandalised.

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Brothers Donnie Gunn, Euan Alexander Mackay, Colin MacKay, and Roy MacIver

Forth Coming Events in the Logie Lounge:

Saturday 26th August - B-B-Q.
Saturday 23rd Sept - Quiz Night.
Saturday 18th Nov - Race Night.

As we go through these strange times. Take care and stay safe.

That`s all Folks, watch this Space.

D. Gunn RWM

Secretary.

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LODGE ALLAN WILSON 851

There is not a lot to report regarding Lodge Allan Wilson currently but here is a wee reminder of the dates for our forthcoming meetings.

Our first meeting will be our Installation Meeting on Tuesday 13th June, followed by our second meeting on Tuesday 11th July, and our third meeting on Tuesday 8th August. We are in the process of confirming our speakers for the July and August meetings.

Brethren should note that our Annual Visitation from Provincial Grand Lodge will take place, this year, at the August meeting rather than the July meeting due to our Provincial Grand Master being on holiday.

We look forward to seeing you all at the meetings.

David MacMaster - Secretary

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 1996

The Grand Lodge business was dealt with quickly and efficiently, including the unanimous approval of Grand Lodge that Brother Morris Downie become PGM of Ross & Cromarty. It was the unanimous choice of the Province that Brother Morris MacKenzie Downie, Past Master of Lodge St Martin 1217, Ullapool, be elected to serve the Province as Provincial Grand Master. Brother Downie is well known to everyone throughout the Province and to many beyond the Province. His commitment to Freemasonry in general and to the Province in particular is beyond question. There are few who can match his effort, endeavour, and enthusiasm in the furtherance of Freemasonry and the promotion of events to raise funds and raise the awareness of all that is good in the Craft. His passion for visiting is well known and in his role as Depute Provincial Grand Master he excelled as an ambassador for the Province not only in Scotland but throughout the British Isles and well beyond. I have no doubt that he will continue to fly the Provincial flag in his new role and in so doing, place the Province fairly and squarely on the Masonic Map. The best wishes of all Brethren throughout the Province are extended to Brother Morris both for a happy and successful Installation meeting on 30th August and a meaningful, pleasing, and enjoyable term as Provincial Grand Master.

A vote of thanks to Bro Kenneth Bisset in recognition of his endeavour over the past five years as PGM was also heartily endorsed by all present. However, proceedings were prolonged when two appeals against suspension were dealt with. After long debate in both cases the Brethren present voted not to uphold the appeals.

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LODGE SEAFORTH 854

Masonically, the lodge has been busy over the past three months with Master, Bro. David Roska, and his team advancing several candidates for the Mark master's degree and initiating one new candidate at our annual Provincial Grand Lodge Visit in March.

In February, at our Regular Meeting, Bro. Lewis Fraser, Inner Guard, was advanced to the Degree of Mark Master Mason.

At the Regular Meeting in March, which was also the Annual Visitation of the Provincial Grand Master and his Deputation of Provincial Grand Lodge Members, the lodge initiated Mr. Steven Campbell into the Craft.

At the Regular Meeting in April, Bro. Kevin Lumsden, Junior Deacon, was advanced to the Degree of Mark Master Mason, which was almost four years since he was passed to the Master Mason Degree, mainly due to Kevin completing his studies in Glasgow and not being able to travel back to the Black Isle as much as he would like.

The Brethren look forward to inviting Lodge John O'Groat No. 1333, with the newly installed Master, Bro. Denny Morrison, and his Office-bearers, to work a Fellowcraft Degree on a live candidate at a Special Meeting on Saturday 17th June 2023a at 3:00pm.

The Lodge has enjoyed a long-standing reciprocal meeting arrangement with Lodge John O'Groat No.1333, going back over twenty years, but this has unfortunately had to be put on hold during the last four years due to the Covid 19 restrictions.

All Brethren are cordially welcomed to join us at this Special Meeting and the Harmony in the Clubroom afterwards.

Raymond MacKeddie PM - Secretary

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 1996

It was with great sadness that the Brethren learned of the death of Brother James Clark on Monday 12th February 1996. Brother James put up a brave fight against his illness displaying great courage and determination. He retained his sense of humour, even on the darkest days, cracking jokes with his visitors, his nurses, and fellow patients. He will be sadly missed in the Lodge and in the Community and our sympathy is extended to all members of his family whose loss will be infinitely greater than ours.

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LODGE AVERON No 866

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 2011

Well, that is us shut down for the summer break. It seems like a lifetime ago since the Installation in December.

You will all recall the disaster that befell us, (nine days after the Festival of St John), when the Lodge was flooded after a burst pipe in the bar upstairs. Since then, we have slowly got back on our feet with much of the credit going to our Secretary PM Bro Kenny Sutherland, who did a mountain of work with insurance companies and tradesmen to get the building dried out and operational again. There is still much to do, and hopefully most of it can be done in the recess.

This session we have worked four degrees, EA, FC and MM degrees for Bro George Crawford and Lodge Ness 888 worked an excellent MMM degree for Bro George and Bro John MacRae.

When Provincial Grand Lodge came on their annual visitation, I was delighted to see PM Bro Ian Fraser back in the body of the Lodge after his visit to Raigmore Hospital, It was a delight to see him present PM David Oag with his Diamond Certificate.

On the same night I, along with PM Iain Duxbury and PM Kenny Sutherland, called in to see PM Kenny MacInnes, and it was an honour to present him with his Jubilee Certificate.

Back with us that same evening was PM Rev Bill Niven after his spell in hospital. It was great to see him on the mend.

This was Provincial Grand Master Bro Ramsay McGhee's last annual visitation as PGM, and our best wishes go to him along with my personal thanks for stepping in at very short notice to be my Installing Master in December when PM Fraser had to go into hospital.

Our Senior Citizen party went very well again this year, with well over 70 attending the Alness Bowling Club. A great afternoon was had by all. Special thanks to Bro Calum Mackenzie of Lodge Ness who turned up and wowed them with his piping prowess. Also, our band proved as popular as ever, we had to re-name them as Ramsay was off on Masonic duty. (Tait and the Tremeloes was the new name)

Ladies Night was a tremendous success with loads of credit going to Bro Gavin Forsyth of Ness and our own Bro Calum MacKenzie for all the effort they put in. Having a joint Ladies night with Lodge Ness has proved very popular, and we all look forward to the next one. No complaints this year about the band Bedhead. (Bro Donnie Mathieson's brother was singer). They have already been booked for next year.

I hope you all have a relaxing summer and come back fighting fit for the new season ahead.

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LODGE NESS No 888

Lodge Ness 888 has had a very productive season with 3 new members a further 1 or 2 going through the process. Various charities within the community have been presented with donations from the lodge fundraising. The following photographs give some idea of the range of charities we have been reaching out to. Our Annual BBQ is coming up on Saturday 24th of June 1.30 pm with a theme of cowboys and Indians in memory of the late PM Thomas Stirling. We hope to see you all there.



Presentation to young golfers at Invergordon Golf Club Junior Section



The Isobel Rhind centre provides stimulating activities for people with special needs. It is a place where they can socialise, be creative and takes them out of the home environment for a while. Candle making is a very popular activity.

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Donation to assist the Nursery at South Lodge School, Invergordon

Owen Wilson
Lodge Secretary

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LODGE KYLE No 1117

My thanks to PM Ronnie Miller for this extensive article on restoring Masonic Aprons which he undertook lately. The following picture gives a good indication of the success he had.

Following on from the picture is an interesting article on how he went about restoring the apron which may well prove useful to any readers who want to smarten up their regalia.



Before

and

After

The Secretary's Apron, like me, has seen better days and it was decided to carry out a light restoration as opposed to "buying new" or repairs with replacement parts. I should add that the cleaning of the Office Jewel using just silver polish, and accompanying sash in lukewarm wash and careful pressing, thereafter, presented little difficulty. The Apron on the other hand was more involved. Full details and a buy list are available on the Lodge Kyle Website here:

http://lodgekyle.co.uk/masonic_apron_restoration_repair.html

Now before we begin, here are the terms we will reference in the restoration.

Ronnie Miller, PM - Secretary

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Apron Nomenclature

Laws 282 and 283 along with the Eighth Schedule give precise details of all Masonic Regalia.

Research

Sourcing Masonic specific spare parts is difficult, however not impossible if you wish to go down this route (see below). Be aware that your restoration and spanking new tassels, may look slightly at odds with each other.

I also contacted a reputable Dry Cleaner in Inverness with previous experience of Masonic Aprons, and they said that such items were not really designed to be cleaned. The process would damage the apron and the dry-cleaning machine. The products I finally chose for the restoration were also carefully researched but you may find newer or better methods and materials.

Prep

First, I checked for loose bits which included the belt which due to its maximum girth being less than mine, had parted company with the Apron. Some of the gold wire tassel braid also fell off and had unwound. A few of the gold balls were missing as was one of the rosettes; namely the "5 point star emblem".

I then gave the whole apron and parts going over with a car vacuum cleaner, to remove grit and grime. This done I used some masking tape to cover the entire apron, flattened it, so it stuck well, and then removed it again. This lifted more of the dust and dirt as it stuck to the tape. Good masking tape was by far, the most useful tool in the whole restoration.

Cleaning the leather to a spotless whiteness is difficult, but general grime can be removed by wetting the leather and then gently cleaning with a clean cloth dipped into a lukewarm weak solution of Fairy Liquid. Then removing any trace of detergent with a clean damp cloth.

The waistband and snake buckle were cleaned in a similar manner using the tack method on the material, and very, very dilute washing up liquid on the "gold" parts. A cheap Braun Electric Toothbrush and old brushes were ideal. A lukewarm wash in soapy water can also be done, then left to air dry. Once the ribbon (belt) is dry, it can be flattened inside some baking parchment using an iron on low. The parchment allows for gentle pressure and prevents contamination of either iron or belt.

Cleaning brass

The fittings or ornaments of the apron were cleaned then some of the tarnished removed. This can be done chemically using an all-in-one polish or in two stages using a chemical tarnish remover then brass polish. I used an all-in-one, older product which is called Astonish Silver Cleaner, then removed the polish to a shine with a microfibre cloth. Brasso is also good, once the tarnish is removed and readily available.

The brass/gold-coloured parts are best cleaned after removal from the apron. However, if this is difficult, they will need to be cleaned in-situ. I chose this approach for some parts of the apron and so carefully masked surrounding areas with masking tape, to prevent the cleaning materials from bleaching or damaging leather or fabric. Spatter is an issue if using an electric toothbrush to polish and clean. An ordinary toothbrush is more forgiving. Once cleaned, the brass shows its colour. Brass balls at the end of the Apron Chain Tassels, can be sourced on jewellers' websites under findings to replace missing balls and chain and affixed to the tassel(s). Note: I also used 000 Steel Wool on the oxidation, "green stuff", to good effect.

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Leather

I should say that the condition of my apron was borderline-repairable and so rather than carefully restore the leather (the white part may be vinyl) was painted with a proprietary White Leather Paint. I used a product called: *Angelus white Acrylic Leather Paint*, which has a good reputation and inexpensive. You can also use the paint on vinyl.

First mask the apron well so that any spatter will land on masking tape and not your apron. I used two coats and a 1cm flat brush. You may want to use a smaller pointed brush for "cutting in". Start in an area where no one will see the paint (under the flap), so you get a feel for the paint and the brushes. The Angelus Leather paint (see below) is water soluble so brush cleaning should be done as soon as you finish painting. In a warm room the paint should be "dust safe" in around 15-30 minutes. Apply coat number two the following day, further coats if required at the same interval. When doing the actual painting; TAKE YOUR TIME! and do it undisturbed by pets or family.

Gold

Once tarnished, gold braid and trim are difficult to clean. I again used the tack method of sticky tape to remove dust and grime. The results were poor as the braid and trim had both deteriorated significantly. I therefore resorted to painting them with Deco Art gold paint. While this is not the ideal solution, it turned out to be effective. With proper masking and two coats, an acceptable result may be achieved. Again, patience and a small brush is key! For the wire fringe on the Apron Flap masking is critical as is the protection of any exposed apron surfaces. I used a large polythene bag with the Apron in the bag and the flap outside. The fringe was tacked to remove "rust" with sticky tape and any loose wire removed. This process helped straighten and align the fringe. The technique of painting wire fringe is more laying on of paint than brushing. Each twisted wire strand is treated separately, and a line of paint laid on one side. On the second coat the opposite side of each wire is treated similarly and any gaps in the paint were filled.

Repairs

The belt had come away from the apron. This required the picking apart of the layers of apron where the belt meets the apron. I used an awl (sharpened nail and gaffer tape) to create new holes. A large leather needle and waxed thread were used for the stitching, which took the form of a square and two diagonals bisecting same.

Contact adhesive was then used to re-join the layers. Typically, restoration must be reversible. However, in this instance, Evo stick is not difficult to open again. PVA and clamps may be an alternative.

The gold coloured, five-pointed star emblem was missing from one side of the apron, but fortunately the other remained. This was the template for the replacement. I used "DAS" which is a cold curing clay. It is easy to work with. First, I covered the remaining star emblem in clingfilm. Then rolled out a small sphere of DAS clay to the required thickness of the "star". Placing the clay "button" on top of the clingfilmed star, steady downward pressure was used to get an imprint on the clay. The imprinted clay removed; the reverse of the button was pushed forward so it became convex rather than a concave imprint. This was repeated a few more times so there were "spares" to work with. The imprinted buttons were trimmed to their correct size and left to dry for 4 days, turning each day. DAS behaves very well and there was not any noticeable shrinkage. When dry, the visible side was painted with gold paint, with around 2mm paint extended underneath. Blu Tack is useful to raise and hold it to a surface whilst painting. Repeat painting until satisfied with the result. The gold star was then fixed to the apron using Impact Adhesive although Gorilla Glue would have been used if I had some to hand.

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Aftercare

Using wax nourishes the leather and is good for maintenance. However, if you are doing a restoration, I believe the wax would come last, as the wax seals in any existing grime or crease damage and prevents deep cleaning.

After a long and painful restoration, the best course of action is to store and maintain the apron with wax (and polish for the metals) from day one. In other words, do not let the apron get into a deteriorated state in the first place.

Regalia cases are a safe way of keeping the colours bright and the metals less oxidised and of no dust. So, while it may look nice to have the aprons and jewels left out on the respective Office Bearers' stations; between Meetings the regalia may be better served by being placed in a case.

Epilogue

Now that you have restored your apron, allow me to direct your attention to Etsy.com where you can obtain a brand-new apron for thirty-five pounds! Not high quality, but now you are a master restoring mason, these aprons could be a good starting point for another project. Similarly, you can find all the apron accessories on eBay by searching any of the following keywords:

Masonic Regalia Apron Accessories T Bars Tassels Rosettes Belt.

Prices from 2.99 pounds for one tassel (5.98 Pounds the pair)

Purchases / On-line resources

TESCO

Metal Polish: Brasso wadding / Duraglit 3.50

Multi-Purpose Needles 1.60

Microfibre Cloths 1.50

AMAZON

Masking Tape: 2.00

Gold Painting: Deco Art 3.62

Leather Painting: Angelus White Acrylic Leather Paint 6.67

DAS 500g: 4.79

Evo stick Contact Adhesive: 3.99

Leather repair kit: 4.99

Steel wool 000 grade or 0000 grade 3.49.

NOTE: All the above items can be used for around three aprons or more (if paint is used sparingly). Things like rubber gloves, glue, toothbrush, Brillo pad, cloths, detergent, needle and thread and sticky tape are readily found around most homes. Metal polish can be made with vinegar, salt, and flour. Just make the ingredients into a paste. It is messy and stinks though.

Page 25 – Photo taken in Kyle on 1st May at the Provincial Visitation -

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LODGE ROSEHAUGH No 1216

At long last we were able to raise Dixon Kerr to the high and sublime degree of Master Mason. It took 3 years but well worth the effort as Dixon has already been prominent in visiting other lodges. The PGL Master Bro Mackeddie was in attendance and congratulated Bro Dixon and our Deacons Bros Bassindale and Hossack on their part in the degree. All three being part of the Young Masons forum. We had hopes of a live candidate for our March meeting but unfortunately our candidate Michael Graham was called away to work offshore the day before. Disappointing as Michael has been waiting since 2020 to be initiated.

April's meeting was our PGL visitation and a first degree. Once again Michael headed offshore a couple of days before, however we did have a live candidate in Steven Bassindale (Father of Senior Deacon Calum). The meeting started with a couple of Obituaries. Firstly, for John M Patience of Avoch who passed away in May 2021 and Robert Scott (Rab) of Fortrose who passed away in March 2023. A minute's silence was observed on their memory by the Brethren.

Thereafter the PGL large delegation headed by PGL Grand Master Raymond Mackeddie. Before any business got underway, we had an Obituary for PM Robert Jack who passed away in May 2020. Robert was a Past PGL Substitute Master from 1996 to 2001 under PGL GM Morris Downie. It was fitting for Bro Downie to pay tribute to Robert both as a gentleman and a mason and it was indeed very touching

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tribute and the Lodge wish to thank Morris for this. This was also followed by a minute's silence. Moving on to the degree and we enjoyed an excellent 1st degree with the deacons again in top form and all the parts done to a high standard. Hopefully this made a good impression on Steven especially with his son giving him the secrets of the degree. It was also a pleasure to have our GMM at the meeting with Ramsay playing our new organ.

Following this we welcomed Bro Robert Maclean (Bob) to the floor where he was presented with his Jubilee Certificate from our PGL Master for 50 years' service to Lodge Rosehaugh. Bob was our RWM from 1994 to 1996 and is still a regular attender. Next up we invited Bro Rubin MacSween who was on a visit being the Past Director of Ceremonies of the District of Trinidad, Tobago, and Granada. The RWM passed on some of our Lodge 100th memorabilia to Rubin to thank him for his attendance.

As Calum is unavailable for our May meeting, we have decided not to hold a degree but will hold a business meeting with lecture. This will be held on Friday 5th May at 7.45pm. All welcome.

Pedestal photo. Many thanks to Bro Graeme Brindle who has now installed some support pillars in the East.

Golf Photo. Congratulations to Bros Calum and Steven Bassindale who were the winners of the Black Isle Foursome Handicap held over the weekend of 15th and 16th April. A very modest Steven tells me this is the fourth time he has won the trophy.



*Bros Calum and Steven
Bassindale, winners of the
Black Isle Foursome
Handicap*

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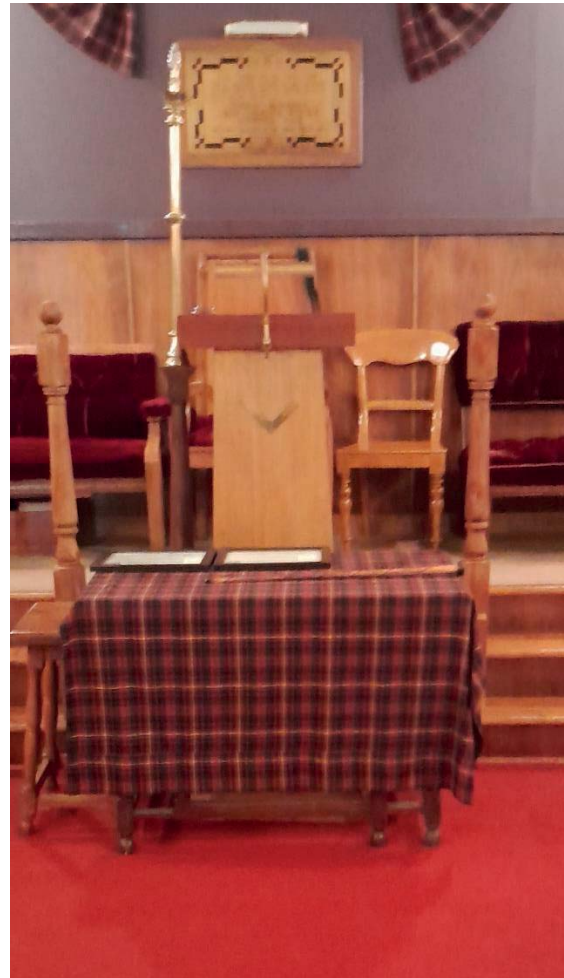
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The new organ and one of the pillars

Keith Patience, PM



The new pedestal and pillars in the East

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 2007

During our April meeting John Patience PM was presented with his 50th Certificate by Robert Jack PM. John has been a stalwart to the Lodge for many years twice serving as Master from 1961-1964 and then 1969-1970. He was one of the Brethren who presided over and rebuilt our Lodge room, which had been demolished in 1963 and rebuilt and then reopened for business in 1968.

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Lodge St Martin 1217

The lodge has had a busy few months with three candidates in the last five months which is very encouraging.

The next regular meeting will be on Tuesday 16th May where we will be working a second degree. We will also be holding a special meeting on Tuesday 6th June where we will be working another second degree.

Our most recent new member, Bro Jon Stranix is a Yeoman of the Guard and will be involved in the coronation ceremonials. Another member Bro. Norman Gillies is also involved with the coronation ceremonials. We would like to wish both these brethren the best of luck carrying out their duties on the great day.

All the best from the west

Charles MacAulay, PM
Secretary

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 2007

TEN REASONS TO BECOME A MASON

1. **MASONRY is a place** to spend time with good men who will make you want to become a better man.
2. **MASONRY is a place** where moral virtue is taught and respected as the cornerstone of life.
3. **MASONRY is a place** where the spiritual growth of every member can rise to its fullest potential.
4. **MASONRY is a place** is a place to become better prepared for service to your family, your church, and your community.
5. **MASONRY is a place** where you can be part of a great fraternity that believes in Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.
6. **MASONRY is a place** where you can support others and give them encouragement as well as receive it yourself.
7. **MASONRY is a place** where outstanding individuals from every walk of life will greet you and call you "Brother."
8. **MASONRY is a place** to meet community leaders and take an active part in community activities.
9. **MASONRY is a place** where you will find unlimited opportunity to acquire leadership experience, self-development, and personal growth.
10. **MASONRY is a place** where you can be sure every man is a true and trustworthy friend.

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Lodge Loch Ewe 1551

With the five affiliates from Lodge St Martin now fully fledged Members of the Lodge, two more brethren also wishing to join, coupled with the possibility of two potential initiates, it is to be hoped that we have reached a turning point and will now be able to move forward with renewed vigour.

As far as work on the building is concerned, it seems that the repairs to the west gable end wall have stemmed the ingress of water enabling us to carry on with the internal repairs and redecoration.

Michael Longley, PM – Lodge Loch Ewe

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 2007

Lodge Loch Ewe played host to the Provincial Grand Lodge on Thursday 12th April for the Annual Visitation. The Lodge Room was almost packed to capacity for the evening. Lodge Loch Ewe had decided not to work a Degree on this occasion but to produce what it called a Programme of Entertainment, but what the PGM very kindly called more of a Lodge of Instruction. It opened with Bro Robert Hanna presenting a talk on Bro Robert Burns and ended with him playing and singing that much loved song written in memory of Burns – “The Star of Robbie Burns” with many Brethren joining in. Next, the RWM Bro Ken McMorrان gave a very short talk on Bro Rudyard Kipling followed by a recitation of Kipling’s well-known and evocative poem “My Mother Lodge”. Bro Andy Henderson recited Holy Willie’s Prayer, suitably dressed for the occasion and PM Colin Forbes thereafter gave a presentation of “The Emblems of the Master Mason Degree”. Many Brethren commented that they had never heard this before. The Programme ended with another performance by Bro Hanna, this time playing his own compositions. A most enjoyable and successful evening ended with a Harmony in the Aultbea Hotel.

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Ye Corporation O' Squaremen Hielan Shed

VISITS FOR 2023

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|
| 13 th MAY | - | Lodge St Aethans – BURGHEAD – bus leaves Inverness 12:30 |
| 3 rd JUNE | - | GRAND SHED VISIT – GORDON TERRACE – INVERNESS 3:00 pm. |
| 1 st JULY | - | Lodge Latheron – LATHERON – bus leaves Inverness 11:30 |
| 5 th AUGUST | - | Lodge Averon – ALNESS – bus leaves Inverness 13:30 |
| 2 nd SEPT. | - | Lodge St Clements – TARBET HARRIS – public transport to Ullapool |

Overnight stay in Stornoway

Note anyone wishing to join us on the trip to the Western Isle should arrange their own accommodation.

We held our AGM and Installation in Inverness on Saturday 4th March – Sadly we had to announce the Passing of 3 more Brithers – Duncan McLennan from Laide, Alexander Nowel Henderson (Bobbins) from Wick and Tom Robertson from Erskine.

Since our last AGM we have donated £900 to various good causes, and we had a further five nominations for our AGM Charity Donations and our Skinner, Andrew Fraser, was delighted to give all £100 each.

On 1st April we visited Lodge Fingal in Dingwall and although it was a disappointing turnout it proved an enjoyable afternoon, and we donated a cheque to RWM Donnie Gunn for a worthy cause of the Lodges choosing.

Due to the Coronation of King Charles III, we have changed our normal Meeting in May to the 13th (second Saturday), and this will be held in Lodge St Aethans in Burghead – the bus will leave the Club in Inverness at 12:30 and will call in at Nairn and Forres on the way. We are hoping for a good turnout.

On April Saturday 22nd April we had a Grand Shed visit to Ochil Shed in Alloa, and we presented a cheque for £300 to the Grand Worthy Deacons Charity which this year is for a Meadow Mead Special Needs School, near Wokingham Shed, who are attempting to raise enough for a Braille printer.

*John & Mackay
Boxie*

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Headmistress of Merkinch School receiving cheque from AGM Donations

WD Douglas McDonald presenting cheque to RWM Donnie Gunn for Lodge good cause.



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PROVINCIAL GRAND ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER of R&C

The Installation of the Grand Superintendent of the Province of Ross and Cromarty, MEC Morris M. Downie, and his Commissioned Office Bearers, was held on Saturday 8th April 2023 in the Masonic Temple of Lodge St. Duthus No 82, in Tain. It was a well-attended occasion with Companions from all the Chapters in the Province, visitors from other Provincial RACs and from other countries, including Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada. The Installation Ceremony was led with excellent ceremony by ME First Grand Principal Dr Joseph J. Morrow, CVO, CBE, KSt.J, KC, DL, FRSE, and his Deputation of Office-bearers from Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter.

After the Installation Ceremonial, all moved to the Royal Hotel, Tain, where an excellent meal, with drinks, fascinating speeches and of course the raffle was held, with lots of donated prizes being won. Overall, an interesting and memorable day was enjoyed by all, meeting old and new friends before departing for home.



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GRAND SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE.

On behalf of the Ross and Cromarty Provincial Grand Royal Arch Chapter can I express appreciation to all who supported the Installation meeting in Tain recently.

Many thanks to all who participated in the success of the event. Especially those Companions who travelled a distance to be with us.

A well-earned summer recess is on the cards, but not so for the Royal Arch masons in the Province of Ross and Cromarty as they are actively busy organising a 100th year Celebration of Royal Arch Masonry here in Ross and Cromarty. The function will be celebrated on Saturday 14th October 2023.

Please, "Royal Arch Masons" of the Chapters in Ross and Cromarty put this date in your diary as a "must attend" function where the Grand 1st Principal and his Office Bearers will be in attendance to carry out a ceremony to mark the milestone. In the meantime, watch this space for more up to date information in the next edition of the Provincial Patter.

A piece of history for Tain & Ross Royal Arch Chapter No. 63 took place on 27th March when a brother from Lodge Rosehaugh No. 1216, Avoch, Calum Bassindale (centre back row) was exalted to the Holy Royal Arch Degree, having previously joined St Clement Royal Arch Chapter No 244, Dingwall.

This is an example of what can be achieved within the Province of Ross and Cromarty when Chapters work in harmony with each other, to further the interest and enjoyment of Royal Arch masonry.



Morris M Downie
Grand Superintendent

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Provincial Visitation to Chapters dates:

The Hebrides Royal Arch Chapter 17th May.

MEC Dave Macrae
Provincial Scribe E

Tain & Ross RAC 63

Please note - The Tain and Ross RAC have changed their meeting night to the fourth Monday. This will alleviate clashes with Lodge Fingal and Lodge Ness.

St Clement RAC 244

.

Cromarty Firth RAC 310

ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER HEBRIDES NO. 364.

As I mentioned in the last Patter, we carried out an Ark Mariner degree in February when Morris Downie and Alex Scott joined our number.

Donnie Macleod
Donald Macleod IPGS R&C

PRECEPTORY OF THE WESTERN ISLES

On Saturday 22nd April we had one of our bi-annual visits by the District Grand Priory of the North In Scotland led by DGP Peter Foster who was on this occasion accompanied by Frater Eric Macgregor who is DGP designate and who will be installed as such in Lossiemouth on 3rd June.

DGP Peter Foster was pleased to carry out the affiliation obligation on our newest frater Henry Macinnes.

Donnie Macleod
†‡ Donald Macleod KCT

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BITS AND PIECES



This booklet from the Grand Lodge of Scotland will be helpful to all but especially to those making their way up through the offices towards the chair of their Lodge. The new publication is available from Grand Lodge and priced at a very reasonable £3.00 per copy, £1.00 of which is going to Masonic Charities. The booklet is the work of the Information and Communications Committee and is an easy guide to Masonic Etiquette and Best Practice.

It covers the A to Z of decorum within the Lodges from the correct positioning of the Altar to correct forms of Address, to Visiting. The booklet also contains guidelines for the use of Masonic Websites, Email, and social media. One copy is currently being sent to each Master, free of charge and thereafter, the booklet will be available to all to purchase.

Grand Lodge of Scotland – On-line shopping



Here is a small selection of items available from the Grand Lodge Shop



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A few Memories from the 2023 Tour. The full report will appear in the 2024 Yearbook.

On Tuesday 7th February I left the Black Isle and travelled to Edinburgh where, on the Tuesday evening I was to host a drinks reception and dinner as part of the annual Tripartite Meeting.

The following morning the Tripartite Meeting proper got underway in the Grand Committee Room. The Pro Grand Master of UGLE, Jonathan Spence, the Grand Master of Ireland, Douglas Gray, and I were joined by the Secretariat comprising Adrian Marsh, Grand Secretary Paul Engeham, Grand Chancellor, UGLE, Philip Daley, Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Ireland and our own Grand Secretary, Willie Semple.

It was an interesting meeting, much of which centred on problems arising through Foreign Grand Lodges, however, much progress was made in keeping each other up to date and abreast of current issues.

At the conclusion of the Tripartite lunch, I headed off to Edinburgh Airport to catch the afternoon flight to London and thereafter to connect with the over-night flight to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai. Also on board was Brother George Donnelly, Proxy DGM of India, who was to assist me, by carrying out his duties as Assistant Grand D of C, both in India and in Sri Lanka.

We arrived in Mumbai on Thursday morning where we were greeted by Bro Kersi Limathwalla, DGM, Bro Bomi Methu, Past DGM and Bro Noshir Paghdiwalla, District Grand Secretary.



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That afternoon we made our way to the Mumbai Masonic temple where we met some of the District Grand Lodge staff, including Swapmali and Shiraz, two delightful ladies who assist Bro Paghdiwalla run the District. We also took advantage of having a run through the ceremony with the DGM while in the main Temple – a useful exercise before the actual Installation.



Bro Limathwalla, Bro Donnelly, Shiraz, GMM, Swapmali, Bro Paghdiwalla

In the evening we joined with senior Office-bearers and enjoyed a traditional Indian meal.

On the Friday morning, after an early breakfast, we left the hotel at 07.30 to catch a two-hour flight to Cochin, followed by a four-hour drive to Munnar. It was quite a journey, narrow winding roads climbing up to 5,500 metres. We arrived at the High Range Club where we would be staying for two nights with just enough time to get changed and make our way to the local Masonic Hall where we attended the Installation Convocation of Chapter Camellia No 871. The Installation of the three Principals, namely MEC Marish Singh, MEC Thomas Mathew and MEC Kariappa was carried out by District Scribe E, MEC Noshir Paghdiwalla. His ritual work was par excellent much to the delight of all present. At the end of the night, we enjoyed Harmony with the Companions.

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Chapter Camellia No 871

Another early breakfast before making our way to the Tea Museum where we spent a very interesting hour before making our way to the home of the Srishti Trust who are dedicated to the rehabilitation and generation of sustainable livelihoods for the differently abled children and young adults of the rural plantation community of Munnar, Kerala.

On leaving the Srishti Project, we headed to the Ripple Tea Factory in Munnar where we were shown round by the factory staff before heading back to the High Range Club to prepare for the Installation Meeting of Lodge Heather No 928.

We discovered the night before that I was the first GMM to visit Munnar and that this year the Lodge building was 120 years old. So, before the Installation, Brother Donnelly and I assisted by Brother Noshir Paghdwalla, Bro Kersi Commissariat and Bro Farokh Chinoy carried out a Rededication of the Temple Building. The additional ceremony was greatly appreciated after which we enjoyed the Installation in Lodge Heather No 928.

First thing on Sunday morning we started the long journey back to Mumbai arriving back in the hotel about 18.00, just in time to get changed and head to the Bombay Gymkhana to enjoy dinner with the Brethren and Ladies.

On Monday morning we visited the Dharavi Slums and the Mahalaxmi Dhobi Ghat. An interesting day.

A worker in the Dharavi Slums



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After the tour, I held a rehearsal for the Re-Installation of Brother Kersi J Limathwalla. The Ceremony proper started at 18.30 on Monday evening. Over 100 Brethren assembled including Deputations from The District Grand Lodge of India (EC), the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ireland and the District Grand Lodge of India.

When the Banquet ended, Brother Donnelly and I returned to the hotel, got changed and headed for the airport for an 03.10 flight to Colombo. However, the flight was delayed for three hours, as a result of which we didn't arrive in Colombo until almost 09.00 on Tuesday morning.

That night we had a welcome dinner at the Colombo Club where we were joined by Brother Alexander Moncrieff, SGM, who had flown out to participate in the celebrations as Acting Grand Chaplain.

On Wednesday morning we had the first rehearsal for the Consecration of the Superintendency and the Installation of the Grand Superintendent. In the evening we gathered at the home of the Grand Superintendent, Brother Dharmin Perera for a Sri Lankan meal.

Thursday morning started with a meeting with three of the senior Brethren in the new Superintendency. Thereafter we were taken to the RCCI (Rehabilitation Centre for the Communication Impaired) which was inspirational to say the least watching the staff working with the students.



Presentation of a cheque to the staff at RCCI

Following the visit to RCCI, I accompanied the Grand Superintendent to a funeral parlour to pay our respects to his daughter-in-law's mother after which we enjoyed lunch hosted by the Irish Brethren.

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In the afternoon we conducted the 2nd full rehearsal and at night enjoyed a barbeque at the home of Brother Nihal Fonseka and his charming wife Rhuna.

Friday morning was spent at the Lodge to ensure we had covered all eventualities.

Saturday 18th February – a beautiful sunny morning, temperatures in the high thirties – we made final preparations for the Consecration Ceremony and the Installation Ceremony. At 15.00 hours, with local Brethren and Brethren from the Sister Constitutions assembled, Grand Lodge was opened, passed, and raised. All went well and we duly Consecrated the new Superintendency and Installed Brother Dharmin Perera as the first Grand Superintendent.



Group photo at the Installation Ceremony

After the Ceremonies were complete, 150 Brethren, wives and guests descended on the ballroom at the Galle Face Hotel in Colombo where the celebratory Banquet was being held. The meal, service, speeches, company were all of the highest order then things started to go downhill. The Brethren of the Superintendency acquired a small accordion and we decided that we needed to teach the Sri Lankans how to dance a Strip the Willow.



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On Sunday morning Brothers Moncrieff, Donnelly and I attended the morning service in the Scots Kirk in Colombo. We were made most welcome and we thoroughly enjoyed the service

I left Sri Lanka at 00.45 hours on the first leg of my journey to Kalgoorlie. Colombo to Singapore, Singapore to Perth and Perth to Kalgoorlie where I arrived at 18.00 hours on the Monday. I was met at the airport by Brothers Anderson, Chapman, and Ekins. How good it was to see them again.

That night there was a welcome barbeque at the Lodge then on Tuesday morning I was taken to the ABC broadcasting studio where I was interviewed for the local morning programme. From there, Brother Arthur Anderson drove me to Coolgardie where we visited the site of the former Lodge in the town, the local museum, the cemetery and Finnerty House.

On Tuesday night, I was privileged to attend a meeting of Lodge Golden Thistle where I witnessed an excellent EA Degree with two candidates.

Next morning, I made my way to Pringle Village to lay a Foundation Stone to mark the start of another 140 homes and a new health centre in the Masonic Village



Bro Douglas Daws, PDGM, GMM and Bro Arthur Anderson, DGM

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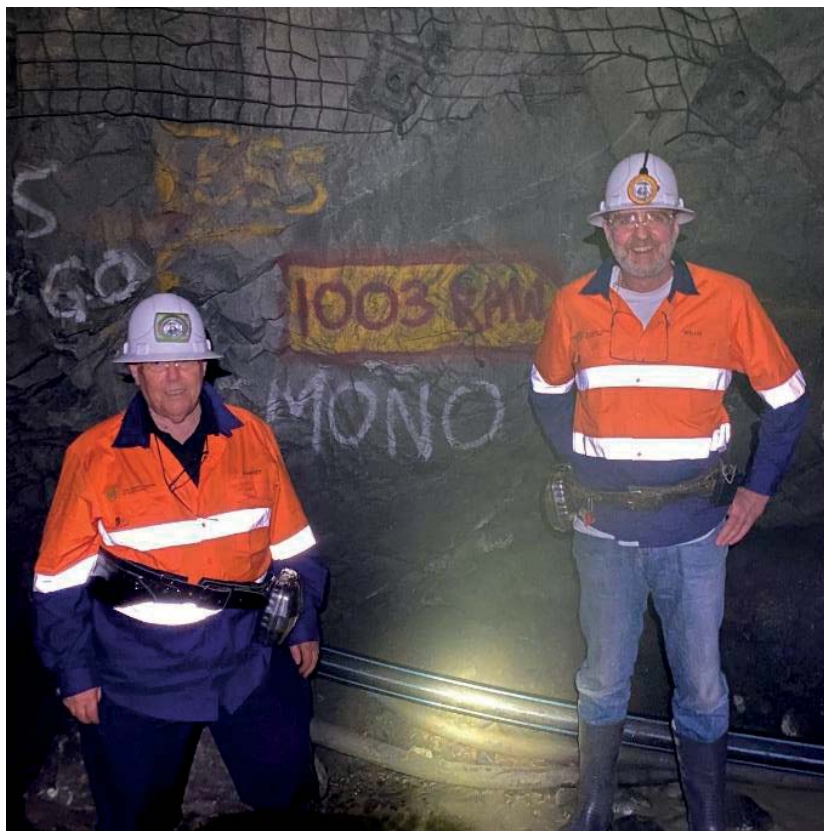
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During the afternoon, Grand Secretary arrived from Scotland and we both attended a Civic Reception held in honour of Grand Lodge in the Town Hall at night. It was a nice gesture which gave us both the opportunity to meet and socialise with Brethren and local dignitaries.

Thursday morning, 07.30, picked up by DDGM, Matt Ekins and taken on the hour-long drive to Randall's gold mine where we got kitted out to, first, do a tour of the plant. It was a tremendous experience and Bro Ekins gave us a very informative running commentary as we progressed around the plant. We then made our way to another part of the mine where Brother Jens Steenbach had arranged for us to go underground. It was a memorable experience during which we descended to 1003 metres underground.



1003 metres below ground

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The end of the process – one gold bar worth \$1.5 million

We were greatly privileged to be able to witness a “pour” resulting in two bars of gold being produced, each valued at \$1.5 million.

Interestingly, the value of that bar of gold was almost the equivalent of the amount that Scottish Freemasons presented to Prostate Scotland.

At the end of a truly fascinating day, we returned to Kalgoorlie where, after a Japanese meal, we gathered in the Lodge to listen to a presentation by Brother Tony Banner on Australian brethren who had been awarded the Victoria Cross. A very enjoyable and instructional evening.

Friday morning was spent getting some administration duties completed, meeting Brethren, and generally preparing for the Installation on Saturday. We then had a working lunch at the Golf Club with senior members of the District before returning to the Lodge in the evening to unveil an obelisk in the grounds of the Lodge which gives much information regarding the history of the building and the four Lodges.

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The unveiling of the Obelisk

That evening we attended a meeting of Lodge Sir William Wallace at which we witnessed a truly excellent MM Degree.

Saturday was the day of the District Grand Lodge Installation but there was much to pack in before we got to that stage. First, the District Grand Chaplain, Brother Jim Clews took Grand Secretary and I for a flight in his Cessna around the Kalgoorlie area.



We arrived back in time to get changed and head to the Lodge to attend a meeting of Lodge Leonora United (WA Constitution) who worked an EA Degree which was very similar to our own working.

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We broke for lunch after which it was back into the Lodge for the main event – the Installation of Brother Arthur John Ritchie Anderson as DGM of Western Australia Goldfields.



Installation of Brother Arthur John Ritchie Anderson

The Installation was well attended, and I was indebted to Grand Secretary who acted as Grand D of C. After the Installation we made our way to Goldfields Function Suite where we enjoyed an excellent Harmony.

On Sunday morning, many Brethren met at the Lodge from where we paraded in full regalia to the local Uniting church.

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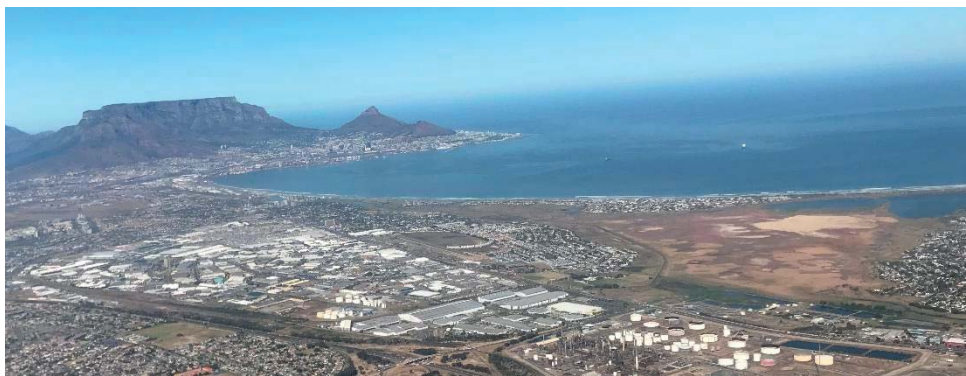
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Ready for the Church Parade

Grand Secretary and I returned to Perth on the Monday where we were supposed to attend a meeting of Lodge Royal Stewart. Unfortunately, the meeting was cancelled but I did have the bonus of meeting up with my granddaughter, Tilly, who was touring Australia for her gap year.

Grand Secretary made his way back to Edinburgh while I made for the Western Cape of Good Hope.



Flying into Cape Town – Table Mountain in the background

On my first night in Cape Town, I attended a very interesting EA Degree worked by Lodge Westerford, No 43 on the roll of the Grand Lodge of South Africa.

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Lodge Westerford No 43

I was a guest at the meeting of Brother John Smith, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of South Africa.

On my arrival in Cape Town, I was joined by a great Deputation from the District Grand Lodge of East Africa who accompanied me throughout South Africa and Zambia. Their DGM, Brother Kalpesh Shah was my acting Grand D of C while District Grand Secretary, Jeremy Holley was acting Grand Chaplain. Both Brethren did a splendid job.



The East Africa Deputation who accompanied me throughout Africa

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First call was on Saturday 4th March, when I had the privilege and pleasure to install Brother Frank Winter as the 21st DGM of the District Grand Lodge of the Western Province of the Cape of Good Hope. Brother Winter takes over from Brother David Gallacher who has been a real stalwart for Scottish Freemasonry in the Western Cape.



Installation of Brother Frank Winter Western Province of the Cape of Good Hope

From Western Cape, I flew to Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape, accompanied by the Deputation from East Africa. We arrived at 07.45 and over coffee had a planning session with DGM, Brother Craig Jessop and his team followed later by lunch where I met up with most of the District Office-bearers. That afternoon we met the Rector of Grey's School who kindly gave us a guided tour of the excellent facilities the school boasts. There is a strong Masonic link with the school – the founder was in the Craft. Lodge St Andrew 608 thereafter hosted a reception in the Grey's Pavilion at which I met many of the Reigning Masters, and Past Masters of the District.

On Tuesday I was privileged to present an achievement award to Adrian Gardiner, Founder of CCFA (Community Conservation Fund Africa) in recognition of all he has done for wildlife and conservation.

After the presentation, I was invited to plant a tree in the grounds of the centre. I was delighted, with the help of Brother Craig Jessop and others to do so.

The Community Conservation Fund addresses the urgent need for community development to benefit Africa's wild animals and wilderness areas. CCFA works at the intersection between conservation, ecotourism, and community as both a fundraising and grant-giving organization, active in educating and empowering local communities in conservation areas.

Their goal is to create a conservation legacy through projects that protect the environment and wildlife by creating sustainable partnerships with communities. Therefore, they strive to ensure that communities participate in and benefit from conservation.

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Planting the tree with DGM Craig Jessop

From Nyosi Wildlife Estate it was back to the Lodge rooms where Lodge Koodoo hosted a reception prior to working an excellent FC Degree.

At 08.30 on Wednesday 8th March we attended a meeting of Lodge Sonheuwel.



Lodge Sonheuwel

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Later, we enjoyed breakfast with the Brethren, and I presented a check to a local school that deals with autistic children. We then had a presentation from a local politician, Annette Lovemore, on the water shortage affecting the Eastern Province at present. It was then time to return to the guest house to get changed for the Installation of the new DGM, Brother Craig Leonard John Jessop and his Commission.

The Lodge was full for the Ceremony after which we were joined by the ladies at the Banquet at the Thatchwoods Hospitality venue. A truly remarkable day enjoyed by all.



Lodge room in Port Elizabeth

Thursday morning, cases all packed once more for the two-hour flight to Johannesburg.

Saturday morning saw over 300 Brethren assemble in the Scottish Masonic Centre, Johannesburg for the Installation of Brother Jim Kerr's successor, Brother Julian Apfel. It was a splendid day – the organisation for the day was top class resulting in the whole day going according to plan. Once again, I was delighted to have Brother Kalpesh Shah as my D of C and Brother Jeremy Holley as my Grand Chaplain. It was good to see the hall packed to capacity for the ceremony which went well. After the Installation, we were well entertained by the Benoni Pipe Band in the grounds of the Masonic Centre while the hall was converted into a dining hall.

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On Sunday morning we travelled to Nigel for a Church Service at which there was a large attendance of Brethren all in Regalia. The Service commemorated the laying of the Foundation Stone of Nigel Methodist Church on 14th March 1903 which, like our experience in Kalgoorlie, involved the local Scottish Masons. In the Lodge Minute Book in 1903 it states – “It was noted that the Methodist community of Nigel was in need of a place of worship” – thereafter the members of the Lodge proceeded to build the church.

I left Johannesburg on Monday, accompanied by the Brethren from East Africa, and flew to Lusaka in Zambia where I was met by Brother Frank McCully, the outgoing DGM and Brother Douglas Ironside, the incoming DGM. We enjoyed a pleasant meal together on Monday night during which we planned the remainder of the week.

On Tuesday morning I had a very useful meeting with the Commissioned Office-bearers which lasted until lunch time when we were joined by the East African Brethren for lunch. In the evening we attended an excellent FC Degree worked by Lodge Lusaka No 1368 under the guidance of their Master, Brother Maaya Chipwayambokoma.

It was back to the Lodge on Wednesday morning for a rehearsal for the Installation. All went well and at 18.30 the District Grand Lodge was opened, and I had the honour of Installing Brother Douglas Ironside as the new DGM. Another tremendous night which ended with a Banquet in the hotel where we were joined by the ladies.

A great ending to a long but very enjoyable trip.

Well, the trip wasn't completely over. I was met at Glasgow airport by the new PGM of Renfrewshire West, Brother John Black and Brother Stuart Smith who drove me down to Greenock.

Friday afternoon was spent in the company of the PGM, John Black and SGM Alan Beck with whom I visited the Greenock Burns Club in the old Customs House. After spending a very instructive hour there, we visited the grave of Highland Mary.

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In the evening I joined with several the brethren, including the new Commission, for a delightful meal in the Tontine Hotel. On Saturday, I had the honour of installing Brother John Williamson Black as the new PGM of Renfrewshire West. A superb day enjoyed by all.



Then, finally arrived home in the Black Isle courtesy of Brothers Alex Craib and Ian MacLaren.