

PROVINCIAL PATTERN

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Province of Ross and Cromarty

ISSUE NO 107

MAY 2021

*The Quarterly Newsletter of the
Province of Ross and Cromarty*



*The pupils of Mountain View School with their new tools.
The tools left Fortrose in October, arrived in Malawi in December and were presented in April when
the school re-opened*

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Editorial

Welcome to the 107th edition of the “Provincial Patter”.

How time flies, here we are, only a month away from Brother Robin Cattanach completing his five-year tenure as our Provincial Grand Master.

I’m sure you will all wish to join me in thanking Robin for all of his work and effort over the past five years. At times it hasn’t been easy for him, but he has steadfastly continued and has been a constant support to all our Lodges. He has continued to support the Mountain View School for Deaf Children in Malawi with great enthusiasm – the Province have been involved with the school for over 13 years now and what a story it has been – the students are all so genuinely delighted at the support we have given them.

In addition, Robin has lent his support to numerous other charities, the latest one being Mikeysline.

It may be some time yet before we can properly thank Robin in person but, in the meantime, many congratulations Robin on a job well done.

As we say farewell to Brother Robin Cattanach, we welcome into Office, Brother Raymond MacKeddie and look forward to his leadership of the Province. He has already made his mark as Depute with his sterling work with the young masons and I’m sure he will have many other initiatives waiting on the sidelines for the end of the pandemic. We wish Raymond well and offer him our wholehearted support as he takes up Office at this difficult time.

Ramsay McGhee, Editor

Grand Lodge of Scotland



The May edition of the Patter and we are still in the grip of the pandemic with many of our Brethren, especially in India, suffering in a way that we cannot imagine as a result of Covid. Grand Secretary has been in touch with the District Grand Secretary in India. In his report to Grand Secretary, Brother Noshir Godrej Paghdiwalla describes how the situation is much worse than the media have been reporting. He and his family have all been victims of the disease but are happily recovering. In Mumbai where our District Grand Office is situated, over 10,000 cases per day are being recorded. We offer our prayers and support to the Brethren in all of our 29 Lodges in India.

The strategy group working parties have been working well and are in the process of pulling together their final reports to be submitted to the Administration Committee with recommendations on the way forward for the Scottish Craft. The Provincial Grand Lodge of Renfrewshire West have invited me to speak on the way forward as have the Provinces in the North East and the Province of Argyll and the Isles. I made it known at the Grand Committee meeting last week that I would be more than happy to do a presentation on the subject to any of the Provinces or Districts – it is so important that we take the Craft forward in a manner that is fit for purpose in the 21st Century.

Ed

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Provincial Grand Lodge:

Brethren,

This will be my last report as Provincial Grand Master as my five-year term in office will finish on the 10th of June. On that day, Brother Raymond MacKeddie takes over the post. We wish him all the best and pledge our support to him and the Province.

I must take this opportunity to thank all the Provincial Grand Office-bearers for their loyal support over the past five years and to all the other Brethren who came along to our Provincial meetings and visits.

There is not much to report in the Province as there has been no meetings held over the last 18 months. However, most of the Lodges have been holding zoom meetings and keeping up to date with each other and quietly working on buildings and property and making improvements, all of which is great news as this needs to be done to keep things in good order.

Provincial Grand Lodge have been busy doing the Annual visits to the Lodges by Zoom. Not quite the same but we have had a very good response to all the meetings so far. Our next meeting is in Kyle on Monday 3rd. of May at 7 30.and the last one in Lodge Fortrose in Stornoway on 21st May.

Brethren, most of the older members have had both covid jags by now so things are improving, and hopefully good news is just round the corner for reopening our Lodges on a restricted basis. We must stick to the rules when we get word from the Grand Master Mason that we can reopen our meetings.

I have been in the Freemasons fifty years since Monday 26th April 1971 and have enjoyed every minute of it. I am very thankful to all the Brethren who helped me along the way. It has been great meeting all the Brethren from far and wide - I am a much richer person (not in my pocket) but in my heart many thanks.

Many thanks to all the lodges and Brethren for the support to PM George Robinson for the tapestry raffle which was won by Alex Craib's Lodge in Inverness the money raised was over £3,500. Well done, George.

Fraternal regards

Robin Cattanach

PGM Ross and Cromarty

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OUR YOUNG MASONS

With the Coronavirus Lockdown continuing, the Young Masons Zoom Meetings have recently passed the milestone of having met online for a full year. During this time, they continued to meet every two weeks, on a Wednesday evening, some twenty-six meetings in total.

The meetings are open to all Brethren who have recently joined Freemasonry, and the meetings usually include a presentation of a masonic topic by a nominated speaker, an opportunity to ask any questions, and the opportunity to have a social blether amongst themselves.

The attendees have a huge geographical spread, with members regularly joining from Germany, Glasgow, Caithness, and the Western Isles.

Over the past few months, they have enjoyed interesting discussions on, Thomas Telford, including a podcast by Dr Robert Lomas, The Anatomy of a Lodge by Randy Sanders, an eminent member of the Grand Lodge of Missouri, Spirituality and Freemasonry by Matt Parker from North Carolina, the Office-bearers Jewels by Donald Oscar MacLeod PM, and the Provincial Grand Master's duties by Raymond MacKeddie PM.

As we return to the bright nights of summer, and many of the members are working longer hours at work, the meetings for the next few months have been reduced, to meeting once a month, on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

The enthusiasm and commitment of the participating Brethren continues to develop an open forum, which has continued to be very entertaining and educational, and it is hoped that is filling a void in their masonic journeys until we can recommence our normal meetings.

If any lodge has any Young Masons who have not already attended these meetings, and would wish to join them, please get in touch with Raymond MacKeddie.

Raymond MacKeddie, Depute PGM

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From the Provincial Almoner

Sadly, I have to start my report by recording the passing to the Grand Lodge Above of Bro. Ross Balfour, Lodge St Duthus. Bro. Balfour had not been attending the Lodge recently.

A number of our brethren are in hospital or have been recently.

Past Master Donnie Sutherland, Lodge Seaforth, who had been in both Raigmore Hospital, Inverness and the Cambusavie Unit at the Lawson Memorial Hospital in Golspie is now home and getting about well. He is now able to do a lot of walking. Unfortunately, Donnie's good lady has also been in hospital, but she is also home now.

Past Master David Smith, Lodge Seaforth, was in Raigmore Hospital recently but was allowed home only to be re-admitted last week. He is making progress, but slowly. He is currently in Ward 6c.

Past Master George Robinson, Lodge Averon, was also in Raigmore recently but he is also now home and awaiting more tests.

Past Master Angus Ross, Lodge Ness, has also been in Raigmore recently but he is also now home and getting on not too badly.

Past Master Fraser MacKay, Lodge St Duthus is still in care at Innis Mhor Care Home in Tain. His condition has not improved.

Past Master Ian MacLaren still attends Raigmore Hospital three days a week for dialysis treatment and is coping well with it and is always in good form when I speak to him.

Past Master John Thomson, Lodge Stepps No. 1213, who is an Honorary Member of Lodge Fingal and known to many brethren in the Province, particularly because of his regular visiting, has also been in Raigmore recently. He is home but is not in very good health. Given his current circumstances he was in remarkably good form when I spoke to him.

Cards have been sent where and when appropriate conveying the good wishes of the Provincial Grand Master and brethren of the Province.

Due to the current restrictions re the Covid 19 pandemic I have been unable to visit brethren either at home or in hospital, but I try to keep in touch by telephone etc and I am also being kept informed by some of the Lodge Almoners. I would like to put on record my thanks to them.

On Wednesday 10th March a 'Zoom' meeting of Lodge Almoners from within the Province was held and was quite well attended. Six of the Lodges were represented, and the Provincial Grand Master and Depute Provincial Master were also in attendance. The meeting was organised as a result of actions raised at a recent meeting of Provincial Grand Masters held by Grand Lodge. Various items were discussed including the need for Almoners to be notified timeously of any brother who may be unwell or in need of assistance. My sincere thanks to all those who attended. I will close as usual and ask that should any brother require my assistance or know of a brother does, please get in contact with me.

David A. MacMaster, PM

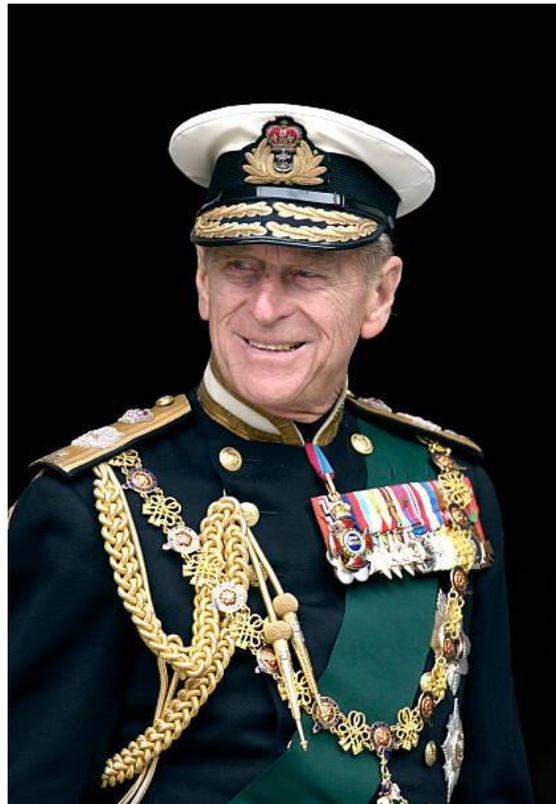
Provincial Grand Almoner

In Memory of

Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh 1921-2021

Prince Philip was initiated into Freemasonry on 5th December 1952. He had two very prominent Brethren as his proposer and seconder into the Navy Lodge No 2612 in London. His proposer was Rear Admiral Sir Arthur Hall, KBE, CB, PGD, a previous Worshipful Deputy Master of Navy Lodge and Honorary member of United Service Lodge. His seconder was Admiral of the Fleet, Baron Fraser of North Cape.

He remained a member of the Lodge and was recognised in 2002 as a 50-year Mason.



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BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - CIRCA 2009



Photo sent in from Tommy Elias PM and past Secretary of the Lodge Tobago Kilwinning in the District Grand Lodge of Trinidad and Tobago. Of course, nowadays includes Grenada. Taken on a visit to the Island by Brothers Cooper, Pringle and Downie in the safe custody of Bro. Elias. Happy days.

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 2007

Sir Alexander Fleming. Forever associated with the discovery of penicillin, was an ardent freemason. Initiated into Santa Maria Lodge, 2682, London, on 9th November 1909, he became Master in 1924. He also joined the London Scottish Rifles Lodge in 1911. In 1925 he joined Misericordia Lodge, 3286, London, becoming Master of this Lodge in 1935. In 1942, he was elected Senior Grand Deacon of the United Grand Lodge of England and became Past Grand Warden in 1948. Although not a member of a Scottish Lodge, he was promoted to the Thirtieth Degree. He died in 1955.

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New Provincial Grand Lodge Ties



I have a large supply of the new Provincial Grand Lodge ties which are taking up a fair amount of my limited storage space. And knowing how the Brethren are proud of both the Province and their own sartorial elegance, I am happy to supply ties by mail order.

The basic cost is £12 per tie plus post and packaging - a very modest £1.50 – if you send me your cheque for £13.50, (made payable to Provincial Grand Lodge General Account) to –

Roger Cundiff, Sealladh-an-loch, Lochcarron, Strathcarron, IV54 8YD – together with a note of your name and address, I will send your tie by return.

Roger Cundiff – Provincial Grand Treasurer

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FROM THE LODGES

Lodge St Duthus No 82



Well Brethren, we are now into recess for the summer months. Exciting times ahead for Lodge St Duthus as the remedial work to the external stone of the building is about commence mid-June. This was due to start last November but unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances the nominated contractor had to withdraw from this project.

We have purchased a document scanner which is being used to scan all our minute books. Brother Steven O'Donnell has volunteered his services to carry out the process of scanning our archives. He is hoping to complete the Lodge documents by end of August. Any Lodge wishing to have their archives scanned and loaded onto searchable pdf books and then mounted on to DVD's please contact our secretary Bro. David Macrae.

Congratulations must go to Brother O'Donnell who was awarded the Heroes of 2020 medal to the NHS Volunteer of Britain (The thanks of a grateful nation). The award is a solid silver medal and he told me that it is the modern version of the George Cross. He doesn't know who nominated him.

Bro. Steven has written an article for an American magazine called The Midnight Freemasons and the link is www.midnightfreemasons.org/2021/03the-asquare-and-circle.html?m=1 Lodge St John Fisherrow No 112 have asked if they can publish the article in their magazine "On The Level". The Cross Keys magazine have also asked permission to publish it.

A date for your diary. On Sunday 18th July we are holding a golf competition in aid of the Highland Hospice. The event will be held at the Old Tom Morris Championship course Tain. The event will be in the form of a Texas Scramble and teams of three are invited. So, Brethren you can bring a friend. A poster has been made by PGS Mike Turner and is being circulated to all Provinces throughout the Country. I am hoping to attract at least sixty golfers. The Hospice have been informed of our intentions and are absolutely delighted. We are looking for sponsorship for the competition whether it be for longest drive at par five or nearest the hole at the par three etc. Any help to make it a successful day would be really appreciated.

John MacKenzie - Master

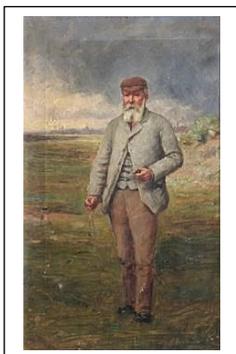
An Invitation to join in a
Masonic Men's Golf Outing
for the benefit of
The Highland Hospice

The Venue is Tain
Golf Club, an Old
Tom Morris course

The Format is Texas
Scramble, Teams of
Three (max 28
Strokes)

Entry is open to Freemasons and their guests.

The Date is Sunday, 18
July 2021
Tee times from 10:00
Entry fee is £25 per
Player.



For entry, please contact:
John Mackenzie, RWM St Duthus
on ajohn_mackenzie@hotmail.com
or
Alex Craib, PM Inverness Old
Kilwinning St John's
on acraib@btinternet.com
with your Name(s), Lodge(s),
Handicap(s),
and preferred tee time
Single players can be assigned to a
team.
Entries by 30 June 2021 please

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Lodge Fortrose No 108

Fortrose Lodge 108 has been holding its regular Zoom meetings to coincide with the normal meeting schedule, so they are anticipated to continue over the summer months as we don't normally close during June to August. These meetings have proved to be very popular and are very well attended by brethren from many parts of the world. Maybe after all this Covid stuff is over it could well be considered a useful media tool for keeping our far-flung brethren in the information loop.

External renovation works have begun on the Lodge building in Stornoway to help keep it in a fit state for our future brethren.

Donnie Macleod

Donald Macleod PM



Lodge Fortrose No 108

The imposing Lodge building in Stornoway undergoing extensive renovation at present.

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 2004

This coming weekend (7th May), the Stornoway Brethren will be hosting a visit involving 26 Brethren from Lodges in Finland.

Brother Donnie MacLeod, SPGM, informs me that a wide-ranging programme has been arranged for the Brethren who arrive on Thursday and depart on Saturday. They will be taken on a tour of the Island, which will include visits to a brewer and to a Harris Tweed manufacturer. There will also be an official visit to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. On Thursday night a Ceilidh has been organised and on Friday night the Lodge Fortrose Brethren will work a Master Mason Degree.

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Robertson's Lodge No 134

Sincere and Fraternal Greetings Brethren,

On the last edition of the Patter, I did not give tribute to our longest standing Member of our Lodge, Brother George MacIvor, who had laid down his tools and passed to the Grand Lodge above. Brother George was well known to many as a keen and stalwart Masonic Brother. He had been initiated on 21st December 1955, which led to a Masonic career holding many offices in this his Mother Lodge, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ross and Cromarty and to Grand Lodge of Scotland. His son, Brother Andrew MacIvor PM, carries on the tradition and is a Past Master of Robertson's Lodge.

Our Lodge Almoner Past Master Jim Tait carries on dutifully with his responsibilities, advising all and communicating with the Members. Past Master Brian McGroarty has recently had a major operation and is at home awaiting further treatment; Brother Andy Young is in Wyvis House; Brother William Mackay (Buller) keeps up with us all and is getting about more. Lodge J.W. Brother Brian Poloczek has advised that his eyes are recovering.

Although we do not have Lodge Meetings the Brethren continue to communicate by WhatsApp Group chats, with many uplifts from our member Brother Morris Downie, PPGM. The Brethren continue to hold a Zoom Meeting on the previous regular date of Meetings, the third Wednesday of the month, which is also attended by Brethren from other Lodges. In reverse, we thankfully receive invitations from other Lodge to their Zoom Meetings, which are attended. The recent Provincial Grand Lodge Visitation Zoom Meetings to Lodges in the Province were also attended. Brethren of the Lodge recently donated to the local Cromarty Care Project Food Larder, and Brother George Robinson's latest Charity Project, for Mikeysline.

Repair and maintenance work was completed on the roof of the Lodge Premises. Further maintenance work is under planning and review.

Having just received the latest documents from Grand Secretary about the "Grand Lodge Guidance for Return to Masonic Activity", they have been distributed to members and are currently under close review and scrutiny.

The Grand Lodge Annual Certificate for Year 2021 for Robertson's Lodge No. 134 has been hung in the same place on the Lodge wall, however we are not back there yet, hopefully it will not be long.

Peter K. Ratcliffe.

Lodge Secretary.

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Lodge Fingal No 318

At the Zoom meetings we had in February, March, and April, we were treated to very fine Lectures by Brothers Brian Crawford, Peter Foster Snr and Michael Scott Turner.

February 9th

After the Business was completed, Brother Brian Crawford spoke on the about the “The Boys Brigade”. His talk was broken up into 5 parts.

1. Brief History of The Boys’ Brigade.
2. Background of Bro Brian Crawford.
3. The B.B and Masonic Links.
4. B.B Major Events.
5. Personal reflections and Memories.

Brian’s parting shot was - my thanks for listening to me and I trust and hope that tonight you have enjoyed my story of The Boys’ Brigade and that it has thrown some light on the subject showing the Church and Masonic intertwined.

The Master thanked Brian for his talk, which lasted some twenty-five minutes, followed by another twenty-five minutes of questions from the Brethren all of whom thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

March 9th

After the Business was completed, the talk was given by Brother Peter Foster Snr, PM, Robertson’s Lodge who spoke about “The Brahan Seer”.

Most of what we know about the Brahan Seer comes from the oral tradition of the Gael. According to one source Kenneth MacKenzie (also known as Coinneach Odhar—dun coloured Kenneth) was born in Baile na Gille in Uig on the Isle of Lewis round about 1650.

He lived at Loch Ussie near Dingwall in Ross-shire and worked as a labourer from about 1675 on the Brahan Estate, seat of the Seaforth chiefs.

The first literary reference to him comes in Pennant’s “A Tour in Scotland (1769)” in which it was stated – “Every country has its prophets and the Highlands their Kenneth Odhar”.

The only historical reference so far uncovered exists in the form of two Commissions of Justice ordering the authorities to prosecute a certain Keanoch Owir for witchcraft—this in 1577, so the reference places him 100 years before the traditional tales (and the time of the 3rd Earl of Seaforth) so cannot be attributed to the same man. This is one of many.

Of his many predictions, handed down by word of mouth, some remain unfulfilled, others doubtfully or partly so. Some however have come to pass wholly and convincingly. The Master thanked Peter for his talk, which lasted some twenty minutes.

Under normal circumstances, this meeting in the Calendar Year, would have been our Annual Visitation from Provincial Grand Lodge. With the Provincial Grand Lodge conducting virtual meetings, the Master symbolically presented the Maul to the Provincial Grand Master, Brother Robin Charles Cattanach, with the words – “It is my honour and pleasure, on behalf of the Brethren of Lodge Fingal,

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to hand you the Maul on this Zoom Meeting tonight, as a token of Fealty and Allegiance to Provincial Grand Lodge and through you to the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

The PGM then went on to give his thoughts about the minute given by the PG Secretary and congratulated the Administrative Team, for the handling of the Lodge Business during these times we find ourselves in. The Zoom meeting was then handed back.

April 13th

After the Business was completed, the Master introduced Brother Mike Turner, Provincial Grand Secretary to speak about `My Friend`.

`My Friend` had no formal education, but was extraordinarily inquisitive, observant, and, may I say it, intelligent. He was extremely instrumental in the development of scientific knowledge. He was foremost in one of the most dramatic and future-influencing political events in history. He was prominent as a guiding light in furthering freemasonry.

My Friend whom I want you to meet is Benjamin Franklin. Benjamin was born on 17 January 1706. His birthplace was Milk Street Boston. (A brief description of life in the mid-18th Century followed).

Mike`s parting shot was Brethren, I hope I have effectively introduced you to my friend, Benjamin Franklin, a scientist, a politician, an inventor, a businessman, a Freemason. I'd like to leave you with a few more of Benjamin's quotes:

Without freedom of thought, there can be no such thing as wisdom, and no such thing as Liberty without freedom of speech.

Democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for lunch. Liberty is a well-armed lamb contesting the vote!

Fish and visitors both began to smell after three days.

The Master thanked Mike for his talk, which lasted some thirty-five minutes.

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

That`s all Folks, watch this Space.

D. Gunn RWM

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 2007

. On Saturday 31st March, the RWM, Bro Donnie Gunn accompanied by the PGM, Bro Ramsay McGhee and Provincial Grand Chaplain, Bro Iain MacLaren, had the pleasure of visiting Bro Huisdean Matheson at the home of his son in Bearsden. Bro Matheson was initiated into Lodge Fingal in 1931 and the reason for our visit was to present him with his 75th Anniversary Diploma – the day before his 100th birthday. Bro Matheson was looking extremely fresh and had been out on the practice tee at the local golf club the day before we visited him. A truly remarkable man and we wish him the best of health to enjoy his golf for many years to come.

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LODGE ALLAN WILSON 851

The new season for Lodge Allan Wilson should start on Tuesday 8th June but that, unfortunately will not happen. However, there is a glimmer of hope that we might get at least one meeting this year at which the new Master, Brother Iain Russell can be installed along with his Office-bearers. However, whatever happens we will have our Provincial visit on Tuesday 13th July probably by Zoom but we never know – this will be Brother MacKeddie's first official visit as our new Provincial Grand Master, and we look forward to welcoming him whether in person or by Zoom.

Thanks to Brother Kevin Taggart, Past Master of Lodge Buchan St John No 636, who has been waiting patiently to affiliate to Lodge Allan Wilson, the Lodge has been included in his Inter-Province Charity programme. To date, we have received four large vanloads of goods which in a joint effort by Lodge Allan Wilson, Lodge Seaforth, and Lodge Old Inverness Kilwinning St John we have distributed to the Sharing Sheds in Avoch, Cromarty, Culbokie, Fortrose, Munloch and Rosemarkie and to the Salvation Army, Inverness Foodstuff at Ness Bank Church and SHIMCA (Scottish Highlands & Islands and Moray Chinese Association) in Inverness and the Bradbury Centre in Bonar Bridge. This has been a good PR exercise and my thanks to Brothers Alex Craib and Raymond MacKeddie for their unstinting assistance and to Brothers Kevin Taggart and Willie Innes for their commitment in bringing the goods north in all sorts of weather.



Brothers Willie Innes, Kevin Taggart, Raymond MacKeddie, and Alex Craib

That apart there has not been a lot happening but hopefully a goodly number of our Brethren will support Lodge Seaforth's whisky tasting night on 28th May.

May all the readers stay safe and well.

Editor

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*Top: Foodstuffs arriving at Lodge Seaforth
Bottom left: being prepared for distribution and bottom right: ready for distribution.*

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LODGE SEAFORTH 854

Zoom Meetings

As lockdown has now continued for over a full year and looks like it is going to continue for some time yet, the Master, Bro Graham Law continues to host an online Zoom Meeting, held on the first and third Monday of each month.

The meetings continue to be well attended, and allow the Lodge to conduct some administration, discuss maintenance of the lodge building and generally socialise with brethren and visitors.

Monday 15th March was our virtual Annual Visitation from the Provincial Grand Master of Ross & Cromarty, Bro. Robin Cattanach, and a large online deputation. The visitation proved to be an interesting meeting held in these exceptional times.

Quiz Night

The Lodge has continued to host an online quiz on the third Friday night of each month. These quizzes have been run by our esteemed quizmaster, Bro. James Fraser, SD, and are open to friends and families.

April's quiz was postponed due to the passing of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, but we look forward to the May event on Friday 14th, which will include the much-anticipated Bingo session.

Many thanks to the regular contingent of quizzers, from all parts of the country, who are providing an exciting and challenging event each month.

Whisky Tasting Night

This is an early warning that the Lodge is planning an Online Whisky Tasting Night on Friday 28th May 2021, joining details will be issued shortly.

Building Maintenance

The front entrance and parking area of the Lodge Building has been tarred and has it has been commented how it has tidied up the whole frontal area of the building.

Internally the electrical systems have been checked, earthing upgraded and certified. All electrical equipment has been PAT tested.

Raymond MacKeddie PM - Secretary

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Danny and Grant MacNeil who carried out the re-tarring contract



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LODGE AVERON No 866

After the success of the fundraiser for the Highland Hospice, it was suggested that I make another tapestry. I was then delighted to get a call from the PGM Bro Robin Cattanach offering to pay for the kit. Two hours later this was ordered and paid for and three weeks later it was delivered.

460 hours of work over 56 days saw the tapestry completed. After discussions it was decided to start fundraising for Mikeysline, a fantastic mental health charity in Inverness who do terrific work in the community. They do not receive any funding and rely on donations and their own fundraising activities. This has been severely restricted because of the Covid pandemic. This was to be a joint venture between Lodge Averon 866 and the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ross and Cromarty. My thanks to Bro Mike Turner PGL Secretary who emailed the fundraiser to all Provinces in Scotland. I decided to run the fundraiser for two weeks.

This was awfully close to my heart after a head injury at work many years ago left me with severe bouts of depression and several inpatient admissions to hospital.

I was humbled by the generosity of the Masonic fraternity. I received donations from as far afield as John O'Groats to the Borders, west to Stornoway and east from Fife. I received some fantastic letters of support along with their donations from Brethren and Lodge Secretaries, most of whom I had never met. When the fund ended it stood at £3,042.50 and this was presented to Mikeysline by myself and the RWPGM, but since then I have been delighted to receive a cheque for £50 from 2 PGL members in the borders and a pledge of £500 from the PGL of Caithness and their Lodges, which brings the total to £3,592.50 a sum I did not think possible at the start.

The Tapestry was won by Lodge Old Inverness Kilwinning St John V1 and I was delighted to present Bro Alex Craib PM and Bro John Russel with their prize.

My sincere thanks to all who helped make this fundraiser the success it ended up being. The managers at Mikeysline have asked me to pass on their thanks to all who donated.

The other Averon news is -

Not much to report this month except the sad passing to the Grand Lodge Above of two of our Brethren. Brother Barry Gray who I didn't know and was a regular attender before moving away for work but still sent donations to the Lodge.

Brother Alec Hume who was Lodge Treasurer for a while in the 1970s and was a true gentleman and always asking for the Brethren when I met him. Our thoughts and prayers are with both families.

Averon continues to hold their Committee Zoom meetings and we still have our virtual pub Zoom on a Saturday. We all look forward to meeting again in the Lodge properly.

George Robinson PM Lodge Averon 866, Almoner

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Brother George Robinson presenting the cheque to the Mikeysline representative with Brother Robin Cattanach, Provincial Grand Master in the background

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - AUGUST 1997

At the Regular Meeting on 10th February, Past Master, Brother Tommy Strachan was presented with his Jubilee Certificate marking his 50 years-service to Freemasonry. In a short but very meaningful ceremony, Past Master, Brother Leslie Ross spoke of the high esteem in which Brother Strachan has been held in the Lodge and congratulated him on attaining such a milestone in his Masonic Career. Past Master Ross's sentiments were duly applauded by all present. Brother Strachan suitably replied, thanking the Brethren for their kindness and good wishes.

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LODGE NESS No 888

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 2004

Bro Downie and I travelled to Ghana to witness the Installation of the new DGM, Bro Charles William Stanley-Pierre. However, we very nearly didn't see it – in fact we came awful close to being locked up the night we arrived – we had no visa to enter the country. Our excuse was that no one ever told us that we needed one but that didn't go down too well with the immigration chaps. Anyway, after a load of hassle trying to get American Dollars, we were eventually admitted to Ghana.

On the evening prior to the District Grand Lodge Installation, we attended the Installation of Bro Joseph Albert Danso as RWM of Lodge Olympus No 1698 SC. It was a most enjoyable evening and culminated with an Installation Banquet in the Army Officer's Mess in Accra.

The following day we attended the DGL Installation which was held in the Banqueting Hall of the State House in Accra. The new DGM of Nigeria carried out the Installation. It was a most enjoyable occasion, but it was a very long day – the DGL was tyled at 1500 hours and the Tyler's Toast was given at 0150 hours the following morning.

On the Sunday, I had the pleasure of attending a "brunch" hosted by the new DGM, Bro Charles William Stanley-Pierre. This was a very informal occasion but nonetheless a very enjoyable one.

Our grateful thanks are extended to the very many Brethren who looked after us in Ghana but especially to Bro Lt Col Mensah Kwoa Gbedemah who called every day to ensure that everything was OK and whose hospitality was exceptional.

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LODGE KYLE No 1117

The Brethren of Lodge Kyle continue to maintain contact with each other and tonight - May 3rd at 7pm - are having their Provincial Visit on Zoom. A Login can be obtained from The Lodge Secretary sales@lochals.com if you are a known Brother.

One of the topics to be discussed is “The transparency of what we do.”

Oftentimes I have seen on Facebook the good works the Craft has done and the people who have genuinely been helped. The amount of money raised during Covid is astounding, but its only really mentioned in CLOSED Facebook Groups, which you have to be a member of in order to view the “posts”.

Given that we sometimes receive bad press (or no press) and our membership in some areas is aging, we need to think seriously about Marketing and Public Relations. After discussing this with a few Brethren, I think Social Media could be a platform for open statements of what, as Freemasons, we do within the community and what we get from being in the Craft.

There are two caveats though ... First, we should not be publishing anything that does not adhere to the high moral values that as Freemasons we aspire. Secondly the issue of comments. As an open group on Facebook for example, we need to curate and sadly, censor any trolling. On Facebook you can turn off commenting, however this means you cannot gather information from people who are not in the Craft, or Brethren; we may be missing some good ideas. Perhaps a group to which anyone can join or a moderator?

Another option is the website. Information can be posted on a news page and the URL distributed to the Press. For example, Bro. George Robinson and his “magic carpet”. would make a great story. £3092.50 to Mikeysline - Well done George! We need to be aware though that news needs to be regular and not repetitive and with an image. Pretty much like the Provincial Patter.

Please let me (Ron: sales@lochals.com) know what you think and any ideas you have about transparency, marketing and where and how to promote the Craft.

Best wishes from all of us in Lodge Kyle to you all in the Province and hope to see you soon!

Ronnie Miller, PM
Secretary

Response to the Lodge Kyle Article.

Brethren,

Brother Miller raises some very valid points but if I could just bring you up to date with the national picture.

You will all be aware of the SCFS information that I publish every week in the GMM's Update – information that is also available on the SCFS Facebook page which, as Brother Miller rightly points out, is a closed page. However, from this weekend, the Admin Team of SCFS is happy to announce that, as of Saturday 1st May 2021, a public facing Sister page is to be launched on Facebook. The page, named “SCFS-Showcase”, will highlight a selection of posts which have appeared over the last year on the main SCFS page ... on an ongoing basis. The creation of this page will enable friends and family, along with other members of the public to view, share and comment on the many examples of the charitable giving undertaken by Scottish Constitution Freemasons throughout the world. We hope that this latest development of the SCFS page will receive your support and help spread the many good news stories to a much wider audience. The page can be accessed from Facebook by searching for “SCFS-Showcase” or by using the link below.

[SCFS-Showcase](#)

Secondly, if you have been following my weekly updates you will be aware that I have appointed Brethren to several working groups. The Brethren on those groups are working on five major topics.

- Membership sustainability.
- How to support Lodges that are struggling.
- How to modernise our organisation while preserving our traditions.
- How to be more transparent and improve our public image.
- How to place a greater emphasis on external charitable giving.

The outcomes from the groups, (the last two groups in particular in relation to the points made by Brother Miller) which we hope to submit to the Administration Committee in June will address all the points made in the Kyle article.

Grand Lodge have continued to work hard, in the background, during the pandemic with a view to having the strategy to take us forward through the 21st Century.

Ed

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LODGE ROSEHAUGH No 1216

The Lodge held a couple of Zoom meetings recently. The first was on the 26th March with 10 Brethren joining along with PM Henry Cameron who had set the Zoom meeting up. It allowed us to get a few pointers ahead of the PGL Visitation Zoom meeting on Friday 2nd April 2021. This went very well and after running through the business aspect we presented a short lecture on the history of Lodge Rosehaugh which had been prepared by PM David Patience for our planned 100th anniversary day. Bro. Jordan Hossack then gave a review of the meetings the younger Brethren had attended. A good update with Jordan thanking PM Raymond Mackeddie for all the work he had done in arranging these. Provincial Grand Secretary gave his report and thereafter the PGL Master Bro Robin Cattnach spoke kindly of the Lodge in his remarks. We would like to pass on our thanks to both for their excellent support over the years. The GMM discussed the 100th anniversary but as yet there is no clarity when this could be held. We also had a chance to have an obituary on the passing of PM Robert Jack almost one year ago.

It was also a shock to here of the untimely passing of Bro John Patience on 3 April, aged only 65. John was a lifetime member of the Lodge but in latter years, worked in the oil industry and was based in Aberdeen. This saw him travel extensively and he regularly commented on Facebook on these travels mainly reporting on flight delays, cancellations and lost baggage. A great supporter of Ross County he managed to get to a load of games mainly away. The Lodge have passed condolences to his daughter Lynne and son John and the family. John's funeral on 16th April was a private one per regulations but a large crowd attended on the streets of Avoch to pay their respects.

Finally, we have the February to May draws still to be done and hopefully this will be in the next couple of weeks.

Keith Patience, PM
Secretary

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Lodge St Martin 1217

A bit of a quiet spell at the Lodge at the moment. We are all still keeping in touch with our members with our monthly meetings on Zoom with the assistance of Bro. Henry Cameron PM who we would like to thank for all his help.

We have now started preparations in the lodge for restarting our meetings as soon as the regulations permit. We are working on a plan to put a new fire exit in the lodge room which will assist in through flow of clean air, so we may have to start wearing our thermals under the suits!!

On Friday 30th April the lodge held it's first "Whisky Tasting" with 19 participants as a trial run. It all went extremely well with lots of positive feedback the following day. We raised approximately £350, and this is being donated to the Lochbroom Community Council Vyner playpark upgrade to provide a bench with any excess funds being retained and put towards another bench within the village area.

Hope all the brethren are managing to keep well and looking forward to a little more normality soon.

Charles MacAulay, PM
Secretary

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 1999

A very successful and well attended car boot sale and barbeque was held in the Lodge Car Park on Saturday 8th May. While the final sum has still to materialise, Lodge Secretary Charlie MacAulay is confident that it will exceed £300. This was an excellent PR exercise enjoyed by Masons and non-Masons alike.

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Lodge Loch Ewe 1551

Ally Gault

Master – Lodge Loch Ewe

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 1996

No doubt if a survey were carried out, we would find the range of hobbies indulged in by Brethren was diverse and varied. Fortunately for the Brethren of Ness, one Brother south of the Border apparently enjoys raking about in middens.

Brother David Smith, Treasurer of Lodge Ness received a communication from the Senior Warden of Lodge Epworth No 3921 in Manchester to the effect that a case containing a Lodge Ness Apron and Sash had been found in a rubbish skip. It transpired that the regalia had belonged to a Brother Harry Birtwhistle who, along with his brother Percy, had joined Lodge Ness on the 25th of November 1916.

Both Brethren were serving in the Royal Navy at the time.

Having been made aware of the find, Brother Smith, accompanied by IPM Leslie Ross, travelled south to Manchester, and visited Lodge Epworth where they received a very warm welcome and during the evening they were presented with the case and regalia. PM Ross tells me that the Apron is in remarkably good condition and will need only minor repairs before going on display in the Lodge.

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BITS AND PIECES

De Corporation O' Squaremen.

Over the summer Past Deacon Bri Colin Thomson had arranged to host "Zoom" Meetings on the dates we should have held our Meetings and they were fairly well supported with participants from as far as America, Sweden, Wokingham and Kingdom O' Fife Sheds as well as a few local stalwarts. The Worthy Deacon, Douglas McDonald, would like to record his thanks to all the participants for turning up on the Saturday evenings when normally they would be having a sleep, in front of the TV, after coming home from the normal Square-men's Meetings (unless of course they were still carrying on the Meeting in some Club or other) with a special thanks to Colin for arranging the Meetings.

Sadly, we lost 7 Brithers over the year,

Edwin H Sutherland, Lairg.

Robert Jack, Avoch.

John Watt Noble, Dingwall.

Samuel Conner Warden, Inverness

Dennis Walker, Nairn.

John (Jock) McGeachie, Inverness

Fredrick John Mant, Inverness

Past Grand Auld Deacon David S Millar who was a Member of Angus Shed but was a great attender of Heilan Shed.

Donations to Charity

Our Benevolent Donations last year amounted to £1,400 - AGM and Installation £700, The Grand Worthy Deacons Charity £300, and Highland Blood Bikers £300 plus in August £100 to the George Robinson Appeal for Highland Hospice

As we have had no Meetings over the last session and are not likely to have any this year the Committee has decided to Donate to the particularly good causes that we gave to at the last AGM in March 2020 and will donate a further £700 to these recipients

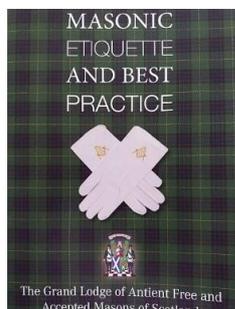
This year we have reached another milestone with our donations as since 2005 we have donated over £25,000 to local good causes.

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This new 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 a very 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.

Many of our Lodges in the Province use part of the following as a Tyler's Toast – here is the full version -

In the midst of our mirth, we drink to poor Masons all over the world,
On every shore our flag of love is gloriously unfurled,
We prize each Brother, fair or dark who bears no moral stain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

Freemasons feel the noble truth that Robert Burns told,
The rank is but the guinea stamp, the man himself the gold,
With us the rich and poor unite, and equal rights maintain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

Dear Brethren of the mystic tie, the night is waning fast,
Our duties done, our feast is over, this Toast must be the last,
Goodnight, goodnight, again we repeat that well known refrain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

To all poor and distressed Masons, scattered over land, sea and in the air. May God bless them and grant them a speedy return to their native land, should they so desire it.

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I have noticed on Facebook throughout this and the previous lockdown that many Brethren are paying their respects each night in the “Nine o’ Clock” Toast or, in some cases, the “Ten o’ Clock” Toast. Some twenty-five years ago while visiting south of the Border I picked up the following “Nine o’ Clock Toast” which may be of interest to those who participate in the Facebook version –

If at nine o’ clock you listen when around the festive board,
If you listen very closely with hearts tuned in accord,
You’ll hear from in the West and South,
You’re charged in fullest measure -
Some distant voices calling - *“Brother may I have the pleasure”*.

For at nine o’ clock we toast you wherever you may stand,
At home or maybe out of town or in some distant land,
With brimming hearts and tearful eyes,
We steal a moment’s leisure,
To call our ancient challenge - *“Brother may I have the pleasure.”*

For we are bound together by a universal link,
We drink of that masonic cup from which we all may drink,
So, to that far flung Brotherhood whose fellowship we treasure,
The old Masonic greeting - *“Brother may I have the pleasure.”*

PROVINCIAL GRAND ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER of R&C

The June Convocation of the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter will take place by Zoom on Friday 11th June.

Tain & Ross RAC 63

The Chapter have been holding regular Zoom meetings and look forward to hopefully getting back to normal for the Installation meeting in October.

St Clement RAC 244

Cromarty Firth RAC 310

ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER HEBRIDES NO. 364.

PRECEPTORY OF THE WESTERN ISLES