

PROVINCIAL PATTERN

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Province of Ross and Cromarty

ISSUE NO 103

MAY 2020

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



Lodge Loch Ewe No 1551, Aultbea, Wester Ross

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Editorial

Welcome to the 103rd edition of the “Provincial Patter”.

What a nightmare we have all been living through and there is absolutely no idea as to how or when we will get an all-clear should that ever happen.

But, while it has totally disrupted our lives, while it has taken from us loved ones, while it has taken Brethren across the world from us, it has certainly given us all time to stop and think. We have had time to reflect on so many different things, time to catch up on things that have remained untouched for some time.

There is no guarantee when we will get back to anything like normality but I’m hoping, maybe forlornly, that we will be able to start our meetings again in September.

Based on that assumption I have drawn up a schedule to try and get all the Rededication Ceremonies planned for this year completed by the end of the year as we have a full calendar again next year.

One significant change will be that the six Provincial Installations that should have taken place during the coming months have all been cancelled. Instead I am hoping to carry out a somewhat unique Installation Ceremony in Grand Lodge on Saturday 24th October when all six Brethren will be installed together as will be their Commissioned Office-bearers.

That will be something totally different, but I think that it encapsulates the fact that this virus has brought us all together in so many ways.

Ramsay McGhee, Editor

Grand Lodge of Scotland



The Grand Lodge Diary has been thrown into complete disarray as a result of Coronavirus. Two Lodges in our own Province have been affected namely Lodge Rosehaugh 1216 and Lodge St Martin 1217.

A revised schedule has been drawn up in the hope that we may start again in September, but we are well aware that that may not be allowed. If we are able to start, Lodge Rosehaugh will have their re-dedication ceremony on Friday 18th September and Lodge St Martin on Saturday 19th September but those dates are very much dependant on Government Guidelines.

As mentioned in the Editorial, we should be carrying out a total of six Provincial Installations over the next few months, including our neighbours in Sutherland, but as most of them fall in June or July they have all been cancelled. However, all six have readily agreed to participate in a single Installation Ceremony in Grand Lodge on Saturday 24th October – again dependant on Government guidelines. Hopefully the other 26 Provincial Grand Masters will attend to welcome their new colleagues.

Sadly, the Scottish Craft has now lost a number of Brethren to Coronavirus. I have asked all Lodge Secretaries to make a return to Grand Lodge of all such Brethren in order that we can hold a special In Memoriam service at the October Communication.

Ed

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Grand Master Masons Diary

African visit 2020

On Tuesday 3rd March I travelled south from Inverness by train passing through the snow laden hills at Dalwhinnie down to Edinburgh where, after a couple of hours administrative duties in Grand Lodge, I headed out to Edinburgh Airport for a flight to Heathrow where I met up with Grand Treasurer, Brother Jim Bell.

Our flight to Johannesburg got off to a poor start when one of the luggage containers jammed. They couldn't get it in to the hold nor could they get it back out. We had to sit on the plane for well over an hour before they could get the problem resolved. We eventually took off an hour and a half late but, thanks to a strong tail wind, we made up some of the time arriving in Johannesburg at 11.30 am on Wednesday 4th March. From the snow at Dalwhinnie, we stepped off the plane to a sunny 30 degrees.

We were met at the airport by the District Grand Master of Central South Africa, Brother Jim Kerr, who transported us to his home where his charming wife, Dorothy, made us most welcome.

During the afternoon we visited the Scottish Masonic Centre, a converted Synagogue, which has been transformed into a very modern, comfortable facility for the Scottish Masons in Johannesburg.



After a delicious meal prepared by Dorothy, we returned to the Scottish Masonic Centre to witness the Installation of Brother Peter Harry Geyer as Master of Lodge Turffontein No 1556. The Installation and following Harmony were carried out in exemplary fashion much to the enjoyment and appreciation of all those present – 13 Entered Apprentices, 4 Fellow Crafts, 54 Master Masons and an Installing Board of 98 giving a grand total of almost 170 Brethren.

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During the evening I had the honour and privilege to present Brother Basil Woodward, Past DGM, with his Diamond Diploma and Jewel and Brother Croucamp with Honorary Grand Rank. It was an absolutely superb evening.



The Refectory at the Scottish Masonic centre

The following morning, Thursday 5th March, we returned to the Scottish Masonic Centre for a couple of individual meetings after which the DGM took us to neighbouring Pretoria where we were taken to the magnificent Voortrekkers Monument.

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It was quite a climb up into the Monument but well worth it to learn something of the history of the Voortrekkers, to admire the construction and to enjoy the view from the top.



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We were indebted to Brother Jim Kerr for taking time out to drive us to Pretoria to see for ourselves this important time in the history of South Africa.

THE VOORTREKKERS

The migrating cattle farmers were descendants of an intermingling of mostly Dutch, French, Germans and to a lesser extent, British and Malay people. They farmed with cattle and since the 1700's migrated north- and eastwards from the Cape to find better grazing.

They desperately yearned for self rule and rebelled against the unsympathetic British Government by moving away from the Cape Colony in an organised fashion under different leaders. This became known as the Great Trek (1835–1854). They later became known as the 'Voortrekkers'.

Their approach with regards to the indigenous cultures with whom they made contact, was summarized in Retief's Manifesto (Grahamstown, 22 January 1837):

"... We will not molest any people and not take away anybody's property; but should we be attacked, we will regard ourselves as being fully justified to defend our own lives and property till the end against any enemy... We will... make our intentions known to the indigenous tribes as well as our desire to live together in peace and friendship."

In most cases, the Voortrekkers traded with them and worked towards cooperative agreements and attempted to, at all times, live peacefully.

EMBROIDERERS: Riana Meyer and Susan Cronjé

Previous page (top) – the Voortrekkers Monument in Pretoria

Previous page (bottom) Two of the exhibits in the Voortrekkers museum depicting life in Pretoria as they made their mark on the area in the 18th Century.

Left – who were the Voortrekkers

Below – Brother Jim Kerr, DGM Central South Africa and Brother Jim Bell, Grand Treasurer on the top-flight of the memorial.



On our return from Pretoria, it was back to business when we headed to Benoni and a meeting of Lodge Athol No 1442 where we witnessed the Master, Brother James Neilson and his Office-bearers work an excellent MM Degree using the Harvey ritual. The Lodgeroom was packed with well over 100 Brethren.

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The festivities continued into the small hours making an early flight on Friday 6th an unappetising possibility, but our flight was cancelled by SAA as a result of which we didn't need to leave so early. We headed from Johannesburg to Gaborone in Botswana. Our late departure meant that our whole programme was delayed but, we made the rehearsal for the Installation before returning to the hotel to get changed for a very pleasant reception at the home of the new District Grand Master, Brother Jayaraman Ramesh.

The following day, Saturday 7th March, we headed to the Masonic Temple in Gaborone where, that afternoon, I had the privilege and pleasure to install Brother Jayaraman Ramesh into office as District Grand Master along with his Commission – Brother Christopher Leddy, DDGM, Brother Brian Giffard, SDGM, Brother Valentino Marcos, District Grand Secretary and Brother Benito Acolatse, Chaplain.

The Installing Team who assisted me on the day were – Brother Mervyn Mitchell, Acting Senior Grand Warden, Brother Neville Chadwick, Acting Junior Grand Warden, Brother James Bell, Acting Grand Secretary, Brother Kalpesh Shah, Acting Grand D of C and Brother Benito Acolatse who was Acting Grand Chaplain. The entire team worked well together and I think Brother Ramesh was pleased with the Ceremony.



At the conclusion of the Ceremony, we made our way to the Travelodge Conference Centre where we enjoyed an excellent meal, and local entertainment from traditional dancers and the Gaborone Pipes and Drums. Both groups were first class. We had a truly memorable night ending up in the “Bricklayers” – the travelling bar which goes wherever the Brethren of East Africa go.

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On the Sunday it was a truly Botswanian experience when we were taken to Mokolodi Game Park where we enjoyed a light lunch before being taken into the park on what was basically the back of a lorry. Our delightful guide informed us that we would be getting a free “African Bum Massage” as the lorry rocked its way along the tracks.

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We mainly saw the beautiful Impala and one or two Kudu but the remainder of the animals were obviously in hiding. As darkness fell we came into a clearing with a fire burning in the centre where we enjoyed a traditional Bush Braai – a truly enjoyable day.

On Monday 9th it was an early start leaving the hotel at 05.30 to fly back to Johannesburg and then on to Harare where we were met by District Grand Secretary, Brother Marinus Petrus Grau who drove us to the Bronte Hotel where we enjoyed a meeting with the senior Zimbabwean Office-bearers but were saddened by the news that our District Grand Master, Brother John Massey, would be unable to attend due to ill health.

That evening we attended the Annual Communication of the District Grand Lodge of Zimbabwe under the Chairmanship of the IPDGM, Brother Chris Looker. It was a first class meeting and it brought home to me the fact that despite all the difficulties with the political situation in Zimbabwe, the Brethren have and continue to show great resilience in keeping the flag of Scottish Freemasonry flying high.

I was intrigued by the poem on the back of the summons for the meeting – by Brother Benjamin Franklin – Grand Master of Pennsylvania in 1790.

Masonic Wages

Masonic labour is purely a labour of love.
He who seeks to draw Masonic wages in gold or silver will be disappointed.
The wages of a Mason are earned and paid in their dealings with one another.
Sympathy begets sympathy,
Kindness begets kindness,
Helpfulness begets helpfulness,
And these are the wages of a Mason.

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Tuesday 10th was another early start with a flight back to Johannesburg, a change of airline and on to Malawi.

Brother Gordon Sheppard, our Grand Superintendent in Malawi met us at Blantyre Airport and took us to the Casa Mia Lodge Hotel, owned by the Master of Lodge Viphya No 1571, Brother Peter Curtis and run by his son Kristoffer who was to be passed to the FC Degree during the evening.

It was a delight to be back in Malawi and meet up with many old friends. The Lodge was duly opened and we witnessed an excellent working of the Degree and an equally excellent Harmony after the Degree.

On Wednesday morning we left the hotel at eight and were driven south to the Makande School in Ngabu by Brother Ahmed Yusuf Dasso, PM, Nyasa 956 arriving there about 10.30 to view the new building provided primarily by the Grand Lodge of Scotland.



The plaque above the door is difficult to read but it says – *“This classroom block was donated by the Grand Lodge of Scotland supported by the Freemasons of Malawi 12th December 2019”*

On the other side of the quadrangle two of the older classrooms were given a makeover and that was sponsored by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Glasgow.

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All pupils gathered under the shade of the trees and entertained us with poetry, drama and dance – it was a real delight to witness the enthusiasm of the pupils.

The Headmaster and pupils were all delighted with the work carried out by the Freemasons and he indicated that due to the new facilities, they could already see an improvement in the standard of work produced by the pupils.

From Makande School we travelled a short distance to have lunch at Gwiraweka Cattle Ranch, home of Rashid Issa and son Bro Rahim Issa – (Rahim is a member of Lodge Nyasa 956) - who greatly assisted in overseeing the work at the school. We are indebted to them for their assistance and to Mrs Fazila Issa and Grandad Abdul Rahim Issa for their hospitality. While we were at the ranch, we met up with a Kudu which will be of significance to the Lodge Allan Wilson brethren as that is the logo of the Lodge.

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It was back on the road again with another two-and-a-half-hour journey to Mountain View School for Deaf Children at Bvumbwe – the school supported by this Province for the past twelve years. This was a short visit by normal standards, but it was good to see Modester Gere again, her staff and the pupils. There was good news and bad news – bad news first. There is insufficient maize to feed the children until the end of this term and no maize at all for next term. They currently have over 150 children in the school and they go through eight bags of maize per week. Good news – Brother Ahmed Yusuf Dassu immediately offered to donate enough maize to get them to the end of this term and I (subsequently with the PGM's blessing) agreed that we would pay for the maize to get them through next term. The price is high now but if there is a good harvest the price should drop before we buy.

More good news – the provision that the Province makes for the wood-work classes in the school is paying massive dividends. Those Brethren who accompanied me on the first visit to the school in 2008 will remember the sad looking wee footstools the pupils were trying to make; over the years I have produced photos of the standards they have reached producing garden furniture, beds, recycling old furniture and now their latest efforts –



Base for a Bed



Some of the latest furniture produced by pupils

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Crafting legs for a coffee table



Learning to use fabric as well as wood



Shaping the wood by hand



We left the school uplifted that things were going in the right direction. The computer laboratory which we have been involved in along with Brother Robert MacPhee from Renfrewshire East is up and running and proving to be a valuable asset.

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We arrived back at Casa Mia Lodge with just enough time to get showered and changed to head back to Freemasons' Hall where we attended a Regular Meeting of Lodge Nyasa No 956 at which we witnessed Brother Thomas Lloyd being raised to the MM Degree. The Master, Brother Staines and his team worked an excellent degree which we all enjoyed before retiring to the Refectory for another first class harmony.

Another early start on the Thursday to head for our last port of call – Pietermaritzburg.

The day started well with Brother Shepperd arranging for Brother Bell and I to depart from the VIP Lounge at the airport. From then on, it went downhill. When we arrived in Johannesburg we had to go to the domestic departures for our flight to Durban only to be told that it had been cancelled. They said that they would swap us onto a flight with another airline but they couldn't locate our luggage on time. We then spent the next two hours trying to find the luggage which we eventually did. When we returned to check it in, we were informed that they would only accept one case each. Given that we were carrying regalia and all sorts of other bits and pieces for the Districts we both had two cases each. We then entered into a negotiation phase which resulted in paying over 900 Rand to get all our luggage to Durban. We eventually arrived three and a half hours late to be met by a very patient District Grand Master, Brother Ken Tucker who then drove us north to his home in Pietermaritzburg where he and his lovely wife Margaret looked after us exceedingly well for the next two days.

On the Friday, we met at the Masonic Centre for a rehearsal, attended to some critical administrative work, enjoyed lunch with Ken and Margaret, attempted some totally non-productive shopping before heading back to the Masonic Centre at Hayfields for a very enjoyable cocktail evening which allowed Brother Bell and I to meet many of the Brethren and their wives.

Saturday 14th March, we were at the Masonic Centre bright and early to prepare for the Installation of Brother Kenneth Buik Tucker as District Grand Master, Brother David Hauptfleisch as Depute, Brothers Mike Wooldridge and Andrew Ramshaw as Substitutes and Eric Schemel and Ercole Chianese as Chaplains. Brother James Ware remains as DG Secretary but was unable to be with us due to illness.

The Ceremony went extremely well with Brother Jim Bell standing in as both Grand Secretary and Grand D of C, excelling in both roles. I was delighted to confer the Honorary Grand Rank of Senior Grand Warden on Brother Peter Sutherland and Junior Grand Warden on Brother Ken Tucker.

After the ceremony concluded we retired to the local Golf Club where we enjoyed an excellent Harmony with the ladies present. All in all, a wonderful day.

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On Sunday morning we had to get up at 03.00 to be driven back to Durban by Ken to catch the early morning flight back to Heathrow and then on to Glasgow for Jim and straight up to Inverness for me.

My sincere thanks to Brother Jim Bell, Grand Treasurer and to everyone who made the trip such a successful one.



Since arriving back in the UK we have been at the mercy of the Coronavirus and have not participated in any further meetings. It is highly unlikely that we will be able to meet again in any great numbers before September at the earliest and even at that, many will be reticent to join in larger assemblies too soon.

Grand Lodge will strictly abide by the Government regulations and only allow meetings to start up again once we get the all-clear to do so.

In the meantime, please look after yourselves and stay safe.

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - FEBRUARY 1998

It's a small world

I was having a craic with Past Master Alick MacRae one night at Avoch and he promised to give me another contribution which I'm delighted to include in this edition.

"While I was a Very Ordinary Seaman, I was drafted to an OBV KORAB I - a very *modern* Polish drifter/factory ship. Among the crew was a big, well built, black haired, beetle browed fisherman from Avoch. Naturally we became good friends and many a long yarn we spun each other.

He was the first person who mentioned The Craft to me and although I had not, at that time, joined, I listened to him extolling the virtues of the Craft. Is it not interesting that, after a chance meeting so many years ago, I am now an Affiliate Member of his Mother Lodge."

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Provincial Grand Lodge:

Brethren, we are going through tough times, keep safe the virus is now on our doorstep.

We are all missing our meetings and visits, but new technology with the like of zoom can keep us in touch with each other.

At Provincial level we only managed four of our twelve annual visits, but the admin team inspected 8 of the lodges books with four still to be examined; that will be done shortly. It will very much depend when restrictions are lifted - we might have to forgo the formal visits this year.

Everything is cancelled at the moment, including the AGM in Tain and the lodge of Sorrow in Lodge Seaforth, both in May. However, on the visits we have made, we were still getting donations for Mountain view school and are eagerly awaiting a report from the Grand Master Mason on his recent visit just prior to lock down.

The Autumn is going to be very busy trying to fit everything in place with meetings and committee meetings when normality returns.

Once again, the Freemasons have responded to a crisis, gathering food and supplies and giving money to those in need and phone calls to check on brethren and keep them up to date. It is a very important time to check up on new brethren who have just gone through a degree and see that they are not forgotten; they could lose interest very quickly if we don't keep in touch with them.

The GMM is keeping us up to date from Grand Lodge with e-mails about what is going on at that level many thanks to Ramsay and staff.

Looking forward to the six Provincial Masters who are going to be installed in Grand Lodge on Saturday 24th October - that will be something to witness.

Our Provincial Grand Master and commissioned office bearers have completed 4 years in office. Another year and it's all change again; I would just like to thank the admin team Mike and Roger for the sterling work they have done and Morris, Ramsay, Ian, Raymond, David and Steven and all the other Office-bearers for all the support to Provincial Grand Lodge of Ross and Cromarty.

To all the Brethren, visitors and neighbours in the Highlands stay safe keep well till we meet again

Fraternal regards

Robin Cattanach

PGM Ross and Cromarty

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From the Provincial Almoner

Fortunately, considering the troubled times we are now living in, my report will not be very long, but sadly, I have to start by reporting the passing to the Grand Lodge Above of Past Master Bobby Brocket, Lodge Ness. Bobby was a stalwart of his Lodge over many years. Due to the current situation with Covid-19 Bobby's funeral has to be held in private. However, a card has been sent to the family conveying the condolences of the Provincial Grand Master and the brethren of the Province.

Past Substitute Provincial Grand Master Robert Jack, Past Master of Lodge Rosehaugh, is currently in Raigmore Hospital being treated for Covid-19. Information received this evening, Saturday 25th April, suggests that he is showing signs of improvement.

Brother David Johnstone, Lodge St Martin is also currently in Raigmore Hospital after an operation. He is also making slight progress.

Past Master Angus Ross, Lodge Ness is still at home being cared for by his wife Kay and a number of carers who attend to his needs daily. Given the good weather we have experienced lately Angus has been able to get out for a run on his mobility scooter each day. I spoke to him this evening and he was in great form and interested in all that is going on in Masonic circles.

Past Master Fraser MacKay, Lodge St Duthus is still in care at Innis Mhor Care Home in Tain. He remains the same.

Past Master John Noble, Lodge Fingal is still in care at Redwoods Nursing Home in Alness. His condition remains unchanged.

Past Master Ian MacLaren, Lodge Rosehaugh is currently attending Raigmore Hospital three days a week for dialysis treatment.

Brother Andy Farquhar, Lodge St Duthus is still not in the best of health but is at home. His mobility is not good.

Brother Andy Sutherland, Lodge St Duthus is now at home and improving.

I have visited brethren when and where possible and cards have been sent, as appropriate, conveying the best wishes of the Provincial Grand Master and the brethren of the Province. Should any brother require my assistance or know of a brother who does, please get in touch with me.

David A. MacMaster, PM

Provincial Grand Almoner

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 as well as bringing them to some of our meetings.

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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Brethren,

I am delighted to report on an initiative of Brother Alex Craib which is making a massive difference to front line NHS staff and the emergency services.

Brother Craib must be commended for taking this action which has received the support of so many Brethren in the north.

Please find below a wee report on progress.

Well done Alex and all the individuals and lodges who have supported him.

Please see attached a photo of the foodstuffs I purchased on behalf of Highland Freemasons to provide a wee bit of comfort for frontline staff in Raigmore and the services fighting the dreadful Coronavirus during their breaks at work. This was all bagged and delivered this morning, Thursday 23rd April. From a wee idea that I had a couple of Sundays ago, I now have in excess of £1500 in donations from lodges and brethren across the Highlands. Several lodges and a Royal Arch Chapter in Ross and Cromarty have so generously donated, whilst the brethren too have been most generous in their donations, remembering the lecture in the North East Corner from their Entered Apprentice degree.

Brethren from Skye in the West to Wick in the North have donated, and Lodge Averon were outstanding with the first donation of provisions. From their donations, the six front line wards in Raigmore and the Renal Unit, the RNI, the Ambulance Service, the Fire Brigade and the Police all received big carrier bags of tea, coffee, sugar, biscuits, and other items.

All these services have indicated their gratitude for the donations, and may I add my gratitude to theirs. From a simple idea, a huge fund has grown, and I will continue every week until the fund is expired, or the pandemic is overcome.

This initiative has highlighted to me the close affinity that the two Provinces have, and it gives me huge pleasure to see this at first hand.

May I conclude by thanking the lodges and brethren once more and wishing all the brethren and their families a safe and healthy transition through these dark times. I look forward to the days ahead when we can once more resume our meetings and harmonies, and maybe get back to “normal” – whatever that will look like after this dreadful situation that the world is in at present.

Alex Craib JD Lodge Fingal 318 and PM Lodge No. VI

FROM THE LODGES

Lodge St Duthus No 82



Lodge St. Duthus got off to a quiet start after the New Year. For our first meeting we had the pleasure of PPGM Morris Downie giving us a talk on his worldly travels and of the people he met. An interesting evening indeed.

In February we did a double MMM degree and in March what should have been another MMM degree, the candidate was self-isolated that day as he had just returned from holiday abroad a couple of days beforehand. On 6th February, our RWM and SD Bro D Johnstone along with RWM of Lodge Fingal Bro. Donnie Gunn were taken to Grand Lodge by PGM Robin Cattanach. On arrival they received a very warm welcome from Grand Master Mason Bro Ramsay McGhee. They were given a brief tour of the building finally arriving at the GMM office. It was a new experience for the brethren to attend Grand Lodge and seeing it being opened for business.

We had our Provincial visit in March and again as with all our other meetings visitor attendance numbers were fantastic. Before we tied at seven o'clock the RWM John Mackenzie along with lodge members had the pleasure of presenting a cheque for £1000 to Mrs Michele Murray. This money is going towards treatment Michele will receive in Russia for MS. Michele has been suffering from MS for the past fifteen years and had to retire from work eight years ago. At present she uses a walking stick, rollator and wheelchair. The treatment she will receive in Moscow is stem cell transplant. Unfortunately, she does not qualify for this treatment in the UK and to pay for it privately in the UK is double what she must pay in Russia. She has to raise £42,000 total. The amount raised now stands at £36,000. Her father George Patience is a life member of Lodge St. Duthus. He was overwhelmed by our generosity. Another cheque presented was to our PGM Robin Cattanach for £100 for the Malawi appeal. As for April, we were looking forward to a third degree and May a special second degree. These will now be rescheduled for next season.

Bro. Johnstone SD continued with the indoor markets in January and February raising funds and we also hosted a quiz night which raised a lot of money for a local group. Plans were also put in place for our Ladies night with everything booked for end of March but again on hold.

John MacKenzie – Master, Lodge St Duthus No 82

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Lodge Fortrose No 108

Strange times these with us all in lockdown and being unable to hold our meetings, even the social club is deserted, and all our beer kegs have been returned.

Do you think we might expect our lodge visitations for 2020 later in the year, maybe during the normal summer recess? There's talk of the Islands being used as a test-bed for trialling whatever exit strategy from the lockdown may be used, this is because of the small number of confirmed coronavirus cases (only 6 so far) and there have been no deaths here as a result of Covid-19 so far. So, we'll have to wait and see, things are changing daily.

Our Burns' Supper this year was delayed until February as our RWM was unable to attend on the designated date in January. The evening turned out to be very well attended, the speakers were all first class and a most enjoyable time was had by all.



In the picture from left: Bro Donnie (Loudy) Macleod who recited his version of Tam O'Shanter and kept us in stitches with his funny stories given in his own inimitable fashion. Mrs Lindy Cameron Saunders who made a very humorous reply from the lasses. RWM Henry Macinnes, Donald J Smith IPM who addressed the Haggis and Bro Robert Doig who gave the immortal memory, part of which he

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sang. Not in the picture is Bro Chris Marrow who made a great job of toasting the lasses, it was his first time at a Burns' supper, and it was obvious he had researched the subject well.

The lodge has decided to support the local food bank with a donation of £500 and this is being dealt with by a local wholesaler who delivers £125 worth of necessities including toilet rolls over 4 weeks. They have expressed their appreciation and we have adjusted the delivery slightly to fit in more with their needs.

Donnie Macleod

Donald Macleod PM

The following dialogue has been doing the rounds on Facebook but for those who don't have or don't use Facebook, you'll find it cleverly written and quite amusing. Brother Macleod in his own inimitable style "*borrowed the following from one of our Fife brothers*":

For the building of ships in the Naval Yard a vast number of Boilermakers were employed consisting of Welders, Platers and Layabouts. The Platers received a weekly allowance of tabs, baccy and broon; but the Welders were paid in Special and went into the Jubilee Club to receive it. They got there by way of a hole in the wall, at the entrance to which their attention was particularly drawn to two Shop-stewards. That on the left was called "Bone-Idle" which means "Tired". That on the right was called "Sackless" which means "Useless", and when conjoined "Futility" for the Convenor said "We that are born idle must stand firm together."

These Shop-Stewards were each five feet seven inches in height; in circumference four feet about the waist; and in diameter took an eighteen-inch collar. They were formed mainly hollow, the better to contain the vast quantities of ale they were accustomed to consume during working hours. They were clothed in blue boiler-suits and donkey jackets, within which were deposited copies of the National Agreements. They were further adorned with Cloth Cap, White Muffler and a Broad Leather Belt. The Cloth Cap denotes "The Union". The White Muffler the coldness of the wind and the Broad Leather Belt served to support the vast "corporation" they carried before them.

These Shop-Stewards were elected by a fiddled ballot which had two wonderful effects; the first being that no-one with the slightest grain of intelligence could be elected to this post; and the second being that if such a calamity should occur it would be nothing less than a miracle. They were ordered to be placed at the entrance to the hole in the wall by the Union Convenor, that being the most fitting and proper place for them, that the Boilermakers might have continually before them a reminder to pay their Union Dues when going to and returning from the club during working hours.

After passing through the hole in the wall they found themselves at the foot of the stairs to the club, where their ascent was opposed by the Ancient Doorman, who demanded of them their card, club and number. The card you will recall is CIU and is depicted by a Bingo Set next to a pile of Domino Cards.

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This took its origin at the time when a squad of welders crossed the Tyne in a hostile manner. The reason they attributed to this unfriendly visitation was that they had not been invited to join in the Self-Financing Productivity Agreements, but the true reason was that they had not joined in the cheap beer put on for Christmas.

The welders had long been accounted a noisy and troublesome shower and had at last downed tools, called a meeting, and after many severe taunts to the fitters in general had threatened to ban George Arnold and his committee from the club. The Convenor having tried all lenient means at his disposal to pacify them, failed miserably and so had recourse to more rigorous ones. He drew forth his darts team and gave the Welders battle, thrashed them in three sets of one thousand and one up; and in order to render his victory decisive and to secure himself from like molestation in the future he placed the 'B' team at the hole in the wall through which he knew the welders must pass in order to return to the Yard, giving them strict instructions that should a worker pass that way, denying that he was a Welder then a test word was to be put to them, which was to pronounce the word "PIECEWORK", but the Welders being bone-idle and hence dead scared of work would not say it, but said instead "TIMEWORK", which small distinction discovered their trade and cost them their time. And the Time Office inform us that on that day they docked Forty-Two hours at Standard Time and Five hours at Premium Time.

Having given this convincing proof they ascended the stairs and entered the Concert Room of the Club, which they found occupied by three, five, seven or more committee men. Three milk the bandit, five run the Bingo, seven or more sell the tickets. Three milk the bandit in allusion to the three principal officers of the Club, namely the Secretary; the Treasurer; and the Club Steward. Five run the Bingo in allusion to the five noble beverages, namely Ex; Scotch; Bass; Special; and Brown. Seven or more sell the tickets as it takes seven years and upwards to even be proposed for the Committee. They also allude to the seven glorious pastimes, namely Boozing; Betting; Bingo; Cards; Darts; Dominoes; and Snooker.

While they were in the Concert Room of the Club their attention was particularly drawn to certain Geordie symbols; depicted by the Blue Star, which denotes S&N whom we all support, and which we all most cheerfully imbibe.

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 2007

I find it difficult to believe that in only six weeks-time I will have been in Office as your PGM for a full year. It has been an interesting year and a very encouraging one. The first meeting of the Reigning Masters Forum was a tremendous start to my term as PGM. The enthusiasm, commitment and creativity displayed by the Masters' who were present was really heartening and their progression of the initiative to encourage inter-Lodge visits has been superb. The majority of Lodges in the Province have taken the project on board and even as we come to the end of the Masonic session we have Lodge St Martin, Lodge Seaforth, Lodge St Duthus and Lodge Fingal all involved in inter Lodge visits during May.

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Robertson's Lodge No 134

Easter Greetings Brethren,

Since the last edition of the "Provincial Patter" a lot has happened, and a lot has not happened. We have been caught up in the effects of the Coronavirus / COVID 19 and it has affected us all personally and in our chosen Masonic Careers. It has also affected the workings of Robertson's Lodge No 134 and stopped all meetings. Of course, it has affected all other Lodges and masonic Bodies also, but we will all progress after this is over, and come out stronger.

The main business of the last meeting held was for an excellent emulation MM degree, which was carried out with Brother Jordan Hossack from Lodge Rosehaugh as the stand in candidate. Brother Hossack was thanked for volunteering. The schedule for future degree working is now on hold until normal circumstances return.

Members continue with their duties, our Lodge Almoner keeps in touch with members who need assistance, are in Homes or have had recent illnesses. Most older members will now be self-isolating.

The usual regular checks are kept on the Lodge Premises, even though they are not used at present. Social Media is the main way to go just now, due to the effects of the Coronavirus, and Government guidelines. Members are using video conferencing to follow and take part in Grand Lodge Workshops, and Meetings. Friendships are continued and even expanded upon by using Facebook and other means such as WhatsApp. There are groups on Facebook for carrying on Masonic activities.

The Lodge Secretary is involved with the Community Council activities regarding the effects of Coronavirus in the Community. We all hope that there will be no serious casualties with our Lodge Members in this or any other Community.

Fraternal regards to All.

Peter K. Ratcliffe.

Lodge Secretary.

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Lodge Fingal No 318

Tuesday 11th February Worked an Emulation EA Degree. [As the candidate, Mr David Noble's Mother-in Law's funeral had taken place on Thursday 6th February, and is Bro Willie Mackintosh's wife], he did not think that it was appropriate to go through with the ceremony. But will be available later in the year. Bro Almoner sent a card.

Press ganged candidate Bro. Roy MacKenzie. The Degree was witnessed by 16 members and 5 visitors, collection amounted to £96.

Tuesday 10th March As this was our annual Provincial Visit, the Lodge tyled at 7:30pm. The deputation entered the Lodge after being raised to the Third Degree, led by the Provincial Grand Master, Brother Robin Cattanaich, accompanied by PPGM Morris Downie, PSPGM Jim Tait and 11 other Provincial Grand Lodge Office Bearers.

Worked a F.C. Degree for Bro. Neil Mackenzie. After the Degree work The RWM came down onto the floor of the Lodge accompanied by the PGM and greeted Bro. Mackenzie, congratulated him on taking his Second Regular Step in Freemasonry, also thanked him for representing the Province at the Abseiling event on the 10th May off the Forth Railway Bridge. Returning to the East the PGM was handed the Maul, asked Provincial Secretary to give his report. PGM congratulated IPM Bro. Colin Mackintosh, as this was his term in the Chair. After all the formalities, Provincial left the Lodge. The Degree was witnessed by 20 members and 10 visitors, collection amounted to £182.

Events Logie Lounge:

Saturday 15th February **Valentines Dance**, what happened.

Bar made £745. Raffle made £270.

Jim Murray [Manager at D. Gunn Funeral Director's] gave a donation of £120. Richard MacDonald gave a donation of £50. All in all, a good night, some 42 came on the night, and blessed the Logie Lounge. Edwin's music, was particularly good, floor never empty.

Would like to take this opportunity to thank all who contributed towards the Raffle.

To Irene Henderson and her daughter Heather on selling the Raffle Tickets.

Last but not least, for the Ladies who contributed towards the Buffet, very much appreciated.

We are still having the 50 /50 Draw, after the draw, a discussion was held about Bro. Alex Craib, doing fund raising, for the Nurses, at Raigmore Hospital, involved on Ward duty for this Virus Epidemic. It was decided that Lodge Fingal would donate £150.

That's all Folks, watch this Space.

D. Gunn - RWM

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LODGE ALLAN WILSON 851

The next meeting on Tuesday 9th June has been cancelled. Indeed, it looks as if all the Allan Wilson meetings for the year will have to be cancelled but the Secretary will keep everyone up to date.

One thing that has not been cancelled is the requirement to pay our annual dues and I would ask the Brethren to submit payment to the Lodge Treasurer, Bro Donnie Gunn as soon as possible. Payment can be made by BACS to the Lodge Allan Wilson General Account, Sort code - 80-06-83, Account number 06000956. The annual test fee is £40. It would be helpful if you could email the Treasurer to let him know that you have paid by BACS or contact him by email for alternative ways of paying at - donald@fingal318.co.uk

Editor

LODGE SEAFORTH 854

Since our last report in the February edition of the Provisional Patter, our next scheduled meeting was on Monday 17th March 2020, which was to be our Annual Visitation from the Provincial Grand Master of Ross & Cromarty.

As the Coronavirus threat was looming the RWM, and his team, were left in difficult position of deciding whether the meeting should go ahead on that night. That afternoon, Boris announced that all public meetings should cease with immediate effect, and our meeting was hastily cancelled at short notice. The RWM extends his apologies for the late decision to cancel the meeting.

Since the lockdown, Lodge Seaforth brethren have met several times by Zoom videoconference as means to keep in touch with the Brethren.

On the 20th April, our regular meeting night, we opened the invitation to members of the Province, and we had around 25 brethren present on the Zoom videoconference.

The RWM extended greetings to all present, and we enjoyed a presentation by the GMM Bro. Ramsay McGhee giving an account of his recent trip to South Africa and Malawi, including an update on the status at the Mountain View School in Malawi.

The Zoom videoconference also gave the opportunity for distant Brethren to touch base with the Seaforth Brethren.

Further Zoom Videoconferences are planned for future Mondays on a fortnightly basis, details available for the Lodge Secretary

All further meetings and our Planned Race Night have been postponed until further notice.

Raymond MacKeddie PM - Secretary

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LODGE AVERON 866

Since our last update to the Patter we have had our Provincial visit on the 13th February and carried out a 2nd Degree for Brother Brian Jay. Since then Brother Jay has been raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason, this degree was carried out by our Past Masters and they certainly worked this degree in an excellent manner.

We had our annual Seniors party on the 15th of February at the Ardross and Alness Bowling club, we had the assistance of the musicians from Lodge Ness who assist us every year. A great time was had by all our guests and a big thank you must go to the whole team who assisted with all the various tasks involved with holding the event.



We have given out couple of cheques to two local causes. One to go towards the local youth group The Place, whom have had to find new premises, and secondly one cheque handed over to Louise Heenan to assist with buying a specially designed wheelchair. Both stories where published in our local Alness and District times.

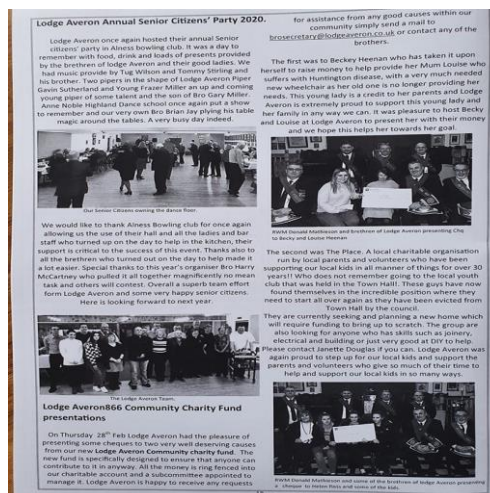


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Unfortunately, we never got to finish all our meetings this season, due to the spread of the Corona Virus and safety for all members and visitors alike was more important.

Brother Alex Craib had sent a message to ask for donations of canteen items to go towards the NHS staff, a collection was made from the brethren of Lodge Averon and delivered to Alex and then to various canteens in the hospital for the members of staff who were delighted at the generosity shown.



Brother Harry McCartney – Lodge Averon Special Correspondent

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LODGE KYLE No 1117

Lodge Kyle No 1117 continues, if not in person, certainly in spirit. Phone calls, participation in Zoom Conference Calls, emails, technology enabling us all to keep in touch. Small acts of kindness sparkle... sums of money or goods sent to NHS, groups of young people on a Rota available to the "oldies" in isolation day and night, and simple contact calls to Brethren and others who at this unique time might find themselves alone and afraid.

It should be noted that some of our Brethren put themselves in harm's way on a daily basis so we can all lead almost normal lives. We appreciate what they do for us.

But the Lodge bills keep coming; insurance, electric, water, repairs ... and we as Brethren also keep coming to the Lodge too, if only singly, to check everything inside the Lodge is okay and that the garden and brambles in particular aren't higher than the Lodge building as demonstrated in a recent Brother's quote, "I didn't know we had two windows round that side of the Lodge!"

With garden trimmed, Lodge cleaned, and bills paid, we look forward to the Autumn and a return to "normality" and seeing our friends again.

For most Lodges September would see a keen return of Brethren, marking a stellar start to the season. 2020 however may not be quite what we expect, "the virus" perhaps revealing one final stealthy sting in its tail.

The sad reality is that just a few virus infected individuals, "could" re-start the whole pandemic, catching out people it missed first time around. This "double spike" behavior is something we need to be aware of when, officially we are told the worst is over. Perhaps we should continue to lead our lives with a modicum of distancing and hygiene. Hopefully a second round of isolation will NOT be the case, particularly for the older members of society, and that in five months from now, the world will be getting to grips with the fiscal implications of the current measures designed to protect its citizens' health.

As Freemasons who meet and travel, we need to consider these issues, even if they relate in some instances, to the far-off days of September and beyond. Hopefully science and medicine will provide a long-term solution, but in the meantime, it is ourselves as individuals that are responsible for keeping our "at risk" Brethren safe, informed and contented.

Best wishes from Lodge Kyle 1117 to everyone in the Province. See you all soon!

Ronnie Miller, PM
Secretary

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LODGE ROSEHAUGH No 1216

It seems a lifetime ago when I go back to our first meeting we held since the last patter in February. We had hoped to hold an EA Degree for Dixon Kerr but with his work at the fishing he was unable to attend. Instead we held an informative General Meeting discussing the planned 100th event in May. We will come back to that later, but we were able to get Dixon into our midst in March for a very well worked degree and pleasing to have another youngster joining our lodge.

It was not long after this that the severity of Covid-19 became apparent and all Masonic activity was suspended. This included our PGL visitation in April along with our May weekend of meetings culminating in the Rededication of our Lodge in celebration of our Centenary. Fortunately, we did have time to cancel the catering however all the memorabilia for the occasion – ties, jewels mark pennies have all been ordered up and we will be looking for good homes for these! It was also very unfortunate for 5 Brethren from Peterborough who had already booked flights and accommodation for the occasion and hopefully they will still be able to attend.

Our GMM has pencilled in a rescheduling of the event for Friday 18th September and whilst we are drafting plans for this, we realise that they will be of a lower key than of our original plan. We would still hope to hold a further event probably in May 2021 where we can host a meeting and a celebration dinner to follow.

Keith Patience, PM – Secretary

BRO ROBERT JACK PM

At our Installation in December the Lodge had the honour of presenting his Jubilee Certificate and jewel to Brother Robert with our PGL Master making the presentation.

Bro Robert joined Lodge Rosehaugh No.1216 on 6 June 1969. He was installed as RWM in 1979 by Bro Donnie Sutherland PM 854 and served 2 years in the chair. He took on the role of Installing Master in the late 1980's and installed myself as RWM in 1996 and his son John in Dec 1998. He also took over the role of Secretary in 1996 and spent almost 20 years in this office.

Robert has always plenty of advice to give in his various roles (some you are no wanting to hear!) but this was always from the heart and in the best interest of the Lodge. He spent many a weekend during 1987 on the construction of our social room eventually opened in 1988.

In 1996 under the Stewardship of Bro Morris Downie, he was Installed as PGL substitute Master and spent 5 years in this office.

So, it was quite a shock to hear that on this return from his holiday with his wife Sheena that he had contracted the COVID-19 virus. He was on a ventilator for 3 weeks but has been showing some signs of improvement. The latest is he had an operation for a tracheostomy to be fitted to assist his breathing and make the wean off the ventilator easier. We are all routing for him to recover from this terrible illness.

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Lodge St Martin 1217

As with all the other lodges in Scotland we are closed and trying to make the best of a very strange and concerning situation. We do have one candidate in the pipeline who has been balloted and ready to be initiated so roll on the easing of the regulations. The centenary celebrations have now been put on hold as our venue for the meeting had to close and cancel all the bookings in line with government guidelines, we have also postponed the booking for the hotel. We intend to look at a new date once we are all back to normal.

On a personal note, I along with ninety-nine others took part in a Zoom Video Conference with Jimmy Young from Grand Lodge regarding the Grand Lodge On-line members database. The presentation was excellent with the progress and additions being made very commendable and I'm sure will make the database more user friendly. The video program used was Zoom and seemed to work extremely well although I know there have been a few concerns regarding security, however all in all a very worthwhile exercise.

All the best brethren and keep safe.

Charles MacAulay, PM
Secretary

Young Masons Zoom Videoconference

During the lockdown, Raymond Mackeddíe, was approached by some of the "younger" masons, i.e. masons recently joined the Craft, about having a videoconference to discuss various aspects of Freemasonry.

An invitation was sent out to all Lodges in the Province to enquire if any of the "younger" Masons would like to take part in the videoconference, with a number showing interest.

The first videoconference was held on Wednesday 22nd April, with seven participants taking part. After introductions and sharing their masonic experience, a presentation on the Structure and History of Freemasonry in Scotland, Ross & Cromarty and Daughter Lodges was given by the Host.

The Brethren taking part were keen continue the forum, and plan to meet on a fortnightly basis, and have arranged to study parts of the First Degree Tracing Board for the next meeting.

We would extend an invitation to any "young" mason in the Province to join us in these videoconferences, please get in touch through your Lodge Secretary.

Raymond Mackeddíe – Depute Provincial Grand Master

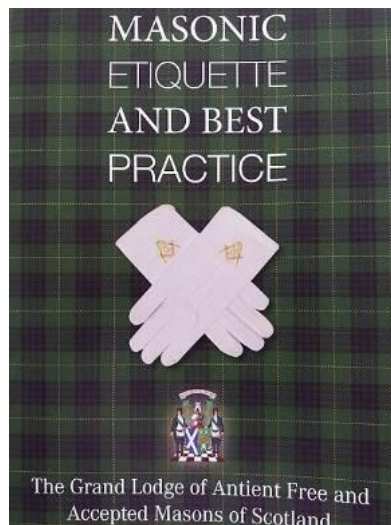
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BITS AND PIECES



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.

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 2002

At our March meeting we had a very interesting Meeting with a lecture on Hiram Abiff given by Bro Rev Iain Ramsden. Bro Iain held everyone's attention with his talk and comments afterward showed that everyone present had enjoyed the meeting and are hopeful that it will not be too long before we have the opportunity to hear him again.

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UNITED GRAND LODGE of QUEENSLAND

Two years ago, while attending the Installation of Brother Keith Murray as Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of Victoria, I had the good fortune to be introduced to Brother Paul Holland who is now Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of Queensland. Brother Paul sent me a note just after the February edition of the Patter telling me about the following. I found it intriguing and I'm sure you will too.

I thought you'd be interested to know that on the 22nd of this month I'm consecrating a new lodge in Toowoomba. Toowoomba is a regional city two hours west of Brisbane. The last District Grand Master for Scotland in Queensland was Bro Thomas Burstow who was Mayor of Toowoomba.

I was approached about a year ago by a number of Brethren in the Toowoomba District to form a new lodge that would have a cultural focus on our First Nations people (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders).

Lodge Ginan will be open to all those who identify as indigenous and those who don't but are empathetic with the ancient initiatory culture of our First Nations people.

Ginan will work a Scottish ritual - the first new lodge to do so in Queensland since 1920. It will also be Australia's first 'First Nations' focused lodge.

I've attached a sneak peek of the prototype apron which, while maintaining its Scots design, makes use of Aboriginal cultural motifs.



Ginan takes its name from the new official name for the star Epsilon Crucis – the smallest of the five main stars in the Southern Cross. It is an Aboriginal name for a 'small dilly bag full of knowledge and song's'. Quite appropriate we thought.

Paul Holland

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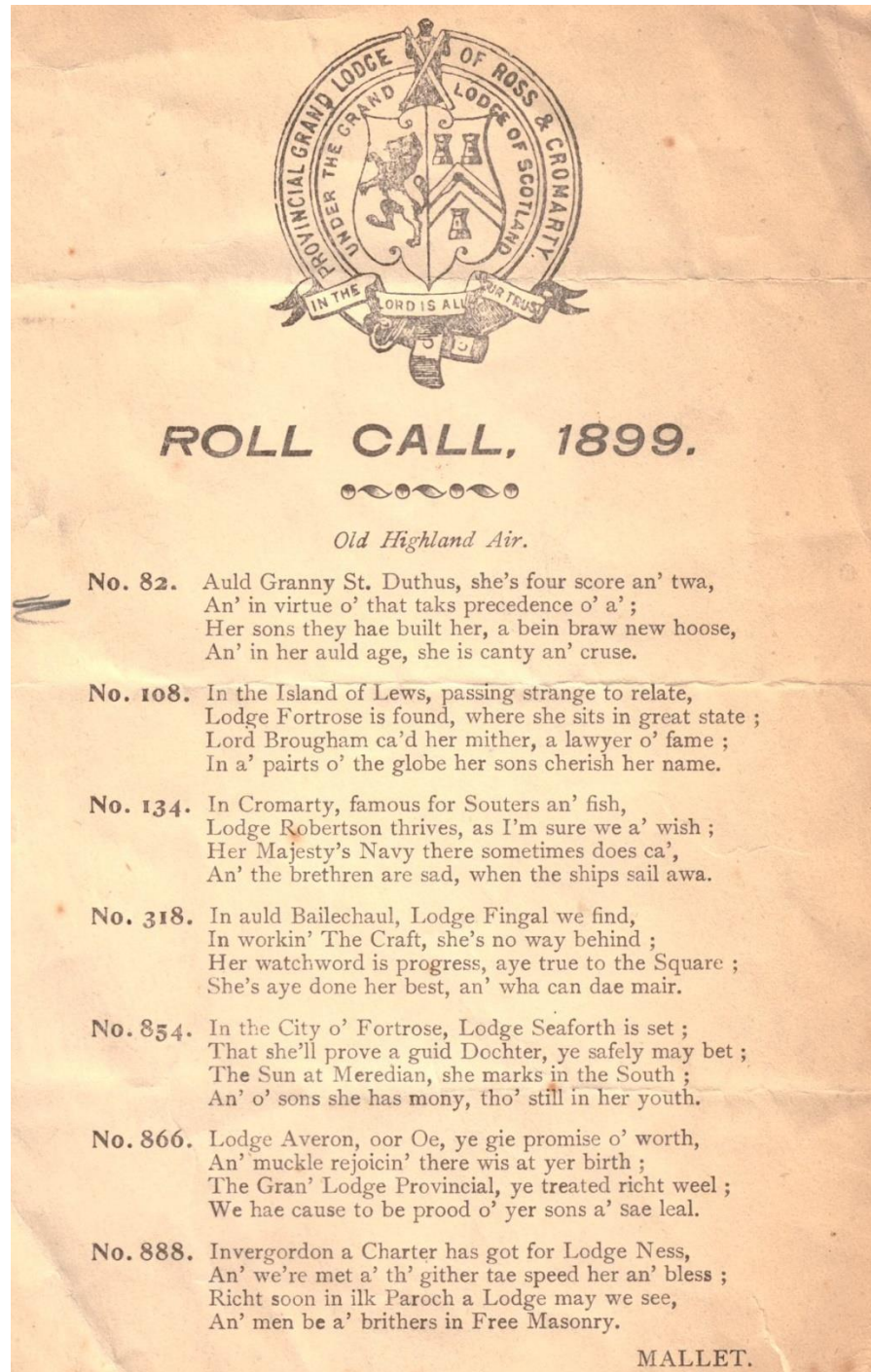
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*I came across this
"Roll Call" of
Lodges in the
Province of Ross and
Cromarty that dates
back to the end of the
19th Century when
there were but seven
Lodges in the
Province.*

*The poem was
obviously written just
before the
Consecration of
Lodge Ness in 1899*

Ed.



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Just as I am about to go to press, I have received the following from Past Master Roy Findlay of Lodge Scoon and Perth No 3.

History repeats itself. Came across this poem written in 1869, reprinted during 1919 Pandemic.

This is Timeless....

And people stayed at home
And read books
And listened
And they rested
And did exercises
And made art and played
And learned new ways of being
And stopped and listened
More deeply
Someone meditated, someone prayed
Someone met their shadow
And people began to think differently
And people healed.
And in the absence of people who
Lived in ignorant ways
Dangerous, meaningless and heartless,
The earth also began to heal
And when the danger ended and
People found themselves
They grieved for the dead
And made new choices
And dreamed of new visions
And created new ways of living
And completely healed the earth
Just as they were healed.



ASSESSMENT TIME

In these days of rules and regulations, human rights etc., etc., we are all used to being assessed whether it be at work or at Provincial Visitations. The army are likewise prone to assessment procedures and I came across one Senior Officer's assessment of some of his soldiers –

“I would not breed from this Officer”.

“His men will follow him anywhere, but only out of curiosity”.

“He would be out of his depth in a car park puddle”.

“He has delusions of adequacy”.

“Since my last report he has reached rock bottom and has started to dig”.

“He sets low personal standards then consistently fails to achieve them”.

“This man is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot”.

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - FEBRUARY 1998

I mentioned in the August edition that one important aspect of the Home Affairs Select Committee report on Freemasonry was the need for more openness in the Craft. The Brethren of Lodge Fortrose No 108, Stornoway have certainly taken the topic of openness on board and in the process have attained national media cover.

In an unprecedented approach in the Province, the Stornoway Brethren opened the doors of the Lodge to the public and welcomed over sixty visitors. A guided tour of the Lodge Room, the Library and several ante-rooms was available to the visitors giving them the opportunity to view the many artefacts which had been meticulously catalogued by Brother George Clavey. The Master, Brother Iain George MacIver was delighted with the response and praised all the Brethren who had worked extremely hard to make the event such a successful one.

While the majority of the Lodges in the Province do not have the same facilities as the Stornoway Lodge, there is no reason why similar events could not be planned.

To some extent, Lodge St Duthus, Lodge Seaforth, Lodge Avern and Lodge St Martin have already moved in the right direction with their annual Divine Services which now take the form of a family service.

It is heartening that the Lodges within the Province of Ross and Cromarty are taking the lead in lessening the ammunition available to the critics of our ancient and honourable craft by practising the openness which is being actively encouraged both within and out with the Craft.

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HEILAN SHED No 6



Photo of Karen McAulay from Erskine, John Baillie and Dougie McDonald, Heilan Sheds Worthy Deacon Elect holding the cheque for £500 from Grand Shed - the £500 is part of the overall £8,000 collected by John. As well as Grand Sheds wonderful donation Heilan Shed donated £200 and the Heilan Shed Members sponsored John individually for a further £150 plus.

At the recent "Cork" Degree held in The Club in Inverness the Brothers raised a wonderful amount of over £2300 which was distributed to 11 local Children's Charities each who received £210

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SPARROW

In a darkened corner
A dusty nave of Stone,
Far from the distant altar,
Among the eaves, alone.
Far from Majestic pillars,
marbled, basking in the light,
touched by a thousand passing hands,
that marvel at their might.
This small place surrounded by creations,
carved by the most skilled of men,
planned, measured and designed,
with paper and a pen.

3 This small, and unplanned wonder
born in apprenticed heart,
pure love instead of chisel,
caused life from stone to part.
Youthful hands, inspired by love,
birthed from the shell of marbled stone,
A humble sparrow, not a dove
to be seen by God alone.

5 That, as with man, from dust to life,
the soul within the stone was seen,
and born from soil and from strife,
an unseen masterpiece serene.

2 Columns, painstakingly constructed,
to stand proud before the choir,
proud but cold, creations,
objects of awe and desire.
Yet in that darkened corner,
where choir's echoes don't reach,
a sparrow of the humblest stone,
stands proud, a lesson it can teach.

4 If one could see above the glare,
beyond carved angel's sublime stare,
a miracle warmed from coldest stone,
worthy to adorn a throne.
The Creator's hands both guided,
the untried palms of youth,
and in their shaking labor
made an image of God's truth

6 Yet though unknown from below,
here curtained air hangs still,
There is a tiny glow,
a ray of sun from distant sill,
On feathered breast a stroke of light,
a tender touch, divine love,
a gentle sign of God's delight,
a smile from above.

My thanks again to Gary Chilton Vickers, Senior Deacon, Lodge Roodepoort Caledonian, S.C. 865 for submitting another of his poems for inclusion in the Patter – we are indebted to him.

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I have also received the following poem from Brother Vickers along with the story behind it – first the poem, then the story

Auld Tommy's Glare

Buckle on your apron,
Your lines well prepare,
For you'll recite them Brother,
Under Auld Tommy's Glare

Know your knocks Tyler,
And perhaps you'd comb your hair,
For at the door you'll be greeted,
By Auld Tommy's Glare

Below his greying, fierce-whiskered jaw,
Beat the warmest heart so rare,
Though, of course you wouldn't say it,
If you saw Auld Tommy's Glare.

If you got to know Our Brother,
A Mentor, strict but fair,
You'd eventually look forward to,
Seeing Auld Tommy's Glare

In Grand Lodge Above, Brethren beware,
If you fumble or stutter, you will assuredly share,
From the East, in just deserved Past-Master's Chair,
The glowing warmth of Auld Tommy's Glare

© 2019 Gary Chilton Vickers

The poem was dedicated to Brother Tommy Gorman, who sadly passed on 17th January this year. Brother Tommy was a Past Master and a long-standing office-bearer of the Scottish District Grand Lodge of Central South Africa. Gary commented – "He was a much-loved Brother, though a perfectionist and uncompromising observer of Masonic ritual and practice.

The reason why I believe the poem to be relevant is because I believe that we all know, or have known, a Brother Tommy. It may be worth a read".

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While we might not have much in the way of Lodge News this time round, I'm obliged to Gary Vickers for his poems and also to PM John Brash who very kindly sent me the following poem which I'm sure you will be able to associate with

The Masonic Black Shoes

The old black shoes are looking glum
As I pass the lobby door,
“What’s wrong with you?” they seem to say,
“We’re going out no more.
We’ve taken not a single step,
Not third or even first,
And ne’er a sign we’ve seen you give,
Has Masonry been cursed?”

3. Gavels now stay silent,
The Master holds no sway.
Volumes of the Sacred Law
On pedestals redundant,
Now Brothers contacts their Brothers
By social posts abundant.
No grip, or word or secret sign,
No friendly Harmony,
No Tyler’s song to say Goodnight,
No organ’s well-loved chord.
“Black shoes,” I said, “do not despair,
Our Chain is firm and strong

2. “It has”, I said, “by virus vile,
We have to stay at home
Until such time the plague has passed,
Then once more we can roam
The Masons’ Halls are empty,
Regalia put away,

4. Our flag of love remains unfurled
We’ll sing again our song.
And though our Brethren may have passed
To Grandeur Lodge Above,
We’ll look upon their memories
With everlasting Love;
And in their name, we’ll offer help
And soothe the burdened heart;
We’ll comfort those who are distressed,
Thus Masons play their part.

5. And when this crisis is resolved
We’ll sing the old refrain,
Happy to Meet, Sorry to Part,
Happy to meet again!

PROVINCIAL PATTERN

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PROVINCIAL GRAND ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER of R&C

Yours Fraternally

Alasdair Taylor

Provincial Grand Scribe E

Tain & Ross RAC 63

The next meeting of the Tain and Ross Chapter will be on Tuesday 13th October 2020

St Clement RAC 244

The next meeting of St Clement will be Friday 30th October

Cromarty Firth RAC 310

The next meeting of Cromarty Firth will be on Wednesday 7th October

The Hebrides RAC 364.

The lockdown means that although we have a candidate waiting for his EM degree we don't know when we'll be able to hold our next meeting and admit him.

PRECEPTORY OF THE WESTERN ISLES

Our venerable Preceptor's only comment is that everything's ground to a halt because of the current lockdown and that our next meeting will be a Malta grade whenever that will be!

Donnie Macleod

†‡ Donald Macleod KCT

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BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 2005

My thanks to the late PM Bro Roddy Cade for providing the following thought-provoking poem in 2005:

It was his dream to become a Mason,
Though he wasn't sure quite why.
So he made an application,
Then waited months for a reply.

3 Finally, a postcard in the mail,
Said – "come Monday night at six,
And bring the entry fee,
If you want to see our tricks."

5 The degree was worked with care and skill,
No one could argue that.
But, the candidate was forgotten,
As they patted themselves on the back.

7 They scratched their heads and wondered,
As again they cried and moaned.
"Our time has all been wasted!
We should have stayed at home."

9 Because you can only be a Mason,
When you're a Mason in your heart;
And along with his jacket seams,
They had burst his dream apart.

11 Answer all his questions,
Let him share your pride.
A Mason's work is honest work;
That's not a secret to hide.

13 Pick him up and take him home,
Isn't he worth the trip?
No candidate should come alone
Please, don't ignore this tip.

15 Now, armed with proper instruction,
Masonry's door will open wide,
Thanks to you, his best example,
Of what a Mason should be inside.

2 No committee came to pay a call,
To meet him or his wife,
No invitation to the Masonic Hall;
Nor offer of advice.

4 He made that solitary journey,
And entered by the door,
But not one hand was offered
As he slowly crossed the floor.

6 He came to Lodge just two more times,
And was raised to the third degree.
That was the last time they saw him
What could the trouble be?

8 It seems to me that they've missed the point,
But they need to understand,
It's not just how well you do the work,
It's how you treat the man.

10 So, if you get an application
Please call on that man at once.
Invite him and his family
To tour the hall and share some lunch.

12 And when it's time to present him
With the gift of a degree,
Remember, genuine friendship is,
The true gift of masonry

14 And remember your obligation,
As you lead him through the gate,
It's up to you to guide him through –
Not to hurt or humiliate.

16 And – thank him sincerely for coming.
Invite him back to his new home.
For a Brother will not be a Brother
If he feels unwelcome and alone.

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And finally –

We have the youngest Lodge in the Province on the front page – here is the oldest Lodge in the Province bringing this edition of “The Patter” to a close.



Lodge St Duthus No 82, Tain