

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

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 1

# DEGREES SOUTH



MARCH 2020



## FROM THE DISTRICT GRAND MASTER

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### IMPORTANT DATES

- **Communications 8–10 May 2020.**
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Greetings Brethren and welcome to the first, long overdue, issue of Degrees South under the stewardship of W Bro Murray Tasker. It is appropriate for me to start this column with a few words of thanks to Murray for taking on the role of editor of our quarterly newsletter, following a short hiatus over the past few months, as your previous editor became snowed under with other responsibilities. I am certainly very grateful to have been relieved of this, not inconsiderable, task and I look forward to Murray bringing a fresh approach to the newsletter after over 10 years as editor.

I am rapidly approaching the half-way point of my self-imposed 5 year term as District Grand Master and I have been greatly encouraged and heartened by the enthusiasm and commitment that seems to reside in every Lodge that I visit. Certainly the last twelve months has seen a number of new candidates coming forward, even for Lodges that have suffered a lack of new members over recent years. I have also appreciated the manner in which each Lodge has pulled back the responsibility for their own installation ceremonies to such an extent that this particular piece of our ritual is no longer an unexplored mystery to our outgoing Masters.

As you are probably aware the Pro Grand Master contacted me just before Christmas to advise me that he, along with the Grand Secretary and the

Grand Director of Ceremonies would be joining us at our Annual Communications in May. This visit has meant a substantially increased workload in the arrangements for Communications and I'm especially thankful to W Bro Frans van Zoggel and his team for their project management expertise which have been duly applied in such a fashion that they have virtually completed the task almost 3 months in advance of the occasion. I would like to take this opportunity to extend a personal invitation to all our members to join us, at least for the meeting itself, if not for the Friday and Saturday evening events.

Finally Brethren we have had a plethora of well-intentioned advice on Covid-19 from the media, governments and UGLE itself so I shall not repeat here this guidance of which we are all aware. I will simply reiterate the fact that our demographic, as an organisation, puts most of us firmly in the high risk group of susceptibility for this illness so would urge you all to take care...remember meetings can always be postponed or cancelled. If you are feeling unwell please stay at home and stay safe.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at Communications on 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> May in Christchurch.

Fraternally,  
Richard

### Communication has been postponed

Because of Covid-19 and the directions from Grand Lodge and our District Grand Master all Lodge activity has been suspended.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARDS

### Report from Board of General Purposes & South Island District Charitable Trust

The Board of General Purposes met on the 23/11/19. Apart from a number of administrative matters the following was discussed:

#### Canterbury Freemasons Centre

As most are aware rents have increased for the Lodges meeting at Shirley, to cover operating costs.

Contrary to some rumours the Board of The Centre have stated they are not in financial difficulties, although finances are very tight.

There was a discussion re a possible financial involvement in the complex from DGLSINZ. The result was the trustees will consider the matter further and report back to our May 2020 meeting.

The current trustees are The District Grand Master, District Grand Treasurer and myself.

#### District Grand Mentor

It was reported by our District Grand Mentor, that not one Lodge has called upon his mentoring services and the same situation had applied to previous District mentors. Our District Mentor K Borland stated he will draft a letter to be sent to Lodges advising of his services.

#### South Island English District Masonic Charitable Trust

It is a pleasure to report, The Trust is in excellent financial shape with nett assets of over 1 million dollars. Applications for Charity are usually finalised at our September meeting, but we received the following special request:

Family of the late Sam Chew Lain requested support to repair his mausoleum Tomb.

He was initiated in The St George Lodge number 1128 on the 9/2/1893. On his death in 1903 the balance of the estate of this prominent and generous mason, was administered by The St George Lodge. It was moved, voted and carried the trust contribute \$2500 to this cause.

A reminder was given that in future, any charity applications must be received within reasonable time before our August meeting and won't be dealt with after that, unless the circumstances are exceptional.

The District Grand Charity Steward gave an update re a St Johns appeal, featuring a programme to be televised February 2020, where participants will be wearing tops displaying our Masonic Square and Compass Emblem.

I look forward to seeing you all at if not before on the weekend of the 8-10 May at our communications meeting in Christchurch.

**John Woolcott**  
President of The Boards

## The Conyers Lodge

At Conyers we had an interesting year with a number of memorial events.

**May.** At our regular meeting our WM presented the gavel to the District Grand Master and with District Grand Officers they performed a very good Second Degree on our candidate, Issac Foster.

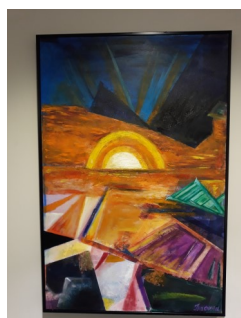
**August.** We were approached by a lady with two children, who was just coming off breast cancer treatment Her husband left her when she was diagnosed, after 9 years of marriage... taking the family home etc.

She was with WINZ but is going back to employment when her treatment finishes in a month or two. She asked for some financial assistance for her and her kids to get her through the short term and pay her bills that WINZ don't cover.

Due diligence was completed and the details were confirmed.

At our regular meeting a raffle was conducted and we raised \$500 which was given to this lady.

Her mother was so grateful she painted the following picture and



presented it to Conyers.

This is now hung in the refectory at the Canterbury Freemasons Centre

This month also saw a visit from the District 25 NZC District Grand Masters, Masters and Brethren from the various Lodges. These Brethren also assisted with the raffle for this lady.

**October.** The Combined English meeting was held with a Second Degree working was carried out on an Amberley candidate. The WM of Amberley completed the Obligation.

At this meeting Alan Williams was presented with his 70 year Jewel. This is no mean feat.

**December.** The long over due Christmas function was held with our partners A good evening which was greatly enjoyed by all. This had not been held for 6 years and will now be a regular event.

It is important to remember our partners and family.

WM Conyers



## NEWS FROM THE TOP OF THE SOUTH

Greetings Brethren. Much has happened in our area since my last report. I suppose the biggest news comes from Southern Star and Lazar Lodges.

As you are probably aware the old Collingwood Street Temple in Nelson, was coming to the end of its useful life, due to enhanced Earthquake standards demanded by the Nelson City Council.



The Trustees had been for some time, looking around for other suitable premises, without a great deal of success.



In the end it was decided that the most practicable situation was to become tenants of the Masonic Centre in Nile Street, owned by the Grand Lodge of New Zealand.

This decision having been made, the old Lodge room was put up for Sale/Tender, with a local land agent. There was one very obvious problem with trying to sell a building of that age and EQ requirements, was that of another restriction, being listed as an Historic Place, which in effect reduced the buildings value. However, a satisfactory offer was made and accepted by the Trustees, with a vacation date of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019.

Southern Star Lodge's last meeting in the Old Building, was on the 24<sup>th</sup> September, being an initiation ceremony for the son of Bro Andrew Preece (the Lodge Inner Guard) and Grandson of Wor Bro Arthur Rushton (Lodge Organist). Towards the end of that meeting the Lodge received an unexpected visitor from a representative of Lodge De Molish No 13, who entered in full working kit, hard hat and a wheelbarrow of working tools ready for demolition!



Following the closing of the Lodge a very grand and enjoyable refectory took place with plenty of food and drink. Many stories were told of past happenings that went on in that building over many years. After a very long evening

every brother departed with recounted memories, in Peace and Harmony.

A full working bee was assembled during the week prior to the vacation date. Collingwood Street building was emptied of all furniture, fittings, a mountain of paper work and many treasures relating to Southern Star and Lazar Lodges also that of Trafalgar Royal Arch and associated Chapters dating back to the middle 1800's.

Many treasures were unearthed, including this Hebrew Bible of 1889, were marked and numbered and put into suitable storage for future investigation and restoration. Most of the items of furniture were transferred to Reefton where the old Lodge room were being reinstated. All useable ceremonial equipment was transferred to the Nile Street Masonic Centre, where storage facilities were provided, ready to use for future meetings.



Mid October saw the first meeting for Southern Star Lodge in its new home, it being the Installation of the new Master, Wor Bro Jeff Grimmatt and his Officers for the year 2019/2020.

Early November, the Lazar Lodge held its last meeting for the year, also in its new home in Nile Street. Unfortunately, shortly after that meeting the building caught fire, with much damage being done to the entrance and the 'crush hall'. An unknown amount of smoke and water damage was affected to the remainder of the building and to date any access to recover valuable equipment has been prohibited. Any decision as to future repair or rebuild seems a long way off.



So, you can imagine the state of disruption we are all in at this end of the Island at present while we search for suitable temporary premises and equipment to allow us to hold future meetings. But knowing Freemasonry as we do, we will survive.

Please Enjoy.

Kind regards.

W Bro Dave Stenning. PAGDC, DepDistGM

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The views expressed in these pages do not  
necessarily reflect those of the District Grand Lodge

**Degrees South Deadline:**  
**May 30th** for the June Edition.

## Freemasonry in the community

At the beginning of 2019 eleven people representing the South Island region were chosen as Charity Ambassadors for St John. One of those chosen was WM Nigel Paterson, PM of the Conyers Lodge 1916 and District Grand Charity Steward.

St John had partnered with Charity TV Global and the goal was to fundraise for, and increase their exposure to, the South Island community. The intent of this partnership was that if each ambassador reached a certain financial goal Charity TV Global would then take them away on an adventure week within the South Island with a camera crew in tow.

Day 1 started in Christchurch and the week finished in Queenstown. Throughout the week the 11 ambassadors were put through several tests and trials. From one day to the next they didn't know what challenges they would face, where they would be accommodated or from where they would be getting their food from. Fortuitously all accommodation, adventures and food were donated by members of the community and businesses across the South Island. This meant that none of the fundraising donations or sponsorships were used for this adventure's expenses.



The South Island English District Charitable Trust happily agreed to be one of the sponsors with a generous donation of \$10,000 to recognize and support the great work St John do in the community. The Masonic Emblem along with “**South Island Freemasons**” were very proudly displayed on the right-hand sleeve of the shirts and the back of the sweat-shirts which all the ambassadors wore throughout the week. This meant a great exposure for Freemasonry across the South Island.



On the way home the ambassadors stopped at several sponsors locations for photo opportunities and one of those was at the Winchester Lodge. It just so happened that RW Richard Taylor was “co-incidentally close by” and able to meet the ambassadors there and show off his sparkly smile. The final step is for the adventure to screen on TVNZ as part of a six-week series called “Adventure All Stars” hosted by Erin Simpson. Check out episode 5 of the 6-week series on TV1, 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2.00pm where St John features.

