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of the District Grand
Lodge of the South Island

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DEGREES SOUTH



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IMPORTANT DATES

- INSTALLATIONS
- 12 June—Phoenix 1690
- 28 June—Winchester 1737
- 21 August—Dunedin 931
- 4 September—Greymouth 1233



DGM THOUGHTS

Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of Greymouth Lodge and the Communications Team for a spectacular weekend at Greymouth and for the excellent way that the Communications meeting was run. I have had a huge amount of positive feedback from within the District and from the members of the North Island District who travelled down to support us. It was a great effort and it delivered one of the best Communications I have attended.

As I'm sure that you are aware, UGLE has produced its first ever Annual report in over 300 years! I would certainly urge everyone to read this report and take in the encouraging change of direction that our Grand Secretary and his team have managed to instil in our august but sometimes cumbersome organisation. He suggests that the increasing openness and raising of visibility of Freemasonry in general and our charity efforts in particular has formed a substantial part of the modernisation programme. Recent research showed that one in four people would consider joining Freemasonry today. This change is significant, because in 2018, the result of the same survey was one in ten. So, what does all this mean at the Lodge level?

Firstly we must bear in mind that a Mission statement is a tool that should allow an organisation to ensure that its disparate parts are able to align themselves in a way that helps them to focus on the purpose intended. That is to say that we are all singing from the same hymn sheet, striving for the same purpose and sharing in a common vision for the future. Alignment is key and you will see that word cropping up a lot in the future. We cannot be seen to be tearing ourselves apart by moving forward in differing directions.

Improvements are also being made in communications. For the first time, the UGLE is able to talk directly and regularly with its membership, and a planned membership survey will ensure that Freemasons will be able to provide feedback directly to the organisation. Please take advantage of this opportunity Brethren, it is important that London has the benefit of input from the Districts.

Further modernisation is underway with Project Hermes, a modern and simple web-based system to be

used by Lodge and Chapter secretaries, which will transform the way in which the organisation is administered and mark an end to lengthy, manual form-filling processes. One of the major design principles of Hermes is that it must be intuitive and easy to operate, similar to using an online banking system. W Bros Stenning and Tasker will form a Competence Centre for Hermes under our District Grand Secretary and will be there to support our Lodges Secretaries as Hermes is rolled out.

Brethren, in previous years I have talked about the difficulties we encounter in communicating both internally and externally. Poor communication was the leading cause of dissatisfaction amongst our members when surveyed some 4 years ago and that led us to face up to the fact that we are not professional or even proficient communicators. Externally we have struggled to get the right messages to the desired audiences in a way that was effective and, more importantly, affordable. Our use of a PR company to raise and manage our public image achieved some notable successes but rapidly proved unaffordable.

This year, to tackle these sorts of problems, Grand Lodge has added two new Provincial and District offices, to one of which I feel we need to assign someone as soon as possible. I have decided to appoint a District Grand Communications Officer and I am pleased to announce the appointment of W Bro Murray Tasker to that office. Murray had already taken on the editorship of the Degrees South Newsletter and in his new role will develop a realistic and affordable Marketing Communication Plan as well as overseeing a redesign of the District website. The second District Office will be that of District Membership Officer and I would be pleased to receive expressions of interest from anyone who would be keen to take on that office, possibly next year. Interpreting guidance from London and developing this new role at a District level would be the initial responsibility.

Meanwhile I trust that you will stay warm and safe over the winter months and I look forward to seeing many of you at Lodge meetings around the District.

Fraternally,

Richard

PACIFIC LODGE OF HOKITIKA 1229

Freemason brethren from Canterbury, Nelson and the West Coast converged on Hokitika on 10th April for the first meeting of the Pacific Lodge of Hokitika in over 40 years.

Lodge 1299 EC was the first to be consecrated on the West Coast, in 1865, and its history will be revisited during the meeting at the original meetings rooms, now the Old Lodge Theatre.

The nostalgic gathering will also include a visit to the Hokitika Museum, where a collection of early memorabilia is kept, followed by a talk on the history of the lodge by honorary member Doug Stapleton.

According to the District Grand Lodge of the South Island, the Pacific Lodge of Hokitika 1229 was founded in 1865 but over time as the port diminished in importance and members were lost due to age or transfers, the membership fell and was augmented by joining members from Christchurch.

With only a few resident members left it was eventually decided to shift house, and lodge rooms at Amberley were rented for the meetings which had been changed to four meetings a year.

When the Freemasons Centre of Canterbury was opened in 1994 the lodge again shifted to meet there.

However, it has not met in Hokitika since 1978.

Photographs and other early memorabilia was on display and members would also visit the museum to view other items of interest.

Mr Stapleton said among the collection was furniture, old minute books and a large oil painting of John Lazar, a prominent Freemason and the Hokitika Borough Council's first town clerk.

Another notable member of the Hokitika lodge was former Premier Richard John Seddon.

In 1898, 30 years after he had first joined the Masons, Seddon, then premier, became the Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge of New Zealand.

The Pacific Lodge of Hokitika pre-dates the Grand Lodge of New Zealand by more than 20 years and is one of only several English Constitution lodges left.

The former lodge building was sold to the Hokitika Dramatic Society in the mid-1980s and the money derived was gifted largely to Westland High School, Mr Stapleton said.

While membership had declined over the years the Greymouth lodge and the Advance Mawhera Lodge still met in the replica lodge built by Freemasons at Shantytown.

The only other lodge on the West Coast is the Phoenix Pacific lodge of Hokitika 1229 returned home to Hokitika after 43 years to be welcomed by heavy rain.

The Programme

12pm - Museum - 17 Hamilton St – walk through the history of the town and memories from our masonic past.

2pm - Old Lodge Building, 11 Revell Street, Hokitika - Lodge meeting

2:30pm – Admit visitors

Call Off

Mayor, Bruce Smith to Speak and Welcome

Doug Stapleton - Brief History of Lodge

5.30pm - Meet at The Chartered Club - 42 Hamilton Street, Hokitika.

Ladies Afternoon

12pm - Meet at Museum

1pm - Tour and Treetop Walk – with afternoon tea

John Lazar, District
Grand Master
Westland in Masonic
regalia.



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

Degrees South Deadline:
August 29th for the September 21 Edition.

W.BRO AJ POLASCHEK

6th May 1933—30th April 2021

Worshipful Brother Alan James Polaschek joined Freemasonry in August 1965 at Lodge Otaihape 142 in the Ruapehu District, nearly 56 years later he was still a member of that, his Mother Lodge.

During his time here in Christchurch he was also an active member of:

- The Conyers Lodge 1916
- The Master's & Past Masters Lodge 130,
- The Pegasus Daylight Lodge 450,
- The Canterbury Royal Arch
- and the South Canterbury Mark Lodge 300

Our District Grand Lodge, our Governing Body if you like, has honoured Alan with the ranks of:

- District Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies in 1993 and 1994,
- District Grand Director of Ceremonies in 1995 and District Grand Chaplain 2003 & 2004.

His greatest joy was of course introducing into Conyers his Son Karl, nephew David, (and various other members of tenuous connection that he also claimed as relatives).

Alan was exceptionally proud to see Karl, and later David, installed as Master of Conyers.

Alan was an enthusiastic Freemason. He epitomised our Tenets and Principles.



There were also numerous committees, boards, and associations within Freemasonry that Alan was a vital part of.

Polly, Frans and others would travel together to our District Annual General Meetings to exotic locations such as Blenheim, Nelson, Greymouth, Westport, Timaru, or Ashburton, and we'd treat them as a Boys Weekend away.

These many road trips afforded us the opportunity to have some in depth discussions about life experiences, morality, and Freemasonry. In one such conversation many years ago, we were discussing mortality. Alan pointed out quite cheerfully that he didn't fear the prospect of death, it is after all inevitable – but it's what we do before that event that's important. The point he made that day also clarified my feelings on the subject.

Both within Freemasonry, and in all his other dealings, Alan was always a Gentleman, he was a Confidential and Sympathetic Listener and Advisor, a Father Figure and Mentor to many, He was Jovial, Fair-Minded, honest, and welcoming. Polly's sense of Humour was always beautifully well timed and often delightfully inappropriate.

He was, above all else a generous and loving man. He has the respect and gratitude of all his Fraternal Brethren here and overseas... he lived respected and is sorely missed.
Thanks to Frans v Zoggel

