

PROVINCIAL PATTERN

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Province of Ross and Cromarty

ISSUE NO 84

AUGUST 2015



What's in the August Edition?

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Cover picture:

The new solar powered pump system for the borehole at Mountain View School – provided by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ross & Cromarty

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Editorial

Welcome to the 84th edition of the Patter.

The big story from the Province has to be the positive and speedy action it took when word came through from Bro Gordon Sheppard that there was a strong possibility of a cholera outbreak at the Mountain View School as a result of the water pump on the borehole packing in all together resulting in no running water whatsoever in the school, therefore no sanitation either.

The school could not afford to replace the system so it was agreed that the money which was raised as a result of the Race Night should be used to purchase a brand new solar based system costing just under £4k but which we have been assured will fit the bill for many years to come.

The following is an extract from a letter received from the headmistress, Modester Jere –

On behalf of the learners, teachers and hostel staff, I would like to thank you very much for this support rendered to us. The coming of the solar pump has eased a number of things at school for example; electricity bills for water, the movement of learners to boreholes. In addition, we are able to get water for the vegetables that we have grown at our school. You can see the attached photos for some of the successes of our school.

As Modester states, it's not just the basics that have been sorted out now that water is back but they can once again produce vegetables for the benefit of the children – I have included a couple of photo's in the newsletter.

As you will recall, the aim of the Race Night was to raise £2k. We have as a result of everyone's generosity, raised about £4.5k – sufficient to pay for the solar system and next years' wages for the woodwork teacher. The Province has excelled once again.

While the Province has raised the money we cannot forget the immense amount of work carried out by the Brethren in Malawi under the leadership of Bro Gordon Sheppard – thanks to them the whole project was managed quickly, efficiently and a good deal cheaper than was first envisaged.

Well done to you all – whatever part you have played. You have simply saved the lives of such vulnerable children.

Ramsay McGhee, Editor

Grand Lodge of Scotland

It has been a busy period for Grand Lodge over the past three months. On 8th May the Grand Master Mason carried out the 200th Anniversary rededication of Lodge of St Nathalan of Tullich in Mar No 259. The following Saturday the Substitute Grand Master, Bro George Kelly carried out the rededication of Lodge Blackridge No 1145 in Armadale, West Lothian. On Saturday 23rd May I travelled down to Barrhead to attend the annual meeting for new members held by the PGL of Renfrewshire East. This was a very well run and very professional seminar – something that other Provinces could benefit from emulating. A week later and I was heading east to Portgordon where I had the privilege of carrying out the Centenary rededication ceremony for Lodge Richmond No 1137. On Wednesday 3rd June I headed west to Dublin to represent the Grand Master Mason at the Grand Lodge of Ireland. On Thursday 11th it was the Grand Lodge Communication in Edinburgh followed on the Friday night by the “Dennis Townhill Memorial Concert” featuring our Grand Organist, Simon Nieminski and local soprano, Emily Mitchell. It was an outstanding concert and I was delighted to give a vote of thanks while the Grand Master Mason was concentrating on his son Harry receiving his MM Degree in Lodge Ythan. While the Grand Master Mason installed the new PGM of Stirlingshire on Saturday 20th June I was in Bucharest representing him on the occasion of the 135th Anniversary of the Grand Lodge of Romania. On Saturday 4th July I travelled east again, this time to Banchory to carry out the 150th anniversary rededication ceremony in Lodge St Ternan No 443.

On Friday 10th July it was northwards to beautiful Orkney and the Installation of the new PGM for Orkney and Zetland followed on 25th July by a journey south to Killin for the Installation of the new PGM of Perthshire West.

As the “Patter” goes to print I will be heading off on the long drag down to Galashiels for the Installation of the new PGM of Roxburgh, Peebles and Selkirkshires. The following week it's a change of direction north to Lairg for the Installation of the new PGM of Sutherland

Ed

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Provincial Grand Lodge:



In the last edition of the Provincial Patter I referred to the kind invitation to attend the Installation of Brother Bill Beardmore as Grand Master of British Freemasonry in Germany. The Installation Meeting was most enjoyable and the hospitality afforded to myself and Past Provincial Grand Master Brother Ian Fraser and his good lady Joan was of the highest standard and the fraternal fellowship will be long remembered. It was my pleasure to meet with many Brethren with good Scottish connections and none more so than to meet with Brother Roddy MacKenzie, Junior Grand Deacon who originated from Conon – Bridge in our own Province. I am delighted to say that just this week we were so pleased to welcome Brother Bill Beardmore and his good lady Ellie back into the area and to repay some of the hospitality by entertaining them to dinner along with Brother Ian Fraser and his wife Joan, Brother Robin Cattnach and his wife Rosemary and also myself and my wife Mina. We had a most enjoyable evening.

This past week end I had the pleasure to attend the Installation of Brother Roger H. Bullard as Provincial Grand Master of Perthshire West and on Saturday 8th. August will be present at the Installation of Brother Donald R. Morrison as Provincial Grand Master of Sutherland.

On a sadder note, I joined many Brethren at the Funeral Service for Brother Thomas Stewart who passed to the Grand Lodge Above at the fine old age of 92 years. Brother Tom was a highly respected member of Lodge Fingal No 318 and served as Lodge Secretary for a number of years and likewise he was a Past Provincial Grand Secretary and was an Honorary Assistant Grand Secretary. Our condolences go to his wife Jean and her family at this sad time.

Our next Provincial Communication is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 26th. August within Lodge Averon No 866 Alness commencing at 8.00 pm and I look forward to a good attendance of members and Brethren.

Sincerely and fraternally,

William Ross

Provincial Grand Master

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From The Provincial Almoner

Once again I have to begin my report with sad news by recording the passing to the Grand Lodge Above of Brother Tom Stewart, Muir of Ord on Sunday 19th July at Southside Nursing Home, Inverness, where he had been resident, along with his wife, Jean, for some time. Tom was initiated into Lodge No 912 Hozier Douglas Water in Lanarkshire Upper Ward and later affiliated to Lodge Fingal, Dingwall. Tom served as Secretary of Lodge Fingal and also as Provincial Grand Secretary of the PGL of Ross and Cromarty. In recognition of his services he was appointed as Honorary Assistant Grand Secretary. He was also involved with a number of other Masonic Orders. His funeral service was held within Urray Free Church, Muir of Ord on Friday 24th July with a large number of Masonic Brethren present. A card has been sent to Mrs Stewart passing on the deepest sympathies of the Provincial Grand Master and brethren of the Province.

Past Master Victor Shepherd, Robertson's Lodge, Cromarty was recently admitted to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness with a kidney infection and while in hospital he sustained a heart attack. He is somewhat confused and at present remains in hospital.

Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, Past Master Rory MacKenzie, Lodge Fingal is also currently in Raigmore Hospital where he recently underwent major surgery. He was in Intensive Care but is currently in High Dependency.

Past Provincial Grand Master Morris Downie has also undergone surgery at Raigmore Hospital but is now recovering at home.

Brother Fraser MacKay, Lodge St Duthus, Tain is also in Raigmore Hospital at present.

Past Master Cochrane Donald, Lodge Seaforth is still not very well but he is at home making slow progress.

Past Master Ian MacLaren, Lodge Rosehaugh, Avoch is still awaiting information as to his long awaited surgery but always in good spirits.

Past Master Sandy Rose, also of Lodge Rosehaugh is recovering from his stroke and progressing slowly. Sandy recently moved to sheltered accommodation in Avoch.

Past Master Raymond Morrison, Lodge Ness, Invergordon is recovering from his recent operation and is allowed to drive again. He is currently having chemotherapy treatment.

I'm sure they can all be assured of our best wishes in their recovery.

If you require my services or know of any brother who does please do not hesitate to get in contact with me.

David MacMaster,

Provincial Grand Almoner

Tel: 01997 421306 email: david@strathpeffer.net

PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE WEBSITE

For up to the Minute information and back copies of the Provincial Patter – access the Provincial Website on - <http://www.pgrossandcromarty.org.uk/>

PROVINCIAL QUARTERLY COMMUNICATION

The Quarterly Communication will be held at 20.00 hours on Wednesday 26th August in Lodge Averon, Alness

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FROM THE LODGES

Lodge St Duthus No 82



Lodge St Duthus had a quiet time over the summer but starting to make preparations for the upcoming season. The changes to our Bylaws have been approved by Grand Lodge with the main change is that we have reduced our Regular meetings to the first Monday between October and April still commencing at 7.45 pm.

The first meeting on the 5th October will be the AGM and Election of Office Bearers.

The meeting on the 2nd November will be the Installation meeting. This will commence for Lodge business at 7pm with the installation commencing at 7.30pm.

The following meetings will be published at a later date.

Please note that as I have now become Interim Secretary my contact details are

Regards
Hugh Patience
Interim Secretary
Lodge St Duthus No82
17 Springfield Gardens
Tain
IV19 1RA
Tel 01862 893425
Mob 07979467300
hughpatience@btinternet.com

FORTROSE LODGE No. 108

In the last edition of the Patter I was pleased to report that we had a steady flow of candidates, well it's great to say that at our last meeting on 3rd July Kevin Macdonald was initiated and at our next meeting on 7th August we will be initiating 2 blood brothers John & Craig Macleod. These last 2 candidates are 22 and 19 years old respectively and it would be fantastic if this was a continuation of getting a stream of young blood into the lodge. At the same meeting in August we are expecting to host visiting brethren from Lodge Thistle No. 270 and Lodge Thortree No. 1038 both belonging to the province of Midlothian.

On 5th June we hosted a group of Brethren from Lodge Aeron in Wales when George M Macleod PM took the chair and gave a talk on famous cowboy & indian freemasons. Our Welsh brethren enjoyed their visit which lasted a few days, in fact a couple of them are hoping to visit again before the end of the year.

The Chernobyl children arrived on Wednesday 22 July for their annual 3 day visit to Lewis, we don't need to change the programme for their visit very much from year to year as it's always new kids every year and they seem to really enjoy the activities laid on for them. Every year we continue to be impressed with the generosity of the local businesses and organisations who contribute in kind and time to make the visit enjoyable and comfortable for these children.

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Some of the lifeboat crew with a few of the children after an extremely bracing trip on their vessel



Displaying the Ukraine and Scottish flags after being taught basic highland dancing steps

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Robertson's Lodge No 134

From the Master of Robertson's Lodge - Bro Peter Foster

Here we are nearing the end of our summer break and looking forward to resuming our meetings and catching up with our dear friends and brothers.

Most of us have been lucky enough to actually have a break, unlike our Almoner/Secretary Jim Tait. He has carried on with his usual duties of care and information in an exemplary fashion during all of this time. Some of our Brethren have been ill or in hospital. To them we send our heartfelt wishes for a speedy recovery. Sadly, however, a few have passed through the Veil. We remember them fondly and feel privileged to have enjoyed their companionship.

Hopefully the weather will improve enough to allow more permanent repairs to the Lodge roof to be undertaken.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Lodge for the great honour bestowed on me of being the Master. To all visiting Brethren I send our deepest gratitude for your presence at our meetings. Please continue to come as we really do appreciate your support and loyalty.

I look forward to seeing everyone again. Thank you.

Peter Foster - Master

Also Brethren our first Meeting of the new session will be on Wednesday, 16 September, 2015 at 7.45 p.m. This will be a business meeting to discuss future meetings. Visitors will still be welcome and due notice will be sent out on a billet.

Regards to all

James A Tait, PM

Secretary

Lodge Fingal No 318



Special meeting: Saturday 9th May. The business of the evening was a Mock M.M. degree worked by a Deputation from Lodge St. Peter's No. 284, Thurso. The Lodge Tyled at 6.00pm. The Lodge was well attended as this being the close season, there was 12 Brethren and 10 visiting Brethren present. The deputation from St. Peter's consisting of 13 Brethren entered the Lodge after the opening was completed. The Master, Bro Paul Cowan was presented to the East and our Master Bro Angus Beaton handed him the Maul and thanked him for coming down to Fingal with his large deputation. After the formalities, Bro Cowan asked the office bearers of Fingal to vacate their Chairs for the Brethren of St. Peter's.

The Lodge was then passed to the FC°. The pressurised candidate, Bro D. Nicholson from Lodge John O` Groat No. 1333 was then presented in front of the Chair and retired from the Lodge for further preparation. The Lodge was then raised to the MM°. Bro Nicholson re-entered the Lodge, knelt in the west for the benefit of prayer, then on with the degree work, which was to a very high standard and it was pleasing to note that not a ritual book was to be seen. The RWM Bro Cowan came down onto the floor of the Lodge and thanked Bro Nicholson for taking

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his third regular step in Freemasonry again. RWM asked the Brethren to show their appreciation. The Lodge was then reduced by way of the FC^o to the EA^o. Bro Cowan asked his office bearers to vacate their Chairs and after the usual formalities, handed back the Maul. Bro Beaton asked the deacons to uplift the collection which is going to the Malawi Appeal; this amounted to £150 and was raised to a figure of £200. The Lodge was then closed in due and ancient form at 8.00pm.

Recessed for the harmony in the Logie Lounge, followed by a wee jig, music by a Disco supplied by St. Peter's, D.J.'s James Moodie and Willie Durrand. Come 11.30pm Bro. Cowan was getting his troops organised to get home to Thurso, transport supplied by Bro George Dunnett [Master Undertaker] whose taco-graph was running out of time, hence the early retreat of the evening.

Fingal return to work on Tuesday 13th October: Where we will be treated to a Paper by Honorary Member Bro Ramsay McGhee. As this is our first meeting there will be some minutes to discuss first.

One of our favourite Past Masters Bro Rory MacKenzie is still recovering in Raigmore Hospital after going through surgery; we wish him all the best and a quick recovery, as the Installation season will soon be upon us. Rory is a well-respected and courteous Installing Master.

On a sadder note, as was mentioned in the last Patter. There was an article on Bro Tom Stewart, on receiving his 60 year certificate from Grand Lodge. Sadly Tom has passed away. His funeral took place last Friday in the Free Church, Muir-of-Ord and was well attended. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Jean and their four siblings.

Events Logie Lounge:

Annual Barbecue held in the Logie Lounge.

With the Logie Lounge doors opening for business at 6 pm on Saturday, 27th June 2015 this gave patrons of Brethren, friends, wives, family and partners time to catch up on the craic while the cooks for the evening Brothers Hanson, Henderson and Mackenzie got fired up with the two burners (Beaton & Henderson) under the Gazebo at the back door of the kitchen area best wondering how to keep the hungry hordes adequately fed from 7 to 9 pm.

The Gazebo was erected by Messrs. Beaton, Murray & Henderson who along with John Hanson were the sub-committee members available – we wish our other member Colin MacPhee a good recovery from recent surgery in Edinburgh and a return to participation in our future ventures.

Hordes it pleasantly turned out to be with nigh on 50 souls needing fortified with food and red wine, the latter being provided by Bro. Henderson.

On the food front we had the donated nourishing side dishes of rice based salad (Maureen), greens (Anne and June), potato salad (Irene), coleslaw varieties (Mary) and the strawberries and cream (Andy and Gunn).

The main ingredients of venison burgers, beef burgers, sausages and minute steaks came from the west end butchers Cockburn & Son with butchers Paul and Fraser kindly donating the 40 venison and 20 beef burgers to us – this on top of the haggis donated for our Burns night on 6th February!

To watch Gunn top and tail the strawberries in preparation to serving them with the cream reminded Bro Henderson of the many hours spent in a Caithness 10 acre field of neeps around November time in the early 70s for the expectant ewes at Barrock – it was an art form to see PM Gunn in action with the knife and a bit neater than using a 'doker'!

Following the consumption of the food the company was then thoroughly and enjoyably entertained to a night of dancing to music from Carl (Tug) Wilson from 9 pm and later accompanied by Tommy and Mike Stirling – all the musicians from Ness 888 lodge territory and what a night it turned out to be.

All too soon the witching hour of midnight dawned but not before stalwart of Fingal festivities Donnie Mackay of Maryburgh of the Mackenzie Place duet "Donnie and Jessie" was suitably presented with a framed copy of his Diamond 60 year certificate service to Freemasonry which began in Lodge St Andrew No. 601, Ardersier and

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continued to Lodge Seaforth No. 854, Fortrose – latterly Donnie, who suitably replied to his presentation, has been a frequent and faithful attendee of the charity side of the Craft via the Heilan’ Shed No. 6 of Squaremen.

Two raffles were conducted during the evening one for the bottle of whisky on the ‘numbered board’ which realised £ 60 and the other for the now notorious regular raffle of numerous and varied prizes which realised well in excess of £ 200 with very grateful thanks to all those who kindly donated the prizes to make it possible. Charity certainly begins at home in the Logie Lounge!

The licensed side of things were again adequately and ably handled by Henry and Maureen Cameron.

Bro Henderson wouldn’t like to say when he finally got finished with his chauffeur services for the evening; let’s say it was a pleasant task to get everyone home safely – and thanks to Anne Reid who had earlier done a similar service.

Sunday morning saw the Logie Lounge cleaned up by overnight campers the RWM Angus and his good lady June.

Andrew M. Henderson. PM
Lodge Almoner.
That’s all Folks, watch this Space.

D. Gunn PM
Secretary.

Lodge Allan Wilson No 851

On Tuesday 9th June there was a good attendance of members and visitors to witness Bro Sinclair Bruce, our beloved “Patter” columnist, being installed into the Chair of the Lodge. Brother Bruce was a Reponing Member of the Lodge and has served as Treasurer since the Lodge was reponed. It was very fitting therefore that the Brethren saw fit to reward his outstanding service to the Lodge by inviting him to take the Chair. At the conclusion of the meeting the Brethren enjoyed an excellent meal prepared by Ann Law and her staff at the Eilean Dubh Restaurant.

The July meeting, as well as being the Provincial Visit, gave the Brethren an opportunity to hear and appreciate a first class paper by Bro Rev Iain Ramsden, PM entitled – “Faith, the foundation of Freemasonry”.

The August meeting on Tuesday 11th will be another paper presented by one of our own members, Bro Mike Turner, entitled – “*Antient landmarks, established usages and customs -what does that mean to you?*” A warm welcome is extended to all Brethren to come along and enjoy Mike’s lecture. Many Brethren will remember that he spoke at the July meeting in 2013 and gave an excellent presentation on “Watchmate” – a device which his company designed and built to save lives at sea.

It would be appreciated if visiting Brethren who intend to join us for lunch could let me know in order that I can make necessary arrangements with the caterer.

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Lodge Seaforth No 854

During the recess the Lodge has done a bit of travelling.

On 2nd May a Deputation headed by the Master, Brother Alasdair Taylor, headed south to work a FC Degree in PM McGhee's Mother Lodge – St Barchan No 156. It was a long but nevertheless great day and the hospitality of the Kilbarchan Brethren was greatly appreciated.

The following month – 6th June it was northwards to Caithness where a Deputation headed by the IPM, Brother Gwyn Phillips, worked a FC Degree in Lodge John O' Groat No 1333. Again, a great day out and like the St Barchan Brethren, the Caithness Brethren were wholesome with their hospitality.

The first meeting of the new season will be on Monday 21st September at the new time of 19.30 hours when we will be working the MMM Degree..

As we prepare to go to print, it is with regret that I have to report that I was informed by Bro Ackie Green that Brother James Calder passed to the Grand Lodge above this morning (Wednesday). Brother Calder was initiated into Lodge Seaforth on the 21st January 1985 and was a regular attender until his health deteriorated a few years ago. Brother Calder was pre-deceased by his wife Audrey only some 8 months ago.

Lodge Averon 866

On Saturday 2nd May we headed to Lodge Hozier Douglas Water 912 and conferred the MM degree on Martin Scorgie, son of the Master of the Lodge. This was a very good meeting and we were treated to as much food (and drink) as we could hold. We, like many other Lodges are in recess at the moment. We have kept ourselves busy learning some different parts of ceremonies and a wee social evening on the last Saturday of each month. We are waiting to find out when Lodge Stormont 1524 are coming up to do a degree at Averon.

Henry W. MacInnes RWM

Lodge Ness No 888

As normal the last three months have been relatively quiet but we did have our midsummer barbeque on the 22nd June. This was reasonably well attended and although the sun was not blazing down, it was a mild day with no wind or rain. An excellent day developed with Tug Wilson and Tommy Stirling providing music, games and even a horse race. All who attended made it clear that they enjoyed the day and would be back again.

We now look forward to the re-opening of the Masonic season and wish all a very successful time. We open on Tuesday the 13th. October with a business meeting and hopefully follow that on the 27th with a Mark Degree.

Once I am back on the circuit, I look forward to meeting you again.

Raymond Morrison, PM

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LODGE KYLE No 1117

Some excellent advice from PM Miller – especially for those who are new to technology -

As it's the summer and not much happening in the Lodge I thought we could take look at how the various Brethren communicate electronically with each other with a view to stabilising the systems in place before the new "season".

The following describes how to implement an email communications system if you chose to do so - it is not the only method of doing so and by no means obligatory.

THE BASICS OF EMAIL

The key to electronic communication; typically email, is that EVERYONE in the Lodge actually HAS email and knows how to use it. All the brethren should be able to at least SEND and RECEIVE emails and - most importantly ... they CHECK their email on a regular basis – once a day is normal.

It is also courteous to REPLY within 24 hours as the sender will be waiting for your reply; after all the essence of email, unlike Royal Mail or Post Office mail, is that it's virtually instant.

To keep to basic Masonic Protocol and the expectations of other Lodges you would typically designate THE LODGE SECRETARY as the email coordinator. Any brother with the requisite expertise may initiate a Lodge email system though, but for official business it's now expected that the Secretary would consider conducting his normal Masonic business via email rather than sending out letters, stamps and envelopes. If this is too much of a burden, then the brother who has set up the system may, under the secretary's instruction, act as his proxy.

The first job in setting up email is to inform the Brethren that an email list is to be set up. Do this in the Lodge and pass round a form with every Brother's name on a CLIPBOARD asking the Brethren to take their time and PRINT NEATLY their email address next to their name or write NONE in capital letters should they not have email.

The best way is to use your email LIST, MAILING LIST or GROUP function in your email programme. (Outlook, Windows Mail, Mac Mail or GMAIL etc) Simply gather everyone's email address. Add it to a GROUP or LIST and then use THE GROUP as if it was a single Brother's email address. In essence you are sending the email to THE GROUP. This is important you build a mail list or GROUP as some ISPs (the people who actually send your e-mail) may forbid the sending of large numbers of email any other way.

Once the list or group is set up - perform a test "Send" asking everyone to REPLY as soon as they get the email confirming they got it. You will then know for sure that everyone is ABLE to receive email from the Secretary or his designated proxy.

Later on you can decide if you wish the brethren to use the REPLY or REPLY TO ALL function in their email to respond to individual newsletters or emails. "Reply to all" is good if you want to have a discussion and get various opinions. Whereas if you put "No Reply Required" at the end of the email before your signature, this is also good if you are just sending out an agenda and don't want to waste time by acknowledging replies.

It's important for EVERY Brother in the Lodge to ADD the Lodge email address (from whence email are sent out by the secretary), to their FRIENDS LIST or WHITELIST or simply add the Lodge email address to their ADDRESS BOOK. This helps prevent the emails going straight into the SPAM folder. This is especially true for Brethren who use AOL.

The building of an email list should help discover who has and has not got email. Its likely most Brethren will have email but if they don't there are THREE ways of plugging the gap(s).

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At our Lodge we use text. You can send ONLINE texts which saves typing out the email again – this is usually a service on the PHONE PROVIDER's website – so if you are with EE go to the EE website and find the online text. Then it's a simple matter of COPY the email text and PASTE it into the provided box and sent to the relevant recipient(s).

Relay the email by printing it out and taking it physically round to the house of the Brother who does not have email. This is especially useful if the email contains a large document or images. You also usually get tea and a cake.

Failing that ... it's a phone call from the Secretary. (No tea nor cake)

Once you are sure everyone is able to receive your email you are good to go with occasional TESTING once every six months to make sure everyone is still "getting the message".

Ronnie Miller, PM Lodge Kyle No. 1117

Lodge Rosehaugh 1216

I read recently on social network that Brethren were keen to encourage Lodges to meet throughout the year but having such a difficult last session I think everyone at Lodge Rosehaugh were happy to see the summer recess this year although we still have administration duties to attend to (Annual accounts and bye-laws) and also the meeting of Lodges 1212-1219 in Ayr which Allan has reported on. However we have now received an email from Bro Alistair Macdonald from Peterborough who all with 4 other Brethren plans to attend our Installation on 4th December. So that is a wee bit of a boost. They are also to attend a meeting on Thursday 3rd December if there is anything on in the vicinity.



Bro Sandy Rose, PM has now moved into the village having being allocated a sheltered house. This is fairly close to Bro Les Warne and Sue who have been very attentive to him in particular during his current illness. Sandy is hopeful of attending the Lodge when restart in October.

Brother Ian MacLaren is also making progress health wise and is back driving although he may have to go into Raigmore for surgery in the not too distant future.

PM's Ian MacLaren and Sandy Rose in happier times' health wise – along with one of the Nigerian Brethren

Finally you may have read in the local press of the passing to the Grand Lodge above of Bro Alexander (Ecky) Patience on the 18th July 2015. Ecky was well known over the Highlands as a prolific Bowler and had represented the Northern Counties back in the 80's. He also qualified and played in the Scottish Championships at Ayr. His daughter Alison pre-deceased Ecky a couple of months ago so we pass on our sympathies to the family at this difficult time.

Keith Patience PM
Secretary

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Lodge Rosehaugh No 1216

The annual meeting of lodges 1212-1219 was this year held in Crosshill, Ayrshire at Lodge Wallace St Hugh 1212. A small delegation from Lodge Rosehaugh – Brothers Brian Carmichael, Graeme Brindle and myself set off from Avoch for the drive to Ayrshire.

After a breakfast at Ballinluig we made good time and arrived at our farmhouse bed & breakfast at 2 pm. The lodge was Tiling for 5 pm so we headed over for about 3 pm. There were already several brethren in attendance. Pre-meeting hospitality was excellent and soon old and new friends were being made and re-acquainted. The degree was an Entered Apprentice and I was delighted to be taken in as part of the visiting delegation of Chartered Lodges. The Master – Brother Wm Fisher PM – and his degree team performed an outstanding 1st degree on the candidate with one or two parts new to me even.

The hospitality for the harmony was outstanding and the drink flowed through the evening as the usual suspects began their party pieces. All too soon the taxi appeared to take us back to our digs where I fell asleep dreaming of a farmhouse fry-up! The journey home the following day was smooth and I can only thank Brian and Graeme for sharing the driving duties. 2016 has been pencilled in for Lodge Craigielea 1218 in Paisley, with Lodge Rosehaugh hoping to host in 2017. I would encourage as many brethren as possible to attend as these meetings are first class and strengthen our fraternal bonds across the Provinces.

Allan Carmichael

PM, Lodge Rosehaugh 1216.

Lodge Rosehaugh recently sponsored Bro Kevin Kelman and this is his account of the fund raising mission.

Mam and dad have both had cancer in the last seven years with dad having it and surviving it twice.

Whilst receiving his chemo in the Macmillan suite in Raigmore, we realised that there was nothing in the suite for the patients, or visitors, so dad decided that when he felt better we as a family would do a fundraiser to provide a television for them.

After a lot of red tape, we finally got the go ahead to donate the television and the fundraiser was born.

We planned it for the 25 April, printing out flyers, organising sponsor forms, asking local companies and small businesses for donations.

The response was amazing,

On the day, myself, my son and my nephew all got our legs waxed, we held a coffee morning and a raffle, and 33 people did a 10k walk in the afternoon.

The coffee morning and raffle raised £1500, and on the morning of the event, my mother got a phone call from a business man who wants to remain anonymous, donating the television complete with fitment and servicing, warranty etc.

Final update: it took a while to get everything in and added up, and a total of £7042 was raised, brought in by coffee morning, raffle and 10k walk, plus numerous generous donations.

Total amount divided to Macmillan Suite: Macmillan Nurses and Cancer research

Once again thank you for your kindness

On behalf of Kevin Kelman and family.

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Lodge St Martin 1217



The Brethren of Lodge St Martin once again had a stall at the annual Rotary Club Pier Day in Ullapool. The monies raised at the stall go to local Charities.



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Lodge Loch Ewe No 1551

It is welcoming to report, in this 84th issue of the 'Patter', the most enjoyable evening spent earlier this month on Tuesday 14th July.

The occasion was that of the 90th birthday meal held for our Substitute Master Bro. Dennis Aldrich in the Sheiling, Gairloch.

To join Dennis on this milestone in his life were Office Bearers and brethren of the Lodge along with wives, partners and friends.

Such is the esteem Dennis has been held in over the 25 years he and his wife Pauline have spent in Wester Ross since Dennis moved here in retirement in 1990 that, on the minibus carrying the brethren from Easter Ross, there were no less than 3 prominent Provincial Grand Lodge Office Bearers viz. Bro. William Ross RWPGM, Bro. Ramsay McGhee IPPGM who is also RWDGM of The Grand Lodge of Scotland and PPGM Morris Downie.

A company of 24 sat down in the restaurant to a 3 course meal the quality of which was equally matched by the glorious weather which streamed through the restaurant windows enhancing the fantastic scenic views which abound in this area.

At the conclusion of the meal the RWM of the lodge said a few words (meticulously timed by the RWDGM!), then presented a suitably engraved Quaich to Dennis to commemorate the occasion and to which Dennis suitably and eloquently replied.



The grateful thanks of the lodge are due to Secretary Bro Barrie Whitwell for pulling the operation together with the forward planning, for example, of his spreadsheet indicating choices from the menu prior to our arrival thus enabling the staff to quickly and efficiently see to our various needs. Thanks are also due to IG Bro Richard MacDonald for providing the cake for the Birthday Boy and also for driving those who travelled from the east – his driving skills were greatly appreciated. All in all, a great night to be fondly remembered by all.

Still in the lodge catchment area over the weekend of Friday 24th/ Saturday 25th July in Aultbea itself the Village Annual Raft Race and Fun Day were held. The raft race route is from the Aultbea Pier to the Aultbea Hotel and the fun day takes place in a local field in the village. Reports indicate that the Barbecue was very, very busy indeed and was undertaken by local lodge representative (and Treasurer) Michael Longley and further reports indicate that Michael is a shadow of his former self due a) to the demands on him being very busy cooking / dishing out the burgers, drumsticks, hot dogs and steaks etc. that b) he wasn't able to sample his own work but is reckoned to have lost a few pounds in the process! Never mind Michael, it's all in a day's work and you cannot do enough for a good cause!

Looking ahead to the season re-commencing in September the first meeting on Thursday 10th will be on business and going through the parts for the 3rd Degree to be held a fortnight later. The 3rd Degree itself will be for FC Michael Macleod and the lodge tyles at 8 pm on Thursday 24th. We already know of brethren intending to visit us from 3 lodges, 2 of which are from outside the Province and we look forward to welcoming 2 of these brethren for the first time to our shores.

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For information: It is intended to hold MMM degrees in October, November and January on the 4th Thursdays of these months; any changes to that programme will be advised accordingly.

Talking of October, this appears to be the odds on favourite month to hold the Quiz Night. There is undoubtedly a demand for a follow up to the successful one held at end of February; it will again be held in the Aultbea Hotel and the date will be communicated around the area via local bush telegraph, posters and other media once it is known.

During the close season lodge visits have been continuing and our travels have taken us to Lodge St. Andrew No. 601 in Ardersier, Lodge Pitgaveny No. 681 in Lossiemouth and Lodge St Aethan's No. 1227 in Burghead.

With the anticipated visits of brethren in October we look forward to the remainder of the next session and more brethren coming west to sample our work and hospitality.

Andrew Henderson, RWM



The Sinclair Bruce Diary

I concluded my contribution to the 83rd edition on the World Snooker Championship and now I will keep you up to date on the final stages Judd Trump lost in the semi-final to Stuart Bingham - consequently Stuart will meet Shaun Murphy in the final and that will be a game well worth watching.

And so we arrive at the final and as expected true to form it was Shaun Murphy V Stuart Bingham definitely the best game of the session and very closely fought from the fifteenth onwards it went as follows 15-15 16-15 17-15 and finally Bingham won the honours at 18-15.

The football this week was of great interest to all interested in the Highlands when Caley Thistle played at Hamden in the Scottish Cup against Falkirk - a great game. At half time it was one each and it livened up in the second half when Caley Thistle went on to win - final score Caley 2 Falkirk 1.

The England game FA cup was also great to view with the final score being Arsenal 4 Aston Villa 0. This score takes nothing away from the entertainment of the game as Aston Villa put up a great fight but just could not score on the day.

It's now Tuesday the 9th of June and we have just held our first meeting of Lodge Allan Wilson No 851. This was the Installation meeting which was presided over by the Deputy Grand Master of Scotland, Bro Ramsay McGhee who installed the Master and PM James Tait who installed the Office-bearers. At this juncture I feel I should inform you that it was I, Sinclair Bruce, who was installed into the Chair of the Lodge. In my closing comments

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I stated that the complete meeting was perfection personified and I can say with confidence that that was the feeling of all present.

We have now reached the final of the Aegon Tennis Championship and it is between Andy Murray and Kevin Anderson. Anderson, although a Scot by name, he actually was born and brought up in South Africa. However the game was great to watch and although Murray won by two sets to nil, that did not reflect on the quality of the match.

The rugby on the telly today was the two teams competing to go through to the semi-final of the Ladbrokes' challenge cup, namely Warrington Athletic vs Leigh Centurions. It was an excellent game to watch with both teams scoring in equal numbers but of course there has to be a winner. The result was Warrington 34 Leigh Centurions 24.

Well now here we are almost half through July and so far no great signs of summer, however we just have to keep hoping that the sun will give us a welcome visit and hopefully for at least a week that's wishful thinking not really worth a bet.

Today the 14th of July and we held our second meeting of Lodge Allan Wilson. After opening and attending to all the business I invited Bro Rev Iain Ramsden, PM to the chair. Iain delivered an excellent paper on Faith relative to the Craft which at the conclusion got the applause of all present.

And now a report on the final day of the 144th golf open championship from the real home of golf - St Andrews. A great game with three players tying for the title and the cherished cup. The three names were Zack Johnson, M Lewisham and Louis Oosthuizen. The play went on in spite of heavy rain and gusts of wind and as always one winner who was Johnson with an overall score of 273 the other two equal second.

It's now near the time to forward my contribution for this edition to the editor so if no further news or comments come to hand I will do that within the next few days.

Sinclair G Bruce

Sinclair Bruce

BITS AND PIECES

GRENADA

The annual visit to Grenada was undertaken by Bro Morris M Downie and Bro David J. Pringle with the purpose of attending the Installation meeting of Lodge Saint Andrew No. 1794 on Saturday 9th May.

The Brethren of the Lodge, Brothers Zead Fakhre, Daniel Nicholas, Nigel Fleming and Lodge Secretary Danny Roberts all descended on the Maurice Bishop International Airport to welcome the Scots to the island once again. An addition to the welcoming party was newly born son of Daniel and Hannah Nicholas "Issa".

The meeting was held in the Saint Andrew's Room of the Radisson Hotel, Grand Anse Beach Resort.

The Installation was carried out by the outgoing Master Bro. Michael Kirkton, who was assisted by a wonderful team of fellow brothers of the lodge and District.

The meeting was well attended and the Lodge was very well supported by the District Grand Lodge of Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada under the leadership of the District Grand Master Bro. Adrian C. Franklin.

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After the Installation meeting a most enjoyable dinner was served up by the staff of the Radisson hotel. The meal was of a very high standard. A raffle, which this particular Lodge don't usually do was undertaken and well supported by all present for Lodge funds. The prizes were of a Scottish flavour, viz:- Smoked salmon, Haggis and Malt whiskey.

The newly installed Right Worshipful Master, Bro Trevor Renwick commenced the evenings toast list under the direction of the Lodge Director of Ceremonies Bro. Zead Fakhre, all of which were reasonably short, interesting and to the point.

While attending this meeting an invitation was extended to the visiting Ross and Cromarty Provincial Grand Lodge members to attend the Installation of Bro Major (Ret'd) Charles Rodriquez as Worshipful Master of Conception Lodge No. 8346 EC on Friday 15th May.

This Installation was carried out by Worshipful Brother Colin Dowe to a very high standard being ably assisted by Lodge members and the District Grand Master of the District Grand Lodge for Barbados & The Eastern Caribbean Right Worshipful Brother Brian Douglas Parsons, The Baron of Ormiston.

The meal afterwards was of a very high standard, enjoyed by all present. The toasts after were a bit more plentiful than the Scottish Lodge but were reasonably short, interesting and well received.

A good attendance from all lodges on the island both Scottish and English attended both Installation meetings which was enjoyed by all who attended.

The author was most impressed by the number of initiates attending the Installations and Bro. Rocky Alexander an initiate of Lodge Conception's delivery of the working tools of the 1st Degree to the newly installed Worshipful Master Charles Rodriquez.

All in all an excellent and interesting visitation to the Spice Isle.



The photo is of Bro. Morris M. Downie and Worshipful Bro. Philip David, Past Master of Lodge Conception, cooling down after the meeting.

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“Two well-known Masons from Trinidad liming in Grenada. District Grand Master and Immediate Past District Grand Master, Adrian C. Franklin and Stanley I Marcus, who once again extended an invitation to the Provincial Grand Master of Ross and Cromarty, his Office Bearers and Brethren of the Province to visit Trinidad.”



Lodge St Martin No. 1217 donated a full football strip to a deserving team in West Africa. It just so happened that the recipients – Bundas FC, in Kololi, The Gambia, West Africa, were drawn to play in a local cup competition in February.

The strip was presented to them just prior to the kick-off.

All the players and officials were really chuffed with the new gear and they played very well during the first half against formidable opponents. However just before half time one of the Bundas (St Martin 1217) players was sent off for a foul, in the penalty box. With a bit of good luck however, the opposition failed to convert from the spot kick.

In the second half the team played like real heroes and late on were awarded a penalty which was converted by the player pictured. I have never seen such jubilation and excitement with all the spectators jumping around on the sand topped pitch for joy. The team managed to hold on for a well-earned win which got them through to the next round of the cup.

An excellent start for the Lodge St Martin 1217 strip and am quite sure the new strip inspired the youngsters to try harder and show up well, which they did in great style.

Well done to the members of Lodge St Martin in this innovative donation, helping youngsters of a less privileged background.

MMD.

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The photo shows Freemasonry to be flourishing when father and son enjoy the brotherhood together. Bro. Rishi Sooknarine with his 18 year old son James enjoying some leisure time on the beach at Grand Anse, St Georges, Grenada the morning after the Installation meeting of Lodge Saint Andrew No. 1794. This was his first visit to Grenada with dad after his initiation in March 2015 in Lodge Felicity No. 1681, Port of Spain, Trinidad.

An invitation was extended by Bro. Dr. Keegan Baggan, to his installation as Master in Lodge Felicity, Port of Spain, Trinidad, on Wednesday 23rd March 2016.

The District Grand Master of the District Grand Lodge of Trinidad & Tobago and Grenada Bro. Adrian C. Franklin, also asked to be remembered to the brethren within the Province of Ross and Cromarty and once again invited us to Trinidad.

The Provincial Secretary has now furnished me with brethren interested in accepting the invitation and I will endeavour to progress the matter. However, if anyone is interested in going they should communicate with the under-signed ASAP and in any case before the end of this month, when final travel arrangements will be made.

Morris M Downie

Proxy District Grand Master,
Trinidad & Tobago and Grenada

E mail:- morris@morrishdownie.wanadoo.co.uk

Highland Hospice

The Hospice “Braingame” will be taking place in Ironworks on Friday 13th November. It would be great to see a team in from the Province or from one or two of the Lodges – we have quite a few quiz experts in the Province – why not pull a team together and have a go?

Ed

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Malawi: *Two of the vegetable plots at Mountain View School in Malawi that are flourishing again thanks to the new solar powered punmp.*



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Royal Arch

KENYA 2015

Wednesday 3rd June.

An overnight Emirates flight from Glasgow with a brief stopover in Dubai and I arrive at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi. On this visit I am accompanied by my wife Joan and ME Companion Hugh Edmond, Past Grand Superintendent of Stirling and Clackmannan who has become a welcome and regular supporter on overseas visits. Later tonight I am to be joined by ME Companion Bomi Metha, Past Grand Superintendent of India and Ceylon.

On arrival we were met by ME Companion Mukesh Shah, Grand Superintendent Designate and other senior representatives of the District of East Africa and assisted through Immigration and Customs. Having inadvertently omitted to establish the correct “visa” procedures regarding entry to East Africa I was relieved to find that in exchange for fifty US dollars the appropriate visas were granted at the airport.

Traffic conditions in Nairobi can best be described as horrendous and the seventeen kilometre journey to the Heron Portico Hotel took in excess of two and a half hours, leaving very little time for the “freshen up” and shower we looked forward to before being collected by ME Companion Bhatt the outgoing Grand Superintendent who drove us to the Taste of India restaurant. While there we spent a most enjoyable evening in the company of several senior Companions and their Ladies. On our return to the hotel I was delighted to see that ME Companion Metha had arrived. No trouble in sleeping tonight.

Thursday, 4th June.

Arrangements having been made for a driver and transport to convey us to an Elephant Orphanage and Giraffe Park we spent an interesting and educational few hours learning about the very worthwhile work being carried out by both organisations responsible for the welfare of these animals who had been orphaned, mostly due to criminal poaching activities still being perpetrated by those willing to take the risk of detection.



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During the course of the evening we spent several hours at the Goan Gymkana where we were most handsomely entertained by several Companions and their Ladies. A fascinating aspect of this evening was to be able to observe M.E. Companion Davinder Tharhey and his good lady prepare a truly wonderful "local meal". Their culinary skills are to be applauded.

Friday, 5th June,

Morning was spent at the Masonic Lodge where we spent several hours in preparation for tonight's Ceremony. At the appointed hour we again assembled at the Lodge premises where, in the presence of a large number of Companions from both the Scottish and English Constitutions, and ably assisted by ME Companion Edmond, I had the pleasure of installing ME Companion Mukesh Shah and his commissioned Office Bearers into their respective offices.

A well-attended Banquet, thoroughly enjoyed by all present, was a fitting conclusion to another memorable occasion.

Saturday, 6th June.

While my wife Joan is being handsomely entertained by several of the local Ladies ME Companion Edmond and I accept an invitation to attend the Ninth Annual Communication of the District Grand Lodge of East Africa SC. where we were warmly welcome by the District Grand Master Brother Craig. A most interesting meeting followed and it is encouraging to see this relatively young District progressing so satisfactorily under the banner of the Scottish Constitution. The customary harmony which followed was a fitting "finale" to our Masonic activities during this visit.

Sunday, 7th June.

ME Companion Shah and his wife Ana very kindly invited us to be his guests for a couple of nights on Safari and about midday we assembled at a local airport to await a short flight to the Masai Mara Game Reserve. After a forty five minute flight in a twelve seater aircraft we landed in the midst of this vast expanse of nature. A short drive later we were settled into the Governors' Camp where luxurious tents provided very comfortable accommodation.

We were extremely anxious to experience our first Game Drive and soon we were all seated in a long wheel base Land Rover and our experienced driver, Joash, very quickly found a lioness and five cubs relaxing on a fallen tree trunk apparently oblivious to our presence. Several other animals were sighted prior to darkness falling and then it was a return to the Camp followed by dinner.

Monday, 8th June.

Early morning at this location is apparently an excellent time to see more game and a six thirty departure certainly lived up to its promise as we were to encounter several animals ranging from a herd of elephants to one of buffalos. Further "drives" gave us all a remarkable opportunity to see these wild animals in their natural habitat and we are extremely grateful to ME Companion Shah for his generous hospitality. A truly wonderful experience.

Tuesday, 9th June.

After the short return flight to Nairobi we returned to our hotel for a few hours relaxation prior to being collected once again and taken to the Anghiti Restuarant where we met up with several Companions and their Ladies who entertained us to a very enjoyable meal.

Wednesday, 10th June.

Scheduled to return home today we bid farewell to our hosts who had assembled at our hotel prior to our departure. How can we express our appreciation for the outstanding kindness and generous hospitality shown to us during

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the last few days? Words are inadequate and I only hope that ME Companions Shah will soon head a Deputation to The Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland and give me an opportunity to reciprocate in some small measure.

Thursday, 11th June.

Early morning we arrive on schedule in Dubai en route to Glasgow and finally home.

Ian Fraser.

St Clement RAC No 244 –

The first meeting will be the Installation meeting on Friday 30th October.

Cromarty Firth RAC 310

It's been a reasonably quite close season, although it's been a difficult period, trying to find a replacement for our long serving scribe, (who kept the chapter in order) and now our present first Principal, is to emigrate to the Western Isles. This leaves us with a bit of a headache before our installation which takes place on Wednesday the 7th October. No doubt it will be sorted out by then.

We wish all chapters a successful season ahead.

Raymond

PROVINCIAL GRAND ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER of R&C

I hope these are the correct dates for our programme for the next season:

CHAPTER	Installation Date	Visitation Date
Tain & Ross 63	13 th October 2015	9 th February 2016 (Second Tuesday)
St Clement 244	30 th October 2015	29 th April 2016 (Last Friday)
Cromarty Firth 310	7 th October 2015	4 th March 2016 (First Friday)
Hebrides 364	13 th October 2015	12 th May 2016 (Second Tuesday)

AGM in Dingwall on Saturday 28th May 2016

Donald MacLeod
PG Superintendent

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SONGS of PRAISE

On Sunday 9th August 2015

In the Barn Church, Inverness

Come along and bring your friends – a chance to sing favourite hymns – old and new

COLLECTION IN AID OF St JOHN CHARITIES

Scottish Charity SC000262

The Squaremen – Hielan' Shed No 6



The photo depicts, once again, the charitable side of Freemasonry when the Worthy Deacon Bri. Colin Thomson is seen handing a cheque over to a new member of the Shed Bri. Andrew Ready, Immediate Past Master of Lodge Pitgaveny No. 681, after joining the Shed in Lossiemouth on Saturday 4th July.

On Saturday 01/08/15 I would like to invite all members old and new to the latest meeting of the Heilan Shed No 6 which will be held in Lodge Ness, Outram Street Invergordon. The shed wraps at 3:00pm. If you have a Brother wishing to be a candidate and you are going to the Corporation of Squaremen please encourage them to take the step and join us for a Saturday afternoon of fund raising and good craic.

The last meeting of the Shed, this year, will be the over-nighter in Durness on Saturday 5th September. Anyone interested in travelling up to the north/west of Sutherland will be made most welcome as will all the north Shed members.

Yours Fraternally
Colin Thomson WD

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Guild Lodges

Moray Guild Lodge

Regular Meeting, which will be held in The Masonic Temple, Lodge St John No.193, Rothes on 11th August 2015 at 7.30pm.

Highland Guild Lodge

The next meeting of the Highland Guild Lodge will take place in Alness on Friday 11th September.

Rosicrucian College – Inverness

The next meeting of the Inverness College will take place on Monday 12th October.

On the following Saturday, 17th October, the annual meeting will take place in Edinburgh.

PRECEPTORY OF THE WESTERN ISLES.

DISTRICT GRAND PRIORY OF THE NORTH IN SCOTLAND.

As I have it I've appended the **District Programme for 2015-2016**

Preceptory	Installation Date	Visitation Date
Highland No.39	18 th September 2015	15 th April 2016 (Third Friday)
Western Isles No.124	31 st October 2015	23 rd April 2016 (Fourth Saturday)
Ross No.138	6 th November 2015	5 th February 2016 (First Friday)
Maison Dieu No.101	13 th November 2015	11 th March 2016 (Second Friday)
Lochaber & Lorne No.139	16 th November 2015	18 th April 2016 (Third Monday)
St Fergus No.44	19 th November 2015	17 th March 2016 (Third Thursday)

The District AGM will be held in the Masonic Temple, Inverness, on Friday 15th April 2016 at 6.30 pm prompt.

Donald MacLeod

SNIPPET from the PAST – May 1998

On 20th February, the Provincial Grand Master and Provincial Grand Secretary travelled south to Tamworth in Staffordshire where they were joined by Bro Iain McGhee, Lodge Seaforth, at the Installation of Bro Roger Silk in Lodge Ashmole of Lichfield. It was an excellent night with many old friendships being resurrected, first class ritual and too much harmony. As well as sending our best wishes to Bro Roger for a successful year in office, we also congratulate him in finding a steward who can sell bottles of whisky at five pounds per bottle. A contract for a free transfer up north is in the post.

135th Anniversary and Annual Communication of the National Grand Lodge of Romania

In February 2015 I was asked by the Grand Master Mason if I would represent the Grand Lodge of Scotland, in his absence, at the 135th Anniversary meeting of the National Grand Lodge of Romania. I was delighted to have been given the opportunity to travel into Eastern Europe to witness how Freemasonry was progressing and I have to say that I certainly wasn't disappointed.

Accompanied by my wife Ann, we left the Black Isle at mid-night on Thursday 18th June and drove down to Edinburgh. We had an early morning flight to Amsterdam where we picked up a direct flight to Bucharest. We were met at the Henri Coanda Airport by Brother Dr Alexandru Lăpușan and transported by him – along with Brother Johann Hauf from the Grand Lodge of Austria – to the imposing Phoenicia Grand Hotel in Bucharest.



We arrived about three in the afternoon so were able to rest for a couple of hours before attending what was described as a welcome cocktail in the Mezzanine Floor of the hotel. Well, it was some cocktail – the Romanian hospitality was outstanding – we were treated to salmon salad followed by baked Dorada and broccoli then a main course of pork finishing off with cake and ice cream. There was no shortage of wine and cocktails to accompany the meal and the cabaret was a mixture of class performers starting with a quartet of girls playing Classical



Music but with style – their repertoire was wide ranging and their interpretation and performance was of the highest possible standard. The entire company thoroughly enjoyed the performance.

The girls were followed by a folk band who were accompanied by traditional dancers. They too were totally professional in their performance.

The enthusiasm and energy of the dancers was matched by the proficiency and skilful playing of the folk group. Near the end of the performance they invited the audience to participate – I thankfully avoided any embarrassing involvement but Ann ended up dancing with one of the group – and seemed to cope with it admirably well.

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In between eating, drinking and watching the show, we were able to mingle and meet up with many of the other delegates who were attending the Communication and Anniversary celebrations.

We took our leave just before 01.00 to get a bit of sleep before I headed to the Palace of the Parliament at 08.15 in the morning for the main event.



The following morning – Saturday 20th June, I met up with forty or fifty fellow delegates and we were taken by coach from the hotel to the Palace of the Parliament where the Annual Communication and 135th Anniversary Celebrations were to take place. It took about forty minutes to drive across Bucharest to the Parliament building – a building that is only second in size to the Pentagon.



However, the Palace splendid as it is, houses a somewhat unsavoury past. It is probably the most controversial building in Romania! The Palace was built by Romania's Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu who, in the late 1970's, was coming to the height of his power and megalomania.

Ceausescu conceived the idea for *'The People's House'* as the Palace was to be called after a visit to North Korea's Kim II-sung in 1972. *The 'People's House'* was to be the largest, most lavish palace in the world and would hold all the functions of his socialist state, as well as serve as a handsome residence for he and his wife.

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Construction began on 'The People's House' in 1983. Some of the local Brethren were able to relate various stories of the horror inflicted upon the residents of the city who, if they failed to volunteer to assist in the building of the Palace, were quite literally disposed of. The cost of the building was enormous although none of the Brethren were able to put a financial cost on it – suffice to say that Ceausescu systematically starved the Romanian people, exporting all of the country's agricultural and industrial production as the standard of living in Romania sank to an all-time low. Many of us will recall quite vividly the scenes of horror displayed on our television screens especially of the children in orphanages. Food-rationing, gas electric and heating blackouts became everyday norms; people lived in squalor and poverty as the Ceausescu's themselves exhibited outrageous extravagance.

The Romanian Revolution of 1989 broke out just as the People's Palace was nearing completion. Mass protests in December 1989 in Timisoara caused martial law to be declared, a Bucharest rally turned to riot and the Ceausescu's were forced to flee the capital by helicopter. They were soon captured by police, were sentenced to death by an ad hoc military court on charges ranging from illegal gathering of wealth to genocide and were executed by firing squad on Christmas Day, 1989.

After Ceausescu's deposition, the new government moved its functions into his maniacal mansion and it was renamed the Palace of Parliament. Today it also houses the National Museum of Contemporary Art and is used for the time being by the National Grand Lodge of Romania to hold its Communications.



The Heads of Deputations assembled in one of the magnificent rooms on the first level of the Palace to get into Regalia and enjoy more Romanian hospitality and then make our way up the regal looking staircase, shown on the left, to the even bigger room where the Communication was to take place.

The Brethren having assembled, the Heads of Deputations ranging from most of the nearby European Grand Lodges to Grand Lodges from as far apart as Grande Loge Nationale Togolaise, the Grand Lodge of Bolivia, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, the Grand Lodge of Israel to name but a few and myself representing the Grand Lodge of Scotland – the most senior Grand Lodge present – were ceremoniously escorted into Grand Lodge. There being no organ, the perambulations were accompanied by carefully chosen classical pieces expertly broadcast by knowledgeable technicians. It was a real honour to be the last representative to be introduced thereby acknowledging Scotland's seniority.

The National Grand Lodge of Romania was opened by the Grand Master, Brother Radu BĂLĂNESCU in the manner of their calling – quite significantly different from our own opening in the Grand Lodge of Scotland but nonetheless very impressive and relatively easy to follow despite my total lack of knowledge of the Romanian language.

Grand Lodge having been opened, they proceeded with the normal business, much of which centred around the proposed building of the new Masonic Temple in Bucharest. Again this information was reasonably understandable as they used a graphic powerpoint presentation to show the progress being made with the project.

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The proposed social and cultural complex of the National Grand Lodge of Romania

This is a massive and exciting project but I think it reflects the progress that has been made over the past twenty five or so years. My understanding is that due to the political situation after the second World War it was impossible for Freemasonry to continue within Romania itself. The harsh totalitarian regime meant that Freemasonry could only be practised from the diaspora in countries such as France, Israel, Germany and Argentina. However, since the death of Ceausescu, and the return to a democratic administration, Freemasonry has flourished and there are now over 400 Lodges in the country in which some 14,000 Brethren are actively involved in the Craft.

The general business of Grand Lodge having been disposed of, the many Deputations present were afforded the opportunity to address the National Grand Lodge of Romania and I deemed it a tremendous privilege to be able to address the Grand Lodge on behalf of the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

The entire communication took some four hours to complete before we were driven back across Bucharest to the hotel for a late lunch. Meanwhile the many ladies attending had been taken round many places of interest within Bucharest and Ann was delighted to enjoy the company in particular of the wives of the representatives from Finland and from Turkey.

At 6.15 on the Saturday evening we once again assembled, with our wives, in the lobby of the hotel to be transported back to the Palace of Parliament. This time it was black tie for the men and evening gowns for the Ladies. The occasion was the 135th Anniversary Ball which was held in the magnificent Ballroom of the Palace.

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As we made our way through the various halls into the ball-room, the quartet who had entertained us the night before were once again in action with their dynamic playing.

This very much set the scene for what was to follow.

Ann and I were honoured to be at the Grand Masters table for what can only be described as a memorable night.

The Grand Master of the National Grand Lodge of Romania, Brother Radu Bălănescu and his good lady



The food was excellent as was the wine and entertainment. Anyone who did not enjoy themselves can only blame themselves!



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The Ball

On Sunday morning it was a relatively late start – we once again returned to the Palace of Parliament to view an international art exhibition which had been organised under the auspices of the National Grand Lodge of Romania. This was an interesting morning with some equally interesting pieces on view but again some pieces that were somewhat beyond my understanding! But nevertheless an excellent piece of PR work by the Grand Lodge.



A few examples of the art in the exhibition

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Sunday evening – another black tie event – this time at the neoclassical Romanian Athenaeum. Opened in 1888, the ornate, domed, circular building is the city's main concert hall and home of the "George Enescu" Philharmonic Orchestra.



This event was the prestigious National Grand Lodge of Romania Awards Gala in association with the Romanian Academy. This is the fifth year that the event has taken place. Seven awards are presented – Exact Science (the Grigore Moisil Award), Applied Science (the Henri Coanda Award), Medicine (the Carol Davila Award), Economics (the Eugeniu Carada Award), Diplomacy (the Nicolae Titulescu Award), Education and Environment (the Spiru Haret Award) and Arts and Culture (the Constantin Brancusi Award) each one named after famous Romanians in those disciplines. Each Award carries a €10,000 prize. The Awards were interspersed with a brilliant musical performance by the "George Enescu" Philharmonic Orchestra and was televised live on Romanian Television. This has to be one of the most positive Masonic PR exercises I have ever experienced. A three hour long live concert introduced by the Grand Master reaching thousands of viewers across Romania.



National Grand Lodge of Romania Gala Awards

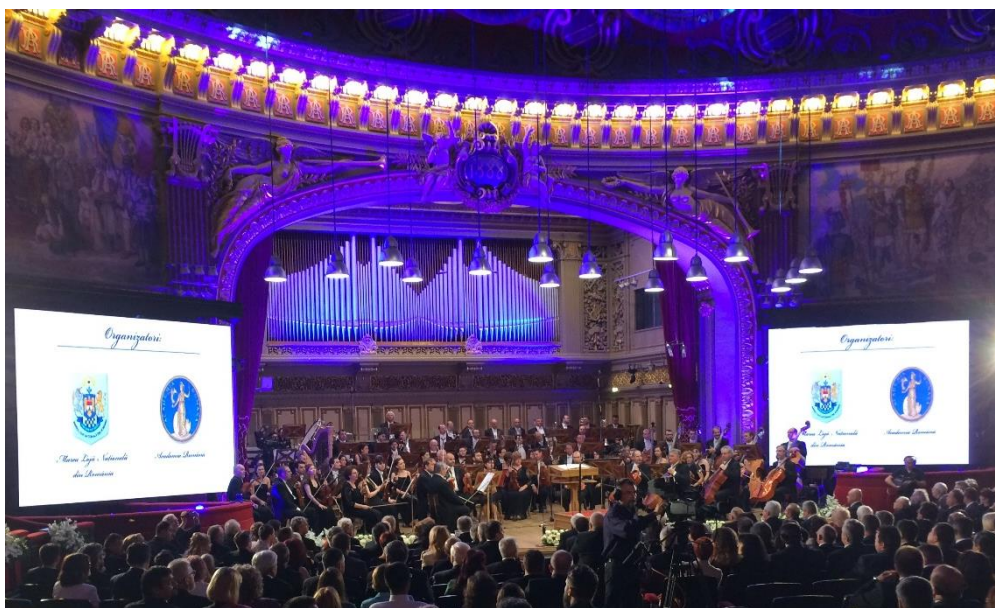
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The musical programme which interspersed each award was excellent. It started with a recital of the Romanian Rhapsody which got everyone into fine mood and enthused for the evening ahead. Next the soloist Gabriel Croitoru joined the orchestra to play the Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso in A minor, Op. 28, - a composition for violin and orchestra written in 1863 by Camille Saint-Saëns. Prior to the interval we enjoyed Verdi's "Corul sclavilor evrei" overture from the opera Nabucco.



Immediately after the interval the orchestra opened with Mozart's overture from the magic flute. This was followed by an aria from Puccini's opera Tosca sung by Cristian Mogosan and then another aria, this time from Bellini's opera Norma sung by the soprano Solistă Irina Iordăchescu. Both soloists reappeared together to sing the duet Brindisi from Verdi's opera – La Traviata. Finally, the orchestra had all 600 in the audience on their feet with a rousing rendition of Johann Strauss's Radetzky March.

It was an absolute privilege to be part of the evening and the National Grand Lodge of Romania has to be congratulated in producing such a high profile event.



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The following morning it was another early start when we were collected at the hotel at 04.45 to be driven to an exceptionally busy Bucharest Airport. We arrived back in Edinburgh safe and sound but the luggage decided to take a detour!

In conclusion I would suggest that in terms of high profile, positive promotion of Freemasonry, we could learn a significant amount from the Romanian Brethren. I asked their Grand Treasurer (above) how Grand Lodge could afford to front such a prestigious event – the answer was quite simply – sponsorship. Over the weekend each and every event was subsidised by sponsorship. The sponsors appear keen to back events such as the award ceremony – it associates them not only with the Grand Lodge but also with the Romanian Academy and gives them exposure on a three hour live broadcast on national television.

The warm welcome, the hospitality, the friendship proffered by the National Grand Lodge of Romania was second to none. It was an honour and privilege to be part of their 135th anniversary celebrations.



Marea Lojă Națională din România
are deosebita plăcere să vă invite la
Balul Conventului M.:L.:N.:R.:
Sâmbătă, 20 Iunie 2015, începând cu orele 19:00
Palatul Parlamentului, Sala Unirii.
Invitație valabilă pentru 1 persoană
Donație 300 Ron/ persoană
Dress Code - Black Tie
Invitația se păstrează pentru participarea la tombolă!



Balul Conventului M.:L.:N.:R.:
Sâmbătă, 20 Iunie 2015 ora 19:00

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MALAWI POLICE TRAINING SCHOOL

When we sent the last boxes of tools over to Malawi, we included in most of the boxes Raith Rover football strips which Bro Rev Andrew Paterson, PGM of Fife and Kinross had acquired. They along with the ones we took over in February were destined for the Mountain View School for Deaf Children and as we illustrated in the May edition of the "Patter" they were delighted to receive them. However, some of the strips were obviously a bit on the big side for the children so Bro Gordon Sheppard responded to a plea from the Police Training School who, like everyone else in Malawi, are strapped for money – Gordon tells me that they receive the equivalent of £3,500 monthly to run the school with 1000+ recruits. This has to cover some salaries; accommodation, food, power and water, fuel, vehicle maintenance etc., etc. As a result there is absolutely no money left for recreational activities including sport. So, the surplus strips were ceremoniously handed over to the Deputy Commissioner Southern Region no less (in the photo) and at least 10 high ranking officers as well as the PE I/C and members of the team were present with many speeches.



As a result of the gift to the Police Training School, the Deputy Commissioner, Dr G Kainja, has written to Bro Gordon Sheppard thanking him for the donation. The strips are now being worn by the Police Training School Football Team named – "The White Eagles".

This has been another joint venture between the Province of Fife and Kinross and the Province of Ross and Cromarty that has enabled barriers to be broken down and shows clearly that Freemasonry is very much at work in deprived communities – not only in our own home areas but in other continents where the flag of Scottish Freemasonry is proudly flown.

The Brethren of both Provinces should be justifiably proud of all they are achieving at home and abroad.

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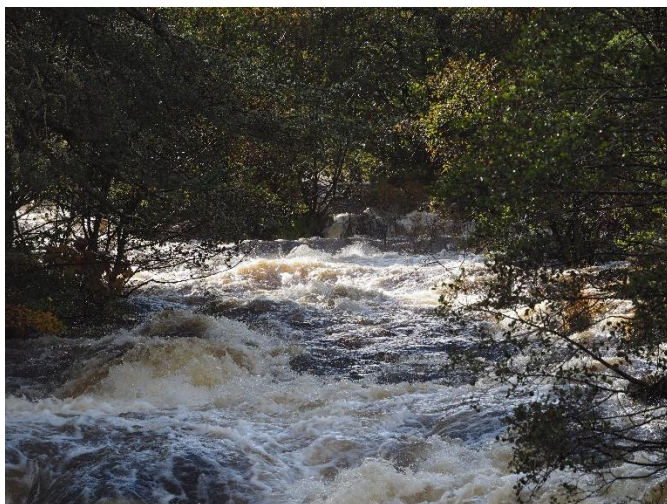
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Provincial Grand Lodge of Perthshire West Saturday, 25th July 2015. Ceremonial of Installation and Dinner following Installation of Brother Roger Harry Bullard as Provincial Grand Master.

During the PGL QC in May in Dingwall my ears pricked up on a few occasions (otherwise I wouldn't be there) and so it was when Killin was mentioned by PGL Secretary as being the venue for an Installation.

Recently I was privileged enough to obtain a ticket for this event by keeping in touch, over the last couple of months, with the Provincial Grand Secretary Bro. William M. S. Semple, PM, The United Lodge of Dunkeld No. 14.

My principal interest in this Installation Ceremony stemmed from a walking break I had planned during the 'tattie holidays' last October when, being in the vicinity of Ben Lawers, I made the village of Killin my base camp. Throughout the ensuing week I didn't get as much walking done as I would have wished due to the horrendous rain and wind which prevailed at the time resulting in some fantastic pictures of the local Falls of Dochart in



tremendous spate within the village itself. However the lack of walks was compensated in visits, despite the weather, to the many picturesque villages in and around this part of the world like Lawers, Aberfeldy, Lochearnhead, Glencoe, Tyndrum and Crianlarich.

I thoroughly enjoyed the companionship within the MacLaren Hall in Killin at both the Installation Ceremony and the Dinner which made for one of the most enjoyable afternoons of my time in Freemasonry elucidated by a few of the speakers during the afternoon expressing the virtues of Perthshire and *then the MWGMM, arriving in the village in ample time before the afternoon's ongauns, being unable to obtain the keys to an ancestral graveyard due to the local library being closed on Saturdays – the way of local life at its best! – One can only imagine the possible riposte of a local: “Och man come back and you'll get the lassie in on Monday morning.”*

Such is the magic emanating from all those early visits since 1978 to lodges in Ross and Cromarty, subsequently spreading to neighbouring Provinces and now to a more distant Province – this quite apart from the now annual pilgrimage to Grand Lodge at the end of November involving a welcome overnight stay in Edinburgh.

After all the business and the meal I decided to stay at the B & B rather than drive home which gave me the opportunity to savour the warm summer evening as opposed to the inclement weather I had encountered in October.

Just up from the MacLaren Hall is the local newsagent round the corner from which is the Breadalbane Park – home to the local Highland Games and where, in a corner something caught my eye from the initial signpost at the newsagents: 'Killin will rock you' or more precisely a reference to a rock called 'Fingal's Rock'. My Mother Lodge being Fingal No. 318 I was intrigued bearing in mind that, within and among the Lodge Brethren, much discussion has taken place over the years on the origin of our lodge name so much so that the PGL DOC Rory Mackenzie PM came across something quite tangible over the last decade while deciphering some old headstones

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in the Parish Church burial ground of St. Clements Church in Dingwall, the spelling of which I cannot recollect right now but was akin to Fingal.

What I came across in Killin isn't going to set the heather on fire in and around Dingwall but it makes for a good story and retains Rory's endeavours as a Work in Progress.



The following is an extract from some of the Information placards situated next to the Killin newsagent:

Killin will Rock you.

If stones could talk... there are many in Killin that could tell a tale or two. Many true. Some imagined. All interesting. You can think about both kinds of story just a short distance from here.

Fianna, Finn and Fingal.

To step into the realms of the fantasy, go through the nearby main gates of Breadalbane Park, to your right and take a short walk to a lone rock that rises from the turf. Called 'Fingal's Stone', this recalls a time when, it is said, a band of warrior heroes – the Fianna - roamed the hills and glens of Scotland and Northern Ireland. Storytellers in both countries still celebrate them. The Fianna spent their time hunting, fighting and feasting in this world and tackling challenges in the spirit world.

Their leader was Fionn mac Cumhaill (pronounced 'Finn Macool') who had many adventures, both serious and funny. Some of his deeds were re-told by a Scottish poet, James MacPherson in the late 18th century. MacPherson called him 'Fingal' – a name that has stuck in some places ever since, including at Fingal's Cave in the Hebrides. Some say that Fingal lies buried beneath this stone. That's unlikely but this is still a great spot to think about those ancient superheroes, and perhaps make up some new stories of your own.

Rough, Ready and Homely.

Now look across the Main Street at the row of one-storey cottages. They're some of the oldest ones in the village, likely to date (like Fingal's name) from the 1700s. Clues to their age are in their stones, whose outlines you can still see beneath the modern paint and harling.

In Killin, as in many parts of Scotland, early buildings were made from the most readily accessible local stone. Fields and river beds were useful sources of rubble for walls. You can see the irregular sizes and shapes of the small blocks that were gathered this way.

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The biggest stones were placed at the base of the walls, to give strong foundations and some protection from damp. These ‘footings’ jut out a little on the pavement side.

Vanished Trades.

What stories would those walls tell, about the time when they were new? About the ordinary folk of the village, perhaps; the people who lived and loved and died in them.

Back then, says one account from the 1790s, local tradesfolk included dozens of weavers, tailors and shoemakers, as well as blacksmiths, merchants, bakers and wheel makers. Some were ‘flax dressers’, whose job it was to remove coarse fibres from harvested flax plants to prepare them for spinning to make linen.

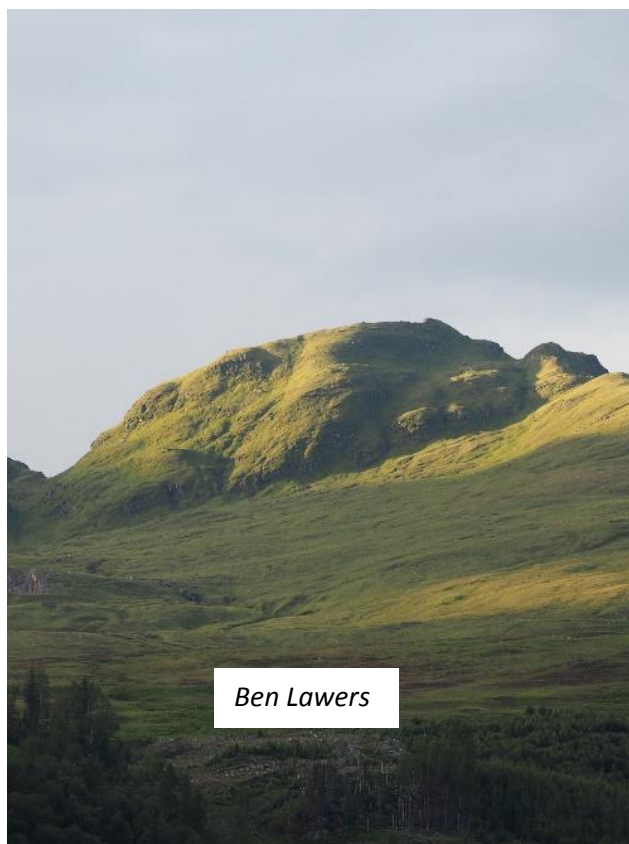
Did any of them live in these cottages? Quite likely. What do you picture?

As a rider to this short article I went to Locheearnhead to look up a fellow Caithnessian who works in a hotel but missed him as he was off duty. On my return to Killin I took some photos of the ‘Stone’ and surrounding hills towards Ben Lawers before parking the car – at which juncture I walked to the Killin Hotel and met a Brother Mason from Orkney and was made to really feel at home downing a pint Ross-shire CAMRA real ale which is brewed en route to Lodge Loch Ewe around Ardesie.

Over the weekend I contemplated that I had a lot indeed to thank for keeping in touch with William Semple to obtain my ticket to Brother Roger’s Installation as PGM of Perthshire West!

Andrew M. Henderson

PGL Architect; RWM Lodge Loch Ewe No. 1551



Ben Lawers