

PROVINCIAL PATTERN

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Province of Ross and Cromarty

ISSUE NO 82

FEBRUARY 2015



What's in the February Edition?

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Cover picture: Lodge Ness No 888

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Editorial

Welcome to the 82nd edition of the Patter.

As this goes to print, I am getting the final preparations made for our latest trip from the Province to the Mountain View school for Deaf Children in Malawi.

It is with much excitement that we head off to Malawi. The tools that we sent out in 2014 have arrived and are being processed by the Brethren – we will hopefully be able to help in that process. We are still hopeful that the PGM of Fife and Kinross and an Honorary Member of this Province – Rev Andrew Paterson, JP, will be able to join us for at least part of the trip. He has a full kit of strips from Raith Rovers that we are taking out with us – the older boys will be over the moon at getting the kit.

We'll need to think of something for the girls – they tend to get left out of the process a bit albeit many of the girls are also taught woodwork and will be making good use of the tools. Perhaps we could give a wee bit of thought to the situation and maybe pull together something to send out especially for the girls later in the year.

If anyone has any spare off the shelf medicines that they can spare, we'd be only too happy to take that with us. It is very difficult for the school staff to source basic things like aspirin which we all take for granted.

After Malawi, we are heading this time to the District Grand Lodge of East Africa where we will be involved in the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of Lodge Unity and we will be attending the District bi-annual communication in Nairobi. Everyone is looking forward to the trip and I'm sure that between us we will be able to put together a full report for the May edition of the Patter.

Ramsay McGhee, Editor

Grand Lodge of Scotland

The next Communication of Grand Lodge is on Thursday 5th February.



During February the Grand Master Mason and the Grand Secretary will be visiting Lodges in South Africa while I will be in East Africa.



On 7th February I will have the honour of heading a Deputation to Lodge Lockerbie Quhytewoolen No 258 who are celebrating their 200th anniversary.

The following week the SGM, George Kelly will head a Deputation to Lodge Neptune Kilwinning Saltcoats No 442 when they will celebrate their 150th anniversary.

The PGM's Forum will take place in Perth on 14th March.

19th March – Special Meeting of Grand Committee.

20th March – SGRAC Installation

20 – 25 March the GMM and Grand Secretary will attend the annual meetings of the Grand Lodge of Sweden and the Grand Lodge of Norway.

30th March – Grand Committee.

Grand Secretary, David M. Begg, has been made aware that Scottish Lodges are being contacted by individuals who are not Scottish Freemasons. This is against International Masonic protocols which are designed to protect Scottish Lodges and Scottish Freemasons from falling victim to unscrupulous mailings. Recent examples have been arriving from an individual claiming to be the Curator of a Masonic Museum in Madrid, Spain. One surname that is used is Moreno. The Grand Lodge of Spain has confirmed that these individuals, nor the 'Museum', have any connection with the Grand Lodge of Spain. All Lodges are reminded that all communication between Lodges under different Grand Lodges should, initially, be made via the office of Grand Secretary.

In the event of receipt of a request for Masonic items (purportedly for a Masonic Museum) or indeed any other enquiry (for instance, requests to attend a meeting of the Lodge, asking for charitable donations or requests for assistance in finding work) received from anyone who is not a verified (and verifiable) member of the Scottish Craft should be referred to Grand Secretary in order that advice can be given.

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Provincial Grand Lodge:

With the Installation Season now completed I would hope that all the newly Installed Right Worshipful Masters and Office-bearers are settled in to their new offices or continuing with the offices previously held and I wish you all every success in the year ahead.

It was my pleasure to attend the majority of the Daughter Lodge Installations and which I witnessed most excellent ceremonies by the various Installing Teams.

It was also most pleasing to attend the Grand Lodge Installation on 27th. November 2014 to see Brother Charles I.R. Wolrige Gordon of Esslemont being re-installed for his seventh term as Grand Master Mason, but more pleasing for me was the Installation of Brother W Ramsay McGhee as Depute Grand Master. An honour richly deserved and which makes all in our Province justly proud of this recognition and it was pleasing that a good number of our Brethren were in attendance.

I was greatly delighted to meet with Brother Roger Silk at the Grand Lodge Installation and he was also very proud to be present and to see his long-time friend Brother Ramsay being installed into office. Brother Silk is an Honorary Member of our Province and has not been in the best of health these past few years and for him to make the effort and travel from the Midlands is most encouraging.

Following on after the Grand Lodge Installation, it was my great pleasure to welcome into our Province the District Grand Master of Trinidad, Tobago and Grenada - Brother Adrian Franklin and a Deputation of Brethren and two ladies. We thoroughly enjoyed having them with us and had them present to witness a Reigning Master's Degree and attend a Social Evening within Lodge Seaforth No 854. A most enjoyable evening coupled with fraternal fellowship was had by all.

Brother Allan MacCrimmon, Past Master of Lodge Loch Ewe No 1551 was honoured by the Grand Master Mason when the Honorary Grand Rank of Senior Grand Standard Bearer was conferred on him. It was my pleasure to attend the Lodge Loch Ewe No 1551 Installation and at which I had the honour to present Brother MacCrimmon with his Jewel and Diploma.

The Provincial Visitations to the Daughter Lodges will be commencing in February with the first one to Lodge Averon No 866 on Thursday 12th. February.

The Provincial Grand Lodge Quarterly Communication is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 3rd. February 2015 within Lodge Seaforth No 854 and a good attendance of Brethren would be appreciated.

William Ross
Provincial Grand Master

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/>

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From The Provincial Almoner

Sadly once again I have to start on a sad note and record the passing to the Grand Lodge above of Past Master Malcolm MacGougan, Lodge St. Duthus, Tain. Malcolm had been ill for some time and passed away at his home on Saturday 3rd January. Malcolm was a stalwart of Lodge St. Duthus for many years. His funeral service in Tain Parish Church and later at Inverness Crematorium was very largely attended by Masonic Brethren. He will be very much missed in Masonic circles. A card was sent to his wife Sadie and the family conveying the condolences and deepest sympathies of the Provincial Grand Master and the brethren of the province.

I only learned today that Past Master Sandy Rose, Lodge Rosehaugh, Avoch has not been so well again and is back in Ward 4A, Raigmore Hospital, Inverness. No further details are known at this time regarding his condition. He had been staying with his daughter recently.

Bro. Donald Jack, also Lodge Rosehaugh, is also in Ward 4A at Raigmore. Donald had been unwell around Christmas and had been in and out of hospital since then. He is currently awaiting surgery for gall stones.

Past Master Iain MacLaren, also of Lodge Rosehaugh, is recovering well from his stroke and is now allowed to drive again. He is due to have an appointment this week with a Consultant at Raigmore Hospital regarding another ongoing medical issue.

Past Master Victor Shepherd, Robertson's Lodge, Cromarty is currently in Invergordon Hospital and is awaiting the preparation of a Care Package to enable him to return home. I have visited him a number of times there, as have a number of other brethren. I saw him last Sunday and he was in very good form but anxious to get home. He was able to walk with me, with the aid of a zimmer, to the main entrance when I was leaving.

Our best wishes are extended to them all.

I would just like to remind you all that should you require my services or know of anyone who does please do not hesitate to contact me.

David MacMaster,

Provincial Grand Almoner

Tel: 01997 421306 email: david@strathpeffer.net

PROVINCIAL QUARTERLY COMMUNICATION

The Quarterly Communication will be held in the Masonic Hall, Station Square, Fortrose, IV10 8TJ at 8.00 pm on Tuesday 3rd February 2015. All Master Masons in good standing are cordially invited to attend. All reigning Masters and Wardens should be present to represent their respective Lodges.

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FROM THE LODGES

Lodge St Duthus No 82



On behalf of the Right Worshipful Master of Lodge St Duthus No 82 can I wish all readers of the Provincial Patter and very happy and prosperous 2015. Since the last issue Lodge St Duthus along with Tain Bowling Club held a very successful Senior Citizens Christmas party. Both numbers this year were down which may have had something to do with the weather a very enjoyable time was had by all.

January saw a sad start of the year for Lodge St Duthus with the passing of PM Malcolm McGougan following illness. PM McGougan was a well-known and well liked Past Master of Lodge St Duthus. He was initiated into freemasonry in 1988, rose through the offices and became Master of the Lodge in 2000. He would willingly stand in for any officer that was absent on a meeting night and was an avid fundraiser for the Lodge, being able to draw the last pennies out of bidders by his inimitable auctioneering style. PM McGougan was well-known in the community and beyond for his musical skills, he played in a number of bands over the years and many a young couple owe their memories of their first dance at their wedding to the playing and singing talents of Malcolm. He was manager for a time of Fearn Thistle football club, a member of Tain Golf Club and chairman of the local branch of the Royal British Legion. The depth of the gratitude owed to Malcolm by the community and the Masonic fraternity could be seen with the large numbers that attended his funeral service both in the Church of Scotland at Tain and also at the crematorium. Our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

Lodge St Duthus No 82 has had a busy start to the New Year having seen two candidates join the Lodge and one awaiting initiation. Lodge St Duthus would like to take this opportunity to welcome into the craft its newest members Bro. Billy Knox and Bro Jaye Macrae. Bro Macrae is the grandson of RWM Ian Sinclair and it was a privilege for all to see RWM Sinclair initiate his grandson into freemasonry. We wish both Bro Knox and Bro Macrae well in their Masonic career.

Our calendar for February starts on Monday the 2nd with a Fellowcraft degree and is followed on 16th February with a Mark Master Masons degree which is to be worked by Lodge St Duthus office bearers in Lodge Seaforth No 854, hopefully we will see you there.

Lodge St Duthus No 82 is in the process of changing its bye-laws and reducing its meetings to once a month. Once the change of bye-laws has been authorised by Grand Lodge daughter Lodge's will be informed of the changes. Advertising of meetings will no longer be placed in the Ross - Shire Journal instead meetings will be advertised electronically by email. An advertisement is also being placed in the monthly issue of the Tain and Dornoch Post.

Lodge St Duthus has also entered the 21st century by the setting up of a Facebook page. This page can be accessed by any Masonic member following acceptance by myself. The page enables members to view the business of Lodge St Duthus or to advertise their own Masonic programme. Brethren can also inform members of the page of any visits that they are planning and offer car sharing. Members wanting to access the page should search "Lodge St Duthus No 82 & Tain Ross No 63"

During February we are also holding to quiz nights on the 21st for Perfect Paws and on the 28th for Tain Scouts (The Big Cats) who are hoping to raise funds to enable them to send two Scouts to an International Jamboree to be held in Japan. We hope to see a good turnout at both these events for such worthy causes.

David Macrae, PM
Secretary

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FORTROSE LODGE No. 108

The main event in the last quarter was of course the installation of Brother Iain N Campbell as Right Worshipful Master and his office bearers on 5th December 2014 very ably carried out by Donnie Graham PM with a little assistance from some of the Lodge past masters and of course WPGM Billy Ross. The installation was followed by the Festival of St John.



The first meeting of this year was on 2nd January when two Brethren were put through their 2nd degree. Donnie Graham PM had to chair the meeting as the mainland was cut off because of the weather and our new RWM was unable to get back across the Minch in time.

Our annual Burn's Supper was held on Friday 23rd January 2015. The speeches were of the usual high standard with Donnie Macdonald addressing the haggis, Calum Macleod doing the immortal memory, Donald J Smith toasting the lasses and Pauline Macleod replying on their behalf.



Quite an address Donnie gave the haggis!!

Photos courtesy of Bro Rod Huckbody



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Robertson's Lodge No 134

As you know we had our Installation meeting on Wednesday 17 December, 2015 when Brother Peter Foster Snr. was installed as R.W.M. and Office Bearers installed or re installed into the various offices. Like many lodges, it is getting difficult to fill offices and like Festive season television we have many repeats. I know Peter is very appreciative of all who have taken up office and I know we will work hard at keeping our Lodge going. We all wish Peter every success for the session ahead. Our first meeting of the year (21 January 2015) is a Business meeting, to plan our session ahead and to carry out some administration work within the lodge. It would be great to see some of our absent Brethren managing to get back among us. A survey is at present ongoing to establish the problems of absenteeism. Many have suggested that costs are becoming prohibitive. If any brother feels this is the problem, please get in touch and we can discuss the problems and see if we can find a solution. This applies to anything that is the cause.

P.M Victor Shepherd was moved from Raigmore and is now in Invergordon Hospital. He is comfortable and I am sure would appreciate anyone in the area, popping in to see him. By the time this is circulated it might be worth checking in case there is any change his location. I heard over the Festive season that Brother Ken MacAulay had been in hospital but was now home. I have sent a card to Ken, with our best wishes and I know that we all wish them and anyone else who is not at their best, a speedy recovery.

At a time when there is so much tragedy in the world it would be nice to see our craft, continue to work in harmony and to see our absent brethren back among us to give us the strength in numbers to achieve this end.

Wishing all a successful year ahead

James A Tait, PM
Secretary



SURPLUS OFF THE SHELF MEDICINE

If you happen to have any surplus off the shelf medicines that you don't require, could you contact any of the following and hand them over before Tuesday 10th February and we will take them with us to the Mountain View School for Deaf Children in Malawi – Many Thanks.

Henry Cameron
Raymond MacKeddie
Jim Hunter
Ramsay McGhee

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Lodge Fingal No 318



November meeting: Was our annual AGM and nomination of Office-bearers along with a Ballot for Bro Jim Murray. Bro Jim, a member of Lodge Leven St John No 170 in the Province of Dunbartonshire was duly Obligated as an Affiliate member of Fingal.

December meeting: Opened in the EA° by the RWM Bro Rev Ivan Warwick with 21 Brethren and 4 visiting Brethren present. Lodges represented were St John No 37, Seaforth No 854, Stepps No 1213 and St Martin No 1217 all of whom were charged to convey the fraternal greetings of Lodge Fingal to their respective Lodges. The main business was a MM degree for Bro Allan MacKenzie [Storn]. At the Risings various Brethren mentioned how pleasing it was to see Bro Ramsay McGhee installed as Depute Grand Master, which they thought was very befitting for the work he does for Freemasonry.

Special meeting: On Saturday 27th December, the Lodge celebrated the Installation off the RWM Elect Bro. Angus Beaton and his Office-bearers. The Lodge was opened by the outgoing Master, Bro Rev Ivan Warwick at 5 pm. A total of 49 Brethren were in attendance. Reigning Masters and Past Masters were invited to their rightful seat in the East. The Master welcomed the PGM of Ross & Cromarty Bro William Ross, the IPPGM of Ross & Cromarty Bro Ramsay McGhee, PPGM of Ross & Cromarty Morris Downie and DPGM of Ross & Cromarty Bro. Robin Cattenach into the Lodge. The Gavel was handed to the PGM to say a few words, he congratulated the RWM on his 2 years in the chair and for keeping the Lodge in good order. The Gavel was returned to the Master who congratulated Bro Ramsay McGhee on his high office in Grand Lodge as Depute Grand Master and also for playing the organ today. He welcomed Brethren from the following Lodges - No's 6 / 37 / 82 / 89 / 134 / 851 / 854 / 866 / 888 / 1235 / 1295 / 1551 and 1675 all the way from South Korea. During the course of the meeting some 32 Installed Masters formed the Board. The business of the meeting being completed, the Lodge was closed in due and ancient form at 7.15pm.

Thirty eight Brethren retired to the Logie Lounge for the Festival of St. John with the catering by Catherine Morrison of the Station Tea Room, Strathpeffer. At the conclusion of the meal, the formal speeches and responses were well received by the Brethren finishing with the Tylers Toast given by Bro Ian Macleod SM.

January meeting: Opened in the EA° by the RWM Bro Angus Beaton with 17 Brethren and 2 visiting Brethren from Lodge No 854 and Lodge Loch Ewe No 1551. The main business of the evening was a Paper by Bro Rev Ivan Warwick IPM on "Changing times in Freemasonry", which lasted for some 25 minutes and was well received by the Brethren.

February meeting: 10th Mock EA°

March meeting: 10th Mock EA° also our annual Provincial visit. Lodge will Tyle at 7.30 p.m. to do the minutes, etc.

April meeting: 14th to be arranged.

Events Logie Lounge:

The Lodge Charity Quiz night was held in the Logie Lounge with 15 teams taking part. The evening was started by RWM Angus Beaton welcoming all the teams. Quiz master John Hanson (SD) and his wife Margaret then took control and proceeded to ask ten rounds of questions ranging from "Musicals" to knowledge of the "Ross-Shire Area".

The wives of Lodge Brethren Mrs Maureen Cameron, Mrs Mary Gunn and Mrs Ann Reid served up tea, coffee, sandwiches, sausages rolls and cakes at half time. PM's Henry Cameron and Donnie Gunn were at hand at the bar, assisted by Colin Mackintosh (WSW) when he was not answering questions.

During the interval the IPM Rev Bro Ivan Warwick along with RWM Angus Beaton handed out cheques for last year's charity events to Miss Christy Merran Eaglesham (£100.00) for the World Challenge Expedition, to Gwen Fullerton (Secretary) representing St. John (Highland) (£300.00) and Kath Sim from Bits & Pieces (£300.00).

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The winners of the quiz were ““3 Goons & A Gooner “, they each received a bottle of Whyte & MacKay Whisky, kindly donated by PM Andy Henderson. The team with best Quiz Name were “Belles of St. Clements” they received large packets of “Smarties”

The Lodge raised an amazing £595.00 on the night, between the team entrance fees and a first class raffle. Thanks to all concerned for making this an enjoyable evening.



Mrs Caroline Bain and Mrs Elizabeth Horne selling the raffles must have been the HATS that took in an excellent amount off £275.



Mrs Gwen Fullerton, Secretary of the Highland Branch of the Venerable Order of St John receiving a cheque from the Bro Rev Ivan Warwick, IPM and the Master of the Lodge, Bro Angus Beaton.

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Miss Christy Merran Eaglesham receiving a cheque for the World Challenge Expedition. For those unfamiliar with World Challenge, it aims to support and facilitate the development of young people through life-changing experiences.

Kath Sim from Bits & Pieces receiving her cheque.

Bits and Pieces is a Charity Shop based in Dingwall where they raise funds for Highland Hospice and Crossroads Care.

And finally –

Friday 6th February, Burns Night, compared by Bro. Andy Henderson.

Friday 20th March, will be our annual Ladies Night.

Saturday 18th April, will be a Social Night

*D. Gunn P.M.
Secretary*



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Lodge Allan Wilson No 851

The next meeting of the Lodge will take place on Tuesday 9th June 2015 when Brother Sinclair Bruce will be installed as Master.

Further information will appear in the May edition.

Lodge Seaforth No 854

The next meeting of the Lodge will be on Monday 16th February when the Mark Master Mason Degree will be worked by the Brethren of Lodge St Duthus No 82.

The March meeting will be a FC Degree and also the annual visitation from the Provincial Grand Lodge.

In April we will be working an EA Degree.

During the recess we will be travelling to Lodge St Barchan No 156, in the Province of Renfrewshire East, on Saturday 2nd May and to Lodge John O' Groat N0 1333 on Saturday 6th June. We will be working Degrees on both occasions – please come along and join our Deputations.

Cochrane Donald

Past Master



RWM Alasdair Taylor (right) and Bro Ackie Green with two of the Trinidad Deputation during their visit to Lodge Seaforth last November when a Reigning Master's Degree was worked by Masters from Lodges in the Province of Ross and Cromarty.

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Lodge Averon 866

On Saturday 20th December we had our installation. The installing Master was Bro Donald Graham PM of Fortrose Lodge 108. The ceremony was conducted with solemnity and dignity with small bits of humour at appropriate times. It was tremendous to see so many Brethren in the Lodge witnessing an afternoon that I shall never forget. The Office Bearers were installed by Bro Frazer McBeath PM and Bro Jim Tait PM, SPGM. At the conclusion of the installation Bro William Ross PM, PGM was presented with his 50 year certificate by Bro Iain Fraser PM, PPGM. I presented Bro Ross with a lapel pin and a bottle of liquid refreshment. Afterwards we sat down and enjoyed the Festival of St. John. The meal having been cooked for us by Bro Calum MacKenzie's good lady and mother. My first meeting was a practice Fellowcraft Degree. Our meeting on Thursday 22nd was a business meeting and followed by a Burns Supper. Next meeting on Thursday 12 February will be the annual visitation of the Provincial Grand Master and his deputation. We will be working a Fellowcraft Degree when the candidate will be Bro Lewis Sinclair. February 26th sees us working a Master Mason Degree when the candidate will be Bro James McDougall. This Degree will be worked by Past Masters. I am looking forward to it. We have a couple of forms out at the moment so I think we will be busy for the rest of the year. One of the forms is for Keith, son of Bro Charlie Carrison PM.

Forgetting

My forgetter's getting better, but my rememberer is broke
to you that may seem funny but, to me, that is no joke.

For when I'm 'here' I'm wondering, if I really should be 'there'
And, when I try to think it through, I haven't got a prayer!

Often times I walk into a room, say 'what am I here for?'
I wrack my brain, but all in vain! A zero, is my score.

At times I put something away where it is safe, but, gee!
The person it is safest from, is, generally me!

When shopping I may see someone, say 'Hi' and have a chat,
Then, when the person walks away I ask myself, 'who the hell was that?'

Yes, my forgetter's getting better, while my rememberer is broke,
and it's driving me plumb crazy and that isn't any joke.

Henry W. MacInnes RWM

Highland Hospice

The Black Isle Cycle Challenge will take place on Saturday 25th April. Last year we had a record turn out with over 400 cyclists participating. Such numbers put additional strain on stewarding and this year we will need more stewards than ever before.

Traditionally, the Province have provided all the Stewards so I would appeal to all Lodges to assist on the day if at all possible. I will also put something in the Highland Masonic Facebook site to hopefully encourage Brethren from neighbouring Provinces to take part.

If you can spare a few hours – roughly from 08.30 until about 14.30 on 25th April to assist with the Stewarding, please get in touch either by phone or email – many thanks

01381 620 110 or w.r.mcgee@btinternet.com

Ed

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And finally from Lodge Averon – land of gnomes and pixies

Marina McCaughy, wife of Lodge Ness's SD was taking the wee one to the Lodge Party when

“So, I'm walking to the bairns Christmas Party. I hear a loud bang and crash behind me. Woman has skidded into the already busted fence. (Cheers to Highland Council for lack of Grit). I run to help and find that the woman's car is stuck fast. I tell her that I will get some help. Take child to party & leave him with Donna Mathieson. Ask some folks for assistance. Turns out they were the "Elf & Safety" Crew. Aka Santa's little helpers”



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Lodge Ness No 888

On behalf of all Lodge Ness Brethren, I would like to wish all a happy prosperous New Year.

It looks like we did quite well over the past three months, conferring all three degrees using different candidates, having our AGM and the reinstatement of RWM Graeme Hunter and his office bearers and on Saturday past, having a Mr and Mrs Competition within the Lodge rooms.

For the next two months until the break, we will be carrying out a MM degree on Bro Lewis Kerr, on the 10th of February and on the 24th for our Provincial visitation we will be carrying out a FC degree on Bro Sam Morton. On the 10th of March we hope to confer the FC degree on Bro Michael Drummond (reliant on the weather as he offshore) and at our last meeting a MM degree.

On the 12th March we will travel to Lodge St Columba 1295 in Inverness to confer the FC degree on one of their candidates.

On the 27th February, we will be having our ladies night, within the Invergordon Golf Club, this will be a buffet dance and tickets are priced at £15 and all are welcome, please contact the RWM or myself if tickets are required.

R. W. Morrison.

PM - Secretary.

LODGE KYLE No 1117

Brethren I am delighted to include this very useful article from PM Ronnie Miller - it is well worth reading:

A FEW WORDS ABOUT ARCHIVES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Old photographs may rightly be viewed as windows into another time and place. It is therefore important for a "social record" to preserve photos and documents in our own lifetimes so that they might be viewed by generations to come.

A photographer once pointed out to me that old snaps may go missing but 9 times out of 10 the negative will be lurking in a cupboard somewhere forming a most basic back-up from which limitless prints can be made.

However with the digital revolution touching almost every aspect of life how are we to ensure digital versions of photos and documents are kept safe so that they can be examined in 20, 40 or 100 years' time?

One only has to look at the collections of VHS video tapes and music cassettes cluttering attics the world over to realise that not just the data must be kept safe; but also the devices on which they can be viewed or played back. While on that subject if you DO play back your music tapes, it's likely they will be muffled because the magnetic signal has degraded over the years or worse still, jam in the pinch wheels of the machinery used to play them back and be destroyed in a few seconds. Fortunately there ARE ways to preserve digital records and in such a manner that they will always be retrievable. Let's look at some of the more robust methods.

MICROFILM & FILM

Yes, this format will last for a very long time and requires just a lens, light and viewer to retrieve the images. So long as the plastic film is kept cool and dry, this format is still good today. Early film however has been reported as literally "fallen to bits" in the can.

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CDs

The music CDs or Compact Disks that you buy in "record" shops are not long term archives, however we are only now seeing the first ones degrade, and those are due to abuse, constant use or in the case of one factory in England where they used materials that "rot" over time.

CD-R

These are DATA disks. The ones that you record yourself and can erase and use again called CD-RW or just re-writable, will last between 5 and 10 years (minimum figure for safety). Data DVD versions will last up to 30 years we think. The DATA CDs made in factories (Games and Software etc.) will last anywhere from 20-100 years. Reputable manufacturers of data disks state their disks (as an occasional archive - not constant use) should be reliable for 100 years.

HOWEVER have a quick look at LOVEFILM'S (mail order DVDs and Blu-ray; watch and return service) disk packet and you will see that each one has a tick box asking if the disk was unplayable. This suggests that Lovefilm get a LOT of disks returned that simply won't work anymore.

In fact human issues are what corrupt Disks more than old age. High temperature, moist conditions, scratches, dirt and grease and delamination are the main problems. There is also a fungus in Indonesia called *Geotrichum Candidum* which "eats" polycarbonate, the plastic from which CDs are manufactured.

ARCHIVE CDs

Archival Disc designed by Sony and Panasonic are new and to be introduced in Q2 2015. They are designed to last 50 years or more even under hostile conditions. They come in capacities currently ranging from 300 GB to 1 Terabyte (1000 GB). Sony say that eventually they will create a box that will house 6 GB of retrievable data. The system is not designed for domestic use.

ALL these Discs require a special machine to play them; which for archive purposes would more than likely be a Blu-ray drive installed on a computer.

We now come to the tricky issue of just raw data files stored on the "cloud". The cloud is ostensibly a warehouse full of computers with one task in life: storing data so it can be updated and retrieved at will. The data centres are climate controlled, very secure and like aircraft, have several layers of fail-safes. The theory being your precious data never gets lost or corrupted.

The down-side to this wonderment is you have to pay for a company to do all this work for you; however prices are falling and in fact Microsoft** will store up to 5 terabytes (1 per user and you are allowed 5 users) and throw in all their Office software for 5 users for less than 70 quid a year. But that is EVERY year. 1 Terabyte is 1000 gigabytes and a gigabyte is 1000 megabytes. A typical music file is 1 megabyte per minute of music and modern cameras produce anywhere from 5 to 25 megabytes per image.

HAVING A BACK-UP

Archivists are still able to retrieve data sets from physical media such as punched cards, paper tapes and magnetic reels, stored way back in the sixties and seventies have first-hand experience of the DIFFICULTY and EXPENSE in doing so. They only too aware of the fragility of what they are doing and can offer people like ourselves advice on how to avoid the pitfalls they regularly encounter; the largest of which is back-up.

In all archiving if the master copy is lost then a secondary copy should be able to be brought forward into play. Especially if you are dealing with something as fragile as binary code (data files). It is therefore necessary when working with data to have at least TWO IDENTICAL sets which are stored in TWO DIFFERENT locations. In business this usually takes the form of one copy on a computer and another on a removable disc or drive that can be taken away from the office and locked in a safe. Many if not most businesses are now considering or already using the "cloud" as the secondary or tertiary data vault.

CONCLUSION

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Electronic media is SEARCHABLE and so if kept legally* is ideal for records such as members, degrees, fees and minutes.

All electronic media (CDs, Blu-ray, DVDs, Hard Drives, Memory Sticks or even the cloud) must be refreshed at regular intervals or the data "fades" away. If you use the cloud you are trusting and paying someone else to do this refreshing for you.

All electronic media relies on a computer or similar device to

- a) Understand the form of the data (jpeg, mpeg, doc or text) and
- b) Be able to reconstruct and image or document from that data. (Into jpg images or text documents)

It is looking like the three safest formats for data are:-

JPG or "jpegs" for pictures

TXT for text files.

CSV for databases and spreadsheets etc.

It therefore makes sense that if you do take the minute in electronic form which is becoming ever more likely, that these records are properly archived in two separated copies. You may even wish to keep one copy as a hard copy which is printed from the electronic record ... or even... handwrite the information into a big book!

*If you are keeping records of people you may wish to read the legal ramifications of doing so by reading the Data Protection Act. Ref: - <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection/the-data-protection-act>

** Microsoft are only one of many companies offering SECURE cloud storage. The figures quoted (January 2015) are for HOME USE and Business Cloud offerings, albeit more expensive, may be more resilient.

Ronnie Miller, PM Lodge Kyle No. 1117

Lodge Rosehaugh No 1216

Our November meeting was mainly a business meeting with a lecture by Bro David Patience PM. Despite his vast masonic experience this was the first time David had undertaken such a venture. The lecture was based on Masonic Poems although it expanded into a wider range. It was a very interesting lecture well received by the Brethren in attendance.

Our December meeting was the Installation evening. With our normal Installing Master Bro Allan Carmichael going back into the chair Bro Ronnie Cooper, who is an affiliate member of 1216, took over as Installation Master and was able assisted by Bro Jim Tait who installed the Office-Bearers in a very good meeting.

The stormy weather we experienced early into 2015 put pay to our January meeting. The village did not have power restored until the Saturday. I think this is the first time we ever had to cancel a meeting due to a power cut. The plan was for Ramsay to give us an update on Malawi and hopefully this can go on in our March meeting. Before then we do have our February meeting on the 6th and we are aiming for an F/craft degree for Bro Kirkwood with an 8.00pm start.

The Lodge held the Annual Senior Citizens Christmas Party on 10th December 2014 with 40 attending this year. It was as normal an excellent evening enjoyed by all. Grateful thanks to Mike Keavey (entertainer) and Annie Owens who helped out on the evening and all the ladies who helped with supplies.

In the last Patter we reported on Sandy Rose who was recovering from a stroke. Sandy did make progress but unfortunately is back in hospital again. Donald Jack was also admitted to Raigmore early in the new- year and after some diagnosis problems had his lungs drained today. He is now awaiting removal of gallstones by keyhole surgery and I am told a full MOT!

Keith Patience, PM

Secretary

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Lodge St Martin 1217

After the installation season came Christmas, which is a busy time for the Brethren. We have, for the last 30 odd years put up the village Christmas tree, and this year was no exception. Thankfully the weather was kind.

On the night after our December meeting, we did the rounds of the village with Santa's float. We decorate a donated lorry for Santa and knock on every door of the village, collecting for fund to give to Ullapool children's charities and needs. This year we raised just under £800.

PM Br. Downie requested, at our December meeting, that the lodge contribute to a raffle he organised to raise funds for football strips for a kid's team in the Gambia. The team is BUNDAS FC, in Sachaba, Kololi, in the Gambia. The Brethren thought this was a good idea and have sponsored 15 strips for the kids. Bro Downie gave us a look at them at our January meeting, picture attached. He will present them to the team on his next visit.



Past Master Downie and RWM Boyd with the new football strips

We all look forward to seeing the Brethren in the Province during the next several months, both in Lodge St Martin and in the Lodges in Ross & Cromarty.

Mike Turner, PM

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Lodge Loch Ewe 1551

The past quarter certainly had its moments at the GL of Scotland Installation Ceremony in Freemasons' Hall and Festival of Saint Andrew on Thursday 27th November 2014 in recognition of which we, at Lodge Loch Ewe, add our congratulations on the prodigious honour of Depute Grand Master Mason conferred on our own Provincial Patter Editor and IPPGM Bro. Ramsay McGhee.

On a more local note we are truly chuffed to report that, at the same venue, bestowed on our own Bro. Allan MacCrimmon was the GL Honorary Rank of Senior Grand Standard Bearer.

Allan has been a stalwart of 1551 serving as Treasurer for the last 25 years and is a very worthy recipient of RWPGM William Ross's nomination on behalf of the Province.

In the lodge at the annual Installation ceremony carried out on Thursday 11th December when Bro. Rory Mackenzie PM and Depute Master of my Mother Lodge Fingal No. 318 installed me as RWM of Lodge Loch Ewe in succession to Bro. Gibby Hassell (now my trusty IPM) and the installation by SPGM Jim Tait of the lodge office bearers my Depute is Duncan MacLennan relinquishing the Secretary post in favour of Bro. Barrie Whitwell WJW who has been succeeded by Bro Ally Gault.

The new Treasurer is Bro. Mike Longley making way for Bro. Allan MacCrimmon to be W.S.W. with other posts remaining much as they were.

The new team will be at work on 12th February when we will have an EA degree for an Initiate; this will be followed by a MM Degree for FC Richard MacDonald on 12th March and, to keep us in trim, we will be doing a FC for the PGL visitation on 9th April.

The Annual Quiz Night will be in the Aultbea Hotel on Friday, 27th February with Bro. Ken McMorran PM as QM. The hotel is presently undergoing refurbishment so we look forward to the 'new look'.

Talking of hotels couldn't help but have a chuckle at the response to a lady tourist in a west coast hotel who asked the waiter if she could have some poached salmon – Certainly madam, how would you liked it cooked!

Andrew M. Henderson

RWM

SNIPPETS FROM THE PAST

From the February edition in 1998

Brother Norman Fawcett of Lodge Seaforth can always be relied upon to come up with snippets of information that make us wonder how we ever managed without them. His latest gem is a cracker - There are 56 words in the Lord's Prayer; 297 words in the Ten Commandments; 300 words in the American Declaration of independence and 29,911 words in the EEC Directive on the export of eggs.

Thanks Norman !!!

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**Lodge
Loch Ewe**

Grand Challenge Quiz

Aultbea Hotel

7:30pm Fri 27th Feb

Teams of Four - £10 per Team

Refreshments & Raffle

Proceeds to

Poolewe Swimming Pool

To Book a Table call

07885 515760

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The Sinclair Bruce Diary

October 2014 - Well now here I am with this edition of the Patter when I will give you an insight into my masonic activities until the next edition. I commence with my usual visit to Lodge Rosehaugh and although they were holding a business meeting plus nomination of office bearers followed by a lecture I felt that it would be an interesting night out and I was not disappointed as the first items on the agenda were dealt with efficiently and accurately. And so to the Lecture which was a joint effort by Past Masters and blood Brothers John and David Patience. The lecture centred round the poems based on the North Atlantic Convoys and, in particular, HMS Jarvis Bay on which served a crewman by the name of Sam Patience from Avoch. At its conclusion they received the congratulations of all present - in fact it was so interesting that I and many others would be very happy to listen to it again.

And so to an update on sport. Andy Murray did not put up a good show in his first match of the present contest as he lost by two frames to nil and now will require to win his next two games to stay in the contest. I think he is getting past his sell by date time as there appears to be a number of new young players in the circuit.

The rugby today between England and New Zealand was a lively game in the first half with end to end play and the score at half time was England 14 New Zealand 5. However the second half was, although equally lively, all about the Southerners who got stronger as the game went on and they came out the winners by 24 to 21. Unfortunately an England player carelessly dropped the ball and New Zealand took full advantage of his error.

It's now Monday 17th November and I have just returned from Lodge Seaforth's regular meeting which took the form of business and nomination of office bearers for the coming year. All went very smoothly with a few changes and I am happy to report that this year we will have three offices changed from Past Masters to Master Masons and that can only be good for further progression into the future for our Lodge.

On not such a happy note Scotland really did not shine in the football last night and although they tried hard it was not enough and quite frankly they looked the weaker team from the start and they were lucky not to lose by a greater margin Final score Scotland 1 England 3.

We are now in the last week of November and the weather is more like June or July! I always keep reminding myself that climate change is certainly with us or maybe we will be in for a shock like America is presently experiencing with an overall covering of snow up to six feet - time will tell.

The Rugby Union game today between Scotland and Tonga was a game well worth watching. It was end to end play and the score does not reflect the quality of the match. The only weakness was that Tonga just could not score - possibly because Scotland's defence was superb. However it was great to witness a Scotland really at its best so perhaps they will play likewise in the six nations contest. Final score Scotland 37 Tonga 12.

The Wales vs New Zealand was also a good game to watch and the score does not reflect the quality of the game final score New Zealand 27 Wales 16.

And now to the football played by the ladies. A nice game to watch between England and Germany. The game was very slow to start - possibly weighing up each other - something at which women are champions at! However, at half time the score was three nil in favour of the Germans and that's how the game ended.

Saturday the 29th November was a special meeting on behalf of Brethren from Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada. I understand that two Brethren from Jamaica were also with the party. Although I held the meeting in my memory as a must go to, it was when my niece and her father came in for their usual visit and said "we did not expect to

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see you here". They had been in Fortrose and saw the activity at the Lodge around two o'clock. Only then I realised my error. Consequently it was too late for a change of mind, however I am reliably informed that there were over sixty in the Lodge and around forty at the meal and all had an enjoyable afternoon.

Last night I made my visit to Lodge Rosehaugh for their installation ceremony. All went very well with PM Ronnie Cooper in the chair assisted by PM James Tait. It was actually a reinstallation consequently a shorter programme with all present enjoying and admiring their command of the ritual.

And now a brief summary of the snooker on the telly all this week and the final will be played tomorrow Sunday the 7th December. The games of interest were as follows - Bingham vs Dot 6-5 O'Sullivan vs MacGill 6-4 and O'Sullivan vs Bingham 6-5. All close games however O'Sullivan will go through to the final and will meet Jud Trump. And now we reach the final and, as I said, it is between Trump and O'Sullivan. It was a really exciting game to watch and at half time it was 8-4 to O'Sullivan and the writing was on the wall as he went on to win with a slightly less margin final score O'Sullivan 10 Trump 9.

The year is fairly slipping by and its now Saturday the 13th and Lodge Seaforth's installation of our new Master and Office-bearers The meeting was chaired by Past Provincial Grand Master Bro Morris MacKenzie Downie and his team. All went well and Bro Alasdair Taylor and his Office-bearers were well and truly placed in their respective offices.

It is now Monday the 15th December and Lodge Seaforth's regular meeting will take the form of a Nine Lessons and Carols. I have just returned from the aforementioned singing and although the meeting was not well attended by our own members, those who turned out had an enjoyable evening that concluded with tea and Christmas pies in abundance. For me a grand start to our seasonal activities

And now we arrive at Christmas Eve and as old tradition goes I will stay up until 12 o'clock open the gifts, have a toast then retire for the night. Perhaps next week I will have an extra dram to take in the new year and so that's New Year over and all activities over for another year and I wish all readers a happy and successful 2015.

And as stated I consumed my usual drams plus.

And now we have all watched a full week of snooker on the Telly and unfortunately witnessed some great players bite the dust like John Higgins and Ronnie O-Sullivan

But the two finalists were Shaun Murphy vs Neil Robertson. An excellent game that was much better than the score reflects from their qualifying games as I really thought Robertson would win but that was not to be as firstly he lost the first two games and although he played his heart out he just could not get in front. In fact the final score reads Murphy 10 Robertson 2 the winner gets £200,000 and runner up £90,000 a good weeks work.

Our January Seaforth meeting was a first degree and the candidate was Mr Bassindale which was also our first meeting with the newly installed Office-bearers and my son Ronald who is the Junior Deacon held the responsibility of the perambulation's and he also delivered the charge. He did not let the clan down as he executed all his duties in an excellent manner and gained the respect and congratulations of all present.

We also witnessed PM Hamish Keir receiving his 50 years in the craft certificate plus a well-deserved Distinguished Service Certificate for his long service as treasurer of the Lodge.

The last two days were the finals of the Ladies and Gents International Bowls. Both Games were great to watch and so it should be as we were watching possibly the best players in the world. Results Ladies First Catherine Rednall runner up Laura Thomas and in the Gents First Alex Marshall. Runner up Andy Thompson so that's the bowls over meantime.

Sinclair Bruce

May the road rise up to meet you.

May the wind be always at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face;

the rains fall soft upon your fields

and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

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BITS AND PIECES

Brother Shum Siew Khoon – Lodge St Andrew

Brethren

It was indeed with great sadness that a week after the publication of the November edition that I learned of the death of Brother Shum Siew Khoon.

Brother Shum Siew Khoon was a Past Master in Lodge St Andrew No 1437 in Singapore and was the “distribution agent” for the Patter throughout Singapore and Malaysia. He was a charming individual who looked after me on my every trip to Singapore. He (*and no one else would ever have managed*) managed to get me to Tai Chi classes in the beautiful Botanic Gardens in Singapore at 6 in the morning although I think it would be fair to say he was not impressed by my efforts. Brother Shum took a great interest in Scottish Freemasonry and a particular interest in what was happening in Ross and Cromarty. He never failed to amaze me with his profound and penetrating questions – he had a tremendous thirst for knowledge. He was a thorough gentleman and I will miss him greatly when I next return to Singapore.

To his wife Lilian and the family I convey my sincerest condolences and likewise convey the deepest sympathy from the Province of Ross and Cromarty – his adopted Province.

Ramsay McGhee



Grand Lodge's answer to the three tenors – Ramsay McGhee, Hugh Bryson – Past Depute Grand Master and Thomas Constable Smith – Grand Almoner.

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The latest batch of tools – a combined effort from the Province of Ross and Cromarty and the Province of Fife and Kinross - arriving in the container at Ekwandeni in the north of Malawi.

Our Superintendent in Malawi, Gordon Sheppard, has since organised their collection from Ekwandeni and they have now arrived safe and sound in Blantyre



TOOLS FOR MALAWI



The boxes unloaded out of the container ready for transportation to Blantyre

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Royal Arch

INDIA AND CEYLON (SRI LANKA)

Wednesday, November 5th.

Once again the Emirates Desk at Glasgow Airport was the designated rendezvous point for the members of a fairly large Deputation who were to accompany me to India and Sri Lanka. I was privileged to be supported by ME Companion MacEwan, 2nd Grand Principal, ME Companion Grahame Smith, Grand Scribe E, ME Companion Putrell, Grand Superintendent, Border Province, ME Companion Mackean, Grand Superintendent, Mid & East Lothian, his Provincial Grand Scribe E., ME Companion Annand, Past First Principals ME Companions Walter Archibald, David Healy, and John Lynch. Sheila MacEwan and my own wife Joan added the female touch to the company.

Thursday, November, 6th

Departure as I have come to expect, when travelling with Emirates was on time and the seven hour flight to Dubai passed fairly quickly. Following the three hour "stop over" and comparatively short next leg we landed at Mumbai International Airport on schedule at 8a.m. local time.

An interminably long wait at Immigration left me contemplating if the officer processing the passengers in my queue was being overzealous and conscientious or merely incompetent. Eventually, after an hours wait, we exited the Terminal to be welcomed by our Grand Superintendent, ME Companion Aspi Byramji, his wife Tehnaz, and several senior District Office Bearers. We received an extremely warm traditional welcome which included being draped in a garland of flowers.

The hour's journey from the airport gave us all, particularly those visiting India for the first time, an opportunity to view certain aspects of the landscape along the route and appreciate the pressures on our driver who skilfully succeeded in manoeuvring our coach through the heavy traffic. The density of traffic in India is to have significant effect on our travelling experiences during this visit.

The Royal Bombay Yacht Club, having been upgraded considerably since my last visit five years ago proved to be a comfortable location for the following three nights. Our welcome to India was reinforced by a most enjoyable lunch hosted by senior members of the District and included several ladies being present. This light lunch, with an opportunity to sample an abundance of local delicacies, was certainly appreciated.

After a short rest we were conveyed to Freemasons' Hall when we attended a meeting of Lodge Zoraster No 800 (SC) jointly held with Lodge Forman No 1066 (SC). A large number of brethren being present, this proved to be an extremely well conducted EA meeting, given added interest by the fact that both candidates were sons of serving Office Bearers; one father being the Right Worshipful Master and the other Junior Deacon. Both were active participants in the Ceremony.

Another interesting aspect of the evening was the introduction of two senior brethren from Manchester who had travelled to Mumbai to present several artefacts which had belonged to a Past Master of Zoraster Lodge. He had been employed in a senior capacity in the Port of Bombay until his retirement in 1896 when he re-located to Newton Mearns in Scotland. Apparently his daughter-in-law had unearthed a masonic case containing a Past Master's jewel and other items of Masonic interest and had contacted Brother Eastwood, a Past Assistant Grand Superintendent of Works UGLE. Brother Eastwood, on realising the significance of the case decided to visit Mumbai and personally present these artefacts to Lodge Zoroaster. Our first day in Mumbai concluded with a most enjoyable Banquet held within Freemasons' Hall.

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Friday, 7th November.

A short rehearsal at Freemasons' Hall was followed by a leisurely lunch and an opportunity for relaxation. An extremely pleasant evening was spent at Wodehouse Gymkhana when, along with several senior District Office Bearers and their ladies we enjoyed a period of social fellowship and dinner, hosted by ME Companion Byramji and his wife Tehnaz, included liberal quantities of delightful Indian cuisine.

Saturday, 8th November.

During last night's dinner I was seated beside M.E. Companion Dalal, Depute Grand Superintendent, and his wife Gulshan. During our "chat" Mrs Dalal told me that she held a significant role in the running of a local Children's Orphanage. Having expressed an interest in her work she suggested that I might like to pay a visit. I readily accepted her invitation and this morning my wife and I spent two hours or so touring the Asha Sadan Orphanage. This turned out to be an educational and humbling experience.

Partly funded by the Department of Women and Child Development it is mainly dependent on donations from individuals, businesses and philanthropic institutions. The Committee make every effort to provide a high standard of care for its almost 200 residents. A very strict vetting procedure ensures that prospective adoptive parents are suitable and it is interesting to note that a large proportion are from European countries. Several of these children, when they became adults, eventually paid a visit to the Orphanage.

This afternoon we conducted two Ceremonies. The 175th Anniversary Rededication Ceremony of the District Grand Chapter of United Scottish Royal Arch Freemasonry in India and Ceylon, followed by the Re-installation of M.E Companion Aspi Khurshedji Byramji as Grand Superintendent. His Senior Officer Bearers were also duly installed.

A fitting conclusion to the evening was a Banquet held within Freemasons' Hall when we were joined by the Ladies who had patiently awaited the conclusion of our Ceremonies.

Sunday, 9th November.

An 8 a.m. departure from the Royal Bombay Yacht Club, an interesting route by coach to the airport, but on exiting security were advised that there would be a one and a half hour delay before boarding our short JetKconnect flight to Bangalore. On arrival there we received another very warm Indian style welcome; this time from senior members of Gibbs Royal Arch Chapter No 391 (SC) and then quickly driven to Bangalore Golf Club. The course and Club House must be the envy of many and surely qualify to be included in the list of more desirable golfing facilities.

After a leisurely, and another enjoyable lunch, we set off on the long drive to Mysore. Our objective was to see Mysore Palace illuminated. In spite of our driver's valiant attempt to arrive there before 7.45 p.m. (lights out) we failed by a few minutes. We were then driven to our overnight accommodation, the well-appointed Royal Orchid Hotel located overlooking the world renowned spectacular Brindavin Gardens. They were still "lit up" on our arrival.

The staff at the Royal Orchid Hotel excelled and, in spite of the lateness of the hour served another of those meals we have now come to expect.

Monday, 10th November.

Any visit to Mysore would be incomplete without a visit to Mysore Palace, the official seat of The Maharajas of Mysore. Officially opened in 1912 the interior is described as richly carved, colourful and architecturally thrilling. These views were certainly shared by all in my party who were most impressed with its breath-taking opulence.

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After lunch at the Mysore Sporting Club we again embarked on a slow return journey to Bangalore. Our driver's efforts were frustrated by the volume of traffic but eventually we did arrive at the Bangalore Club where several of our party were to reside for the following two nights while the remainder were to be resident at the Terrace Gardenia Hotel.

A welcome dinner was served in the Bangalore Club and no one wasted any time in retiring for the night.

Tuesday, 11th November.

Prior to being entertained to lunch at the Bangalore Cricket Club we spent some time on a city tour which included a stop at St Andrew's Church which is in the process of celebrating its Sesquicentennial Year. As the name suggests this impressive church belonged to the Presbyterian background from the Church of Scotland and during the one hundred and fifty years since the Scottish regiment began worshipping there it has grown to encompass a large multi-denominational family under the Church of South India. Average Sunday attendances are in the region of six hundred.

Late afternoon we assemble at Freemasons' Hall and conduct the Centenary Re-Dedication Ceremony of Chapter Gibbs No 391 (SC). It appears to be a reasonably strong Chapter with a dedicated group of Office Bearers. Another well attended dinner concluded our activities for another day.

Wednesday, 12th November.

Another 8a.m. departure by coach for the airport, where after the check in procedures we boarded another JetKonnnect flight. On arriving in Chennai we were met by several Senior Office-bearers of the local Chapter and driven to the E hotel. Lunch, hosted by members of the Chapter, was enjoyed by all at the Madras Gymkhana.

Chapter Asoka & Madras No 651 (SC) had arranged to work an Exaltation Ceremony for a candidate and we were privileged to witness a very impressive degree. All who participated are to be congratulated. At the conclusion of the Meeting several presentations were made to the visitors which will serve as a tangible souvenir of a memorable Meeting.

Very heavy rain made driving conditions difficult but eventually we arrived at our destination, a private residence, and joined the ladies where, courtesy of M.E. Companion Major Dr D. Raja we all enjoyed an excellent meal and an evening spent in social fellowship.

Thursday, 13th November.

The hotel staff, having previously arranged for coffee and sandwiches to be available, prior to our early departure we were suitably refreshed as we set off for another early morning flight. On time we left Chennai International Airport on our journey to Sri Lanka arriving at Columba shortly before 11 a.m. We were met and welcomed by Companions of Chapter Dalhousie No 182 (SC) who had previously arranged for a coach to be at our disposal for our scheduled trip to Kandy.

Interesting countryside but again traffic conditions made "speed" impossible. On arriving in Pinnawala we were fortunate to reach the Elephant Orphanage when the herd were spending some time in the local river. Lunch in the restaurant with tables set at a vantage point enabled us to witness the elephants' activities.

Onward to Kandy where we eventually arrived and booked into the very comfortable Hotel Topaz. Dinner and a reasonably early night.

Friday, 14th November.

Scheduled to leave our hotel at 8 a.m. we then visited the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic. It is possibly the most sacred Buddhist shrine in the world. From there we travelled for approximately two hours through very picturesque hill countryside and visited a Tea Factory and Plantation at Labookalei. Benefiting greatly from an

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interesting explanation on both the history and production of tea from an experienced and helpful guide this “stop” proved to be both interesting and informative.

During the course of our return journey we stopped briefly and visited a Spice Garden on the outskirts of Kandy prior to setting off on a slow journey to Colombo. Heavy rain and extremely busy traffic resulted in an 80 kilometre trip taking over three hours to complete. My sympathy was with our driver whose efforts were commendable.

Eventually we were able to check into the Mirage Hotel which was to be our location for the next two nights. An exceptionally good hotel and the dinner reflected on its high standard.

Saturday, 15th November.

After breakfast our coach arrived at the hotel and we were taken on a sightseeing tour of Colombo. Quite an eye opener. The governments of Ceylon, given its independence in 1948, certainly lost no time in paving a bright future for this island of twenty one million inhabitants. The city of Colombo, an amalgam of old and modern areas project an image of prosperity indicating the potential for a successful future.

A preliminary visit to Victoria Masonic Temple give us an opportunity to meet a few of the local Companions and discuss our proposals for this evening's Ceremonials. Lunch in a Chinese restaurant and it is time to return to the hotel to change for our return visit to the Masonic Temple.

Our first duty was to conduct the Re-dedication Ceremony of Dalhousie Royal Arch Chapter No 182 (SC) and thereafter the installation of the new First Principal M.E. Companion Rudolf Jacob Boekel and his Office Bearers. All members of the Scottish contingent participated in the actual Installation Ceremony.

At the conclusion of the Ceremony we all adjourned to the Cinnamon Lakeside Hotel and met up with the ladies and other guests at a very formal banquet. We were welcomed at the entrance to the hotel by traditional native drummers and dancers who then preceded us into the Banqueting Hall. Prior to being invited to partake of our meal the customary speeches were delivered while a Western Classical Orchestra provided music. This proved to be a very fitting finale to a most memorable overseas visit.

Sunday, 16th November.

The management of the Mirage Hotel arranged for an early breakfast to be provided and at 6.30a.m. We left for the hour's journey to the airport. Soon we had checked in and without delay boarded the Emirates flight for, initially Dubai and then Glasgow.

Time now to reflect on the activities of the last fortnight. A truly wonderful visit made so much more memorable by several factors. At each location, commencing when we arrived in Mumbai, we were constantly treated to the utmost courtesy, kindness and most outstanding hospitality possible. The preparations made prior to our arrival were of a very professional standard and the comprehensive itinerary contributed greatly to the interest of the tour.

The continued support of Grand Superintendent Byramji, his wife Tehnaz, Past Grand Superintendent Metha and both Deputies M.E. Companions Dalal and Limathwalla who were present with us at all locations out with Mumbai is appreciated. So also was the encouraging presence of the Companions and Ladies who travelled from Scotland. I do hope that they also shared in the pleasure of the occasion.

Ian Fraser.

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PROVINCIAL GRAND ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER of ROSS & CROMARTY

Provincial visitation dates for 2015:

Tuesday 10th February	Tain & Ross RAC, Tain
Wednesday 4th March	Cromarty Firth RAC, Invergordon
Friday 24th April	St Clement RAC, Dingwall
Wednesday 13th May	Hebrides RAC, Stornoway
Thursday 14th May	Hebrides L&C, Stornoway

St Clement RAC No 244 –

The February meeting will take place on Friday 27th February when we will be working the EM Degree.

The March meeting will be on Friday 27th March when we will work the RA Degree

The Provincial Royal Arch Chapter visitation will now take place in April rather than the customary January.

Cromarty Firth RAC

On behalf of the chapter I would like to wish all a happy prosperous New Year.

Since the last Patter we have had our AGM and the installation of Companion Henry Macinnes as First Principal and his office bearers and carried out an EM degree.

Our next meeting on Wed the 4th we will be conferring the RA degree on Companion Keith Bauer (depending on him being onshore).

On the 4th March we will confer the EM degree on Bro Kris Bauer and on the 1st April it will be the nomination and election of office bearers.

Raymond Morrison

Treasurer

ROYAL ARCH HEBRIDES No. 364

The new season's off to a good start with 2 of our brethren being made excellent masters in our first 2 meetings and looking forward to a Royal Arch degree at our February meeting.

A FRENCH CONNECTION.

In the late 1890's through to the mid 1990's French Companions sojourned to Scotland to affiliate to Scottish Chapters and be admitted to Cryptic Councils and Lodges and Councils. This led to twenty French Chapters working the Scottish ritual being established in various parts of France as well as in some of its overseas territories. With the passage of time Companions of these Chapters became desirous of constituting their own Grand Chapter.

Representation was duly made to both The Supreme Grand Chapitre des Macons de L'Arche Royale de France and The Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland, and after due consideration both bodies decided to support this request. It was agreed that the new Grand Chapter be formed within the Grande Loge Nationale Francaise in Paris on Saturday, 13th December, 2014 by representatives of the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland

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Friday, 12th December.

My Deputation consisted of M.E. Companion Alexander, Depute First Grand Principal, M.E. Companion Frost, Past Depute, M.E. Companion, McEwan, 2nd Grand Principal, M.E. Companion Philand, 3rd Grand Principal, M.E. Companion Smith, Grand Scribe E, M.E. Companion Niven, Grand Director of Ceremonies., Four ladies, Sheila McEwan, Libby Philand, Anne Niven and my wife Joan also made the journey to Paris.

An early start from the Marriot Hotel, Edinburgh, ensured that we had sufficient time to “check in” at the Air France desk. On attempting to do so we were advised that the flight had been “downgraded” to a smaller aircraft and that we would not be flying on it but that arrangements had been made to travel by British Airways via Heathrow. Instead of landing in Paris at 12 noon as anticipated we were now scheduled to arrive early evening. No alternative but to “grin and bear it” and advise our French counterparts of the amended timetable.

Three hours spent at Terminal 5 and we then boarded the rearranged flight to Charles de Gaulle International Airport. Within a couple of hours we should be in Paris. The normal flight procedure announcements were completed and the pilot advised us that there was a “glitch” in air traffic control and that we would have to remain on the aircraft until normality was restored and we were permitted to depart. Our thoughts turned to the question are we going to arrive in France today?

Two hours later the pilot announced that permission had been given to “take off” but that we are now in a long queue and would be required to await our turn. Several hours late we arrive in Paris and were met at the airport by two senior Companions of the new Grand Chapter. Coincidentally one of them was an Air France pilot. Within an hour or so we arrived at the Le Meridien Etoile where we were warmly welcomed by the Premier First Grand Principal of the Supreme Grand Chapitre de Macons de L'Arche Royale de France, M.E. Companion Jean-Pierre Serval, the First Grand Principal Designate of the new Grand Chapter, M.E. Companion Thierry Thave and several other senior Companions. They had all awaited our arrival with a considerable degree of patience and suggested that we should not delay in accompanying them to a nearby restaurant where we eventually sat down to a most enjoyable meal and an opportunity to converse with our French hosts, most of whom are fluent in English

Today's travails necessitated an early night.

Saturday, 13th December.

A morning visit to the GLNF lodge premises included a conducted tour of this magnificent building. Following lunch we were duly admitted to the Supreme Grand Chapitre des Macons de l'Arche Royale de France and warmly welcomed by Most Excellent Companion Jean-Pierre Serval, Premier Grand Principal.

In the presence of a large number of Companions the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland was duly opened. In accordance with the Ceremonial to be observed upon Constituting and Dedicating a Royal Arch Chapter the new Grand Chapitre de l'Arche Royale Ecossaise was duly constituted, dedicated and the Principal Office Bearers obligated.

I then had the pleasure and privilege of installing Most Excellent Companion Thierry Thave as its Premier Grand Principal. Thereafter the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland was closed and the new Grand Chapitre de l'Arche Royal Ecossaise de France opened. Most Excellent Companion Thave then installed his Principal Office Bearers and conducted the appropriate business associated with this memorable and unique occasion.

A memorable part of this business was when Most Excellent Thierry Thave conferred upon each of the Grand Office Bearers in the Scottish deputation the corresponding Honorary Grand Office in the new Grand Chapter.

Prior to the conclusion of the meeting the Grand Master of the Grande Loge Nationale Francaise conferred upon Most Excellent Companion Tom Frost the GLNF Medal of Honour to mark his seventy years meritorious service to Royal Arch Freemasonry. This was indeed an outstanding gesture as it is an honour conferred on only twelve living Freemasons as any one time.

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A lavish dinner held within the GLNF premises with ladies being present concluded an unforgettable and historic occasion. Customary speeches both in French and English with assistance from interpreters concluded the evening.

Sunday 14th December.

No problems in respect of our transport arrangements today and we arrived back in Edinburgh with very pleasant memories of the last two days.

I am most grateful to Most Excellent Companion Theierry Thave and Most Excellent Companion Jean-Pierre Servel for the truly exceptional kindness and generous hospitality extended to us during our short sojourn in Paris.

I wish the First Grand Principal, his Office Bearers and Companions great success in all aspects of their new venture.

Ian Fraser.

First Grand Principal

SNIPPETS FROM THE PAST

From the "Patter" in May 1998 –

Another gem from Bro Frank Elliott in Belfast:

Tomorrow

He was going to be all that he wanted to be - tomorrow.

None could be kinder or braver than he - tomorrow.

A friend who was troubled and weary he knew who'd be glad for a lift - and who needed it too - on him he'd call and see what he could do - tomorrow.

Each morning he stacked up the letters he'd write - tomorrow.

And thought of the folks he would fill with delight - tomorrow.

And hadn't one minute to stop on his way, "more time I'll have to give to others" he'd say - tomorrow.

The greatest of workers this man would have been - tomorrow.

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The Squaremen – Heilan' Shed No 6



The above photo shows the Sub-Deacon, Colin and Assistant, Harry, having a well-earned break from labour in John O' Groats Lodge when sixteen members of the Shed travelled up the A9 to pay a visit there.

A deputation of members from Orkney travelled across the Pentland Firth to join in for the day to supplement the members from Caithness.

Four new members joined Heilan Shed on the day.

An excellent time was had and the mince and tatties was served up by Christine Green from Maryburgh, who was in attendance with her husband Ackie, a long standing supporter of Heilan Shed.

The photograph below shows the Acting Worthy Deacon, Morris Downie presenting a cheque to Donnie Macdonald, for a very worthy cause in Caithness.

Unfortunately the Worthy Deacon, James Williamson, was not in attendance due to work commitments but the message he conveyed was that he appreciated the support given to the Shed throughout his term in office and wished all who got there, a safe journey home.

The Captain of the Guard, Henry McInnes was also absent due to working abroad and his office was ably occupied by Past Worthy Deacon Derek Milne, while Past Worthy Deacon James Dowie filled in and attended to the working tools lecture, at the last minute.

Brian Fraser, the long standing Steward was away on holidays and the stewarding was attended to by Derrick and Stevie in a most competent manner.

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Acting Worthy Deacon, Morris Downie presenting a cheque to Donnie Macdonald

DISTRICT GRAND PRIORY OF THE NORTH IN SCOTLAND.

Visitations dates for Spring 2015 ;

Friday 6th February	Ross, Alness
Friday 13th March	Maison Dieu, Lossiemouth
Thursday 19th March	St Fergus, Wick
Friday 17th April	Highland, Inverness
Saturday 18th April	Western Isles, Stornoway
Monday 20th April	Lochaber & Lorn, Oban

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Guild Lodges

Highland Guild Lodge will meet in the Masonic Hall, Alness on Friday 13th February.

Rosicrucian College – Inverness

The next meeting of the Inverness College will be on Monday 9th February when a Grade Four will be worked.

Ramsay McGhee

Ed

Spelling Chequer

For those of you who use the latest in word processing packages on your computers, you will be well aware of the convenience of the built in spelling checker - however, too much reliance upon it can cause all sorts of problems!

I have a spelling chequer
It came with my pea sea
It plainly marks four my revue
Miss steaks eye cannot sea
Each thyme when eye have
struck the quays
I weight for it two say
If watt eye rote is wrong or rite
It shows me strait a weigh
As soon as mist ache is maid
It nose bee fore two late
And eye can put the error rite
No, I shall find it grate
I've run this poem threw it
I'm shore yore policed to no
It's letter perfect in its weigh
My chequer tolled me sew.

And finally

May I take this opportunity to thank, in the sincerest terms, all those who have so warmly and enthusiastically passed on their kind remarks on my recent appointment as Depute Grand Master - I can assure you that your kind and generous words are very much appreciated. I will endeavour to carry out my duties in a manner that will hopefully reflect credit on all the Lodges in the Province of Ross and Cromarty, in particular, Lodge Seaforth and to my Mother Lodge, St Barchan No 156.

My sincere thanks to you all for your thoughtful and kind-hearted greetings.

Ramsay