

District Comments - Kapiti-Wellington

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LATEST COMMENTS FROM RUSSELL PRATT - KAPITI-WELLINGTON DISTRICT

United Horowhenua Continues to be the "Poster Child" for the District



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What a great night United Horowhenua turned on for the re-installation of their current Master, Brian Evans.

Past District Grand Master Barrie Buck officiated for the evening so I sat back and enjoyed a night off. It was humbling to see a true 'master' at work.

The metrics for this Lodge all head skywards with an increase in membership of more than 10% in the last 2 years including 4 initiations and 8 joinings.

This Lodge continues to make a huge effort to involve ladies and partners - so it was fitting that Tania should accompany me on this visit - her first outing as District Grand Mistress. She loved it and has vowed to accompany me again next year.

More than 80 sat down to a sumptuous refectory which included a very thought provoking presentation on the CACTUS charity that the Lodge supports.

I had such an enjoyable evening that I have asked Barrie to officiate at next year's Installation.

Westminster Lodge Proves Haven For All of the District's EAs



I decided on a whim to visit the May Meeting of Westminster Lodge to witness the initiation of Bro Trevor Mourdant. What I wasn't expecting was the huge turnout of Entered Apprentices that had the same idea as me. Including Trevor a total of 6 EAs were present.

The more than 50 members and visitors were treated to a night of superb ritual with standout performances from their Junior Deacon and Senior Warden.

Refectory was equally convivial with an excellent meal and good conversation.

Richard Illingworth is to be congratulated for leading such an engaged and happy Lodge. I was delighted to be presented with a Westminster Lodge tie - a tradition that I understand goes back several years.

My domestic responsibilities typically preclude me visiting on a Friday night - but I really am pleased I broke with domestic protocol to attend, I had such an enjoyable evening. Freemasonry at its best.

Interesting Discussion At Tawera-O-Kapiti

I attended the May regular meeting of Tawera-O-Kapiti to listen to a discussion from Worshipful Master, Malcolm Harfitt and Past Grand Lecturer Chris Bryant on how we should go about making the Craft more attractive for new members; as well as hearing of suggested changes for our Charity.

Those who attended this year's Divisional Conference would have already heard much of the discussion.

I was disappointed to be one of only 3 visitors who came to listen - given the subject matter I was expecting there to be a lot more visitors.

It is great that Lodges are showing the courage to have these types of discussions - our future won't plan itself.

Malcolm is an intelligent articulate Master with enough life under his belt to speak with authority. I thoroughly enjoyed the discussion and look forward to returning to this Lodge for further visits in the future.



Dr Richard Stein Takes First Step In Freemasonry

It was a delight to witness Richard Stein take his first step in Freemasonry at the Hutt Valley Lodge No. 176 on 8 May.

WBro Steve Salmon was in the chair and the evening attracted a good turnout from across both the Hutt Wairarapa and Kapiti-Wellington Districts.

Dr Richard Stein

It was great to catch up with my District 21 District Grand Master counterpart (Rick Masterton) and on this occasion Steve's brother, RW Bro Gary Salmon - Divisional Grand Master of the Northern Division. It's always great when the brother sitting close to you in Lodge really is your brother.

Morris Roberston delivered a sincere and heartfelt toast to the candidate in the refectory reflecting on Dr Richard's efforts to establish Camp Purple in New Zealand.

Dr Richard is a gastroenterologist who is originally from the States, but has been living and working in New Zealand since 2007. Richard received his undergraduate degree from Columbia University and his medical degree from the University of Illinois in Chicago. He did his gastroenterology training at Emory University in Atlanta. Before his permanent move to New Zealand, he was in practice for twenty years in Seattle where he was also an Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of Washington.

His areas of interest are Inflammatory Bowel Disease and diseases of the liver. He is a past recipient of the Ashley O'Connor/Mike McCready Award for IBD, and a past President of the Northwest Chapter of the Crohns and Colitis Foundation of America. Richard was also

Chief of Staff at Highline Medical Centre in Seattle, and a Board member of the King County Medical Society. He is co-chair of Crohns and Colitis NZ Charitable Trust.

Welcome Richard - Freemasonry is a better organisation on account of having you numbered among its ranks.



ANZAC Ceremony Combined With Lodge of Sorrow

Empire Fergusson Lodge's annual ANZAC remembrance was turbo charged at the meeting held in the Brooklyn Masonic Centre on Tuesday 24 April. The Lodge was joined by New Zealand Pacific Lodge No. 2; with the Junior Warden's chair occupied by the Worshipful Master on the Coronation Lodge No. 127 (Bill Taylor).

The unique evening that followed commenced with Empire Fergusson's 'regular' ANZAC ceremony. This included The Last Post and Reveille - both superbly executed by Clive Lloyd.



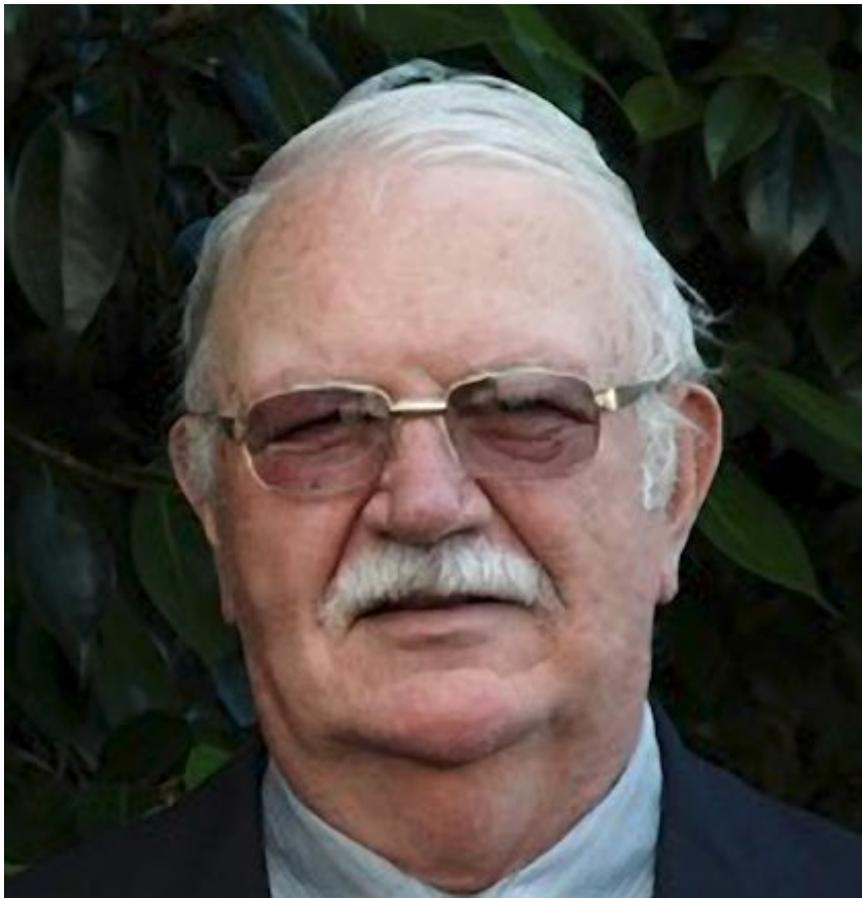
A Lodge of Sorrow was then constituted with WBro John Downey in the chair and eulogies were read for RWBro Jim Hogg, PDepGM; VW Bro Merv Johnston DistGM and WBro Leo Mumford PGSwdB.

With nearly 50 brethren in attendance an enjoyable if not sombre evening was had by all.

In some respects it is a shame that both New Zealand Pacific Lodge and Empire Fergusson Lodge meet on the same night as I sensed a strong connection between the two Lodge's at Tuesday's meeting. They share many values and it was great to stand shoulder to shoulder with New Zealand's oldest Lodge.

Northern Division Conference Proves to be Showcase for "Masonry At Its Best"

I was delighted to be invited to speak at the Northern Division Conference which was held at the Alexandra Park Conference Centre in Greenlane on Saturday the 21st of April.



New sub-editor - John MacDonald

I was speaking on developments to the Northern Division website and announcing the appointment of a new sub-editor who will taking over much of the content preparation work for initially the Northern Division website; but hopefully nationally as he grows into the role.

Our new sub-editor (pictured at left) is John MacDonald from Whangarei. Many of you will instantly recognise John as the holder of the pen behind "NorthTalk". If you're not familiar with NorthTalk you can click [here](#) to go to the page on the Northern Division Website.

Divisional Grand Master, Gary Salmon (brother of our very own Steve Salmon) is leading a Division in good heart - the energy in the room was palpable.

Wherever I look in Freemasonry in New Zealand all I seem to ever see is good news. It's a great time to be a Freemason!

Trentham Lodge Exhibits Impeccable Hospitality at Installation Meeting

It's been a couple of years since I've visited Trentham Lodge - which is way too long for a Lodge that has such a great spirit and energy.

I have previously referred to this Lodge as Masonry's "League of Nations" due to the diverse nationalities of the brethren that make up its ranks.

It was also a delight to support District Grand Master, Rick Masterton as he worked his "magic" in his own Lodge. Our two District's share a very special bond - one which I am keen to strengthen even further over the next 18 months.

Seeing a brother installed for the first time makes an Installation Meeting all the more special and Master Adrian (John) Webb can be well pleased with his performance on the night.

The pictures below show the Grand Lodge Officers present on the night; Rick and I; and Rick with his newest Master in the District.





Thanks to John Woodall for the photographs!

An Enthusiastic Initiate and a very proud Uncle at Coronation Lodge No. 127

I really enjoyed the family atmosphere at the Coronation Lodge Meeting held on Saturday 7th April at their Lodge Rooms in Johnsonville. The candidate for the night was Kristoffer Neudeck (Ace) and his proposer was his very proud Uncle Chris Alip.

Ace had been attending the Lodge to help Chris set up refectory when he was very young and has had a lifelong interest in the Craft. At 21 he has the world at his feet and I wish him a long and happy career in Freemasonry.

I also couldn't help but be impressed with the Philipino way of doing things. At the conclusion of the ceremony Ace's extended family prepared a beautiful meal which they shared with those who attended. The food was beautiful - although admit I couldn't quite push myself to try the black pudding in pig's blood gravy. The roast pork, however, was delicious.



New candidate Ace Neudeck with his Uncle Chris Alip

Worshipful Master, Bill Taylor, is to be congratulated for the amazing vibe this Lodge has. Fellowship and camaraderie ooze from the brethren and this is reflected in the almost 'party like' experience I had on Saturday.

Don't Underestimate the Greatness of the Craft... beer



Pictured from left to right are Clive Lloydd, yours truly, Phil Gardiner, Mick Turner, Cam Lee and Junior Warden, Chris Lee.

I was delighted to be invited to join with 4 other brethren from my city lodge, Empire Fergusson for an evening of beer brewing fun. We arrived at around 5.30pm, chose what we each wanted to brew from the 35-odd beer varieties and then set about brewing our masterpieces. It was all done and dusted by around 8.45pm. At \$160 for 40 litres - it is around 1/8th of the cost of buying craft beer in a pub - around \$4.00 per litre as opposed to around \$32 per litre in a pub.

We will go back in two weeks and bottle the beer - and it will be ready to drink a couple of weeks after that.

It was so much fun that I want to organise a District event here. We can accommodate up to 15 brewers - with up to 3 people in each brewing team. What a great way to honour the 'craft'.

Sincere thanks to our Junior Warden, Chris Lee, for organising such a fun night.

A Tribute to MW Bro Dan Holmes - Past Grand Master

The Kapiti-Wellington District acknowledges the passing today (4 April, 2018) of Daniel Mearns Holmes (Dan), QSO. He was in his 87th year.

MW Bro Holmes had a most distinguished Masonic career. He was initiated in Ikaroa Lodge in the Taranaki District in 1954, passed and raised in 1955 - also in Ikaroa Lodge.

He enjoyed a number of Grand Lodge ranks in the 70's and 80's culminating in his appointment to Grand Master in 1994. He was awarded a 60 year bar to his 50 year jewel in 2014.

Our thoughts are with his family at this sad time. Rest now Brother, your work here is done.



New Zealand Pacific Enjoys 176th Installation

There is some conjecture as to whether it was New Zealand Pacific's 176th Installation on Tuesday 27 March, but it really doesn't matter.

What a great night the more than 70 attending brethren had. John Downey, despite being in his late 80's bounced around the lodgeroom like a teenager.

New Zealand Pacific is one of a handful of Lodges throughout New Zealand that perform their own Installation ceremony. This year the Installing Officer was RW Bro Jim Watt, Divisional Grand Master. Jim did an amazing job and certainly set the bar high for me when I am Installing Officer at Lodge Zetland's Installation later in April.

The refectory proceedings were up to the usual high standard for this Lodge topped off by an excellent performance by Eddie Martin of "The Master's Song".

A great night!



Pictured from left to right: Dennis Blacklaws, John Litton, Steve Salmon, Mike Pope, Jim Watt, John Downey, Russell Pratt and Kevin Nelson

Divisional Conference Draws Record Crowd

I was delighted to attend the 2018 Central Division Conference in Palmerston North on Saturday 24 March. Nearly 150 brethren gave up their Saturday to be part of the exciting future for Freemasonry in the Central Division. The picture below shows a full room of engaged Masons - including more than 30 EAs, FCs and Master Masons - a record in itself.



Thanks to Jim for organising a diverse and interesting programme. For me - the highlight was Steve Griffin's session on Lodge Planning. One of my top priorities over the next few months will be helping Lodges (who need it) with their future planning.

The key note session on Voluntary Organisations was also very insightful - and helped me

appreciate that while, overall the number of people volunteering is down the hours given by volunteers has dramatically increased.

It was also a delight to witness the great work of the Heartland Bank Scholarship programme and their presentation to Anneke Mayhead. More on that in the next series of website updates.

For me though, the most poignant message of the day was from our Grand Master, MW Bro Winger. While it is important to "Speak Up" for Freemasonry; and to see the decline of membership in the Craft level off - it is equally important that Lodges focus on having fun.

In his response to the Toast to the Grand Master at my recent investiture he said "So what will success look like? Membership numbers? I don't think so – it is a sign that we are healthy, but the sign of success I want to focus on is the satisfaction levels of our brethren. Evidence the brethren are taking personal responsibility for their lodges, they are actively engaged in the activities in their community, they enjoy the fraternity – if we get the level of enjoyment right, then our brethren will take pride in freemasonry, they will Speak Up to their friends and family and colleagues – and we will raise our profile in our communities".

So let's not take the "foot off the gas" in terms of membership and retention; but let's focus on making our Lodges enjoyable places to be.

Thanks to Morris Robertson for the photograph.

My Investiture: A night I will NEVER forget

Thursday 22 March 2018 will live with me for the rest of my days.

The night from start to end was just amazing for me. To have nearly 100 brethren, including 41 Grand Lodge Officers brave the elements to witness the investiture was very humbling. Add to that the careful thought that our Grand Master had applied to how he would do the investiture and the outcome was a perfect night.

I was also incredibly grateful for the amazing support in refectory for the fundraising activity we embarked upon for Vincent's Art Workshop. After expenses I understand more than \$3,000 was raised on the night. We are hoping to turn this even to an even greater amount with assistance from the Freemasons Charity.

As I was driving home from the night it occurred to me that maybe investitures of Grand Lodge Officers (with the exception of the Grand Master, his deputy and the Divisional Grand Masters) should be undertaken at a District Level. As great as it would have been being invested at Grand Communication I can't imagine it being any where near as special as what I experienced last Thursday.

Food for thought.



I am very thankful to Jim and Mark (pictured above) for making the night so special. Thanks to Morris Robertson for taking photos on the night.

More pictures will be included in the next series of web updates.

Welcome!

Brethren, I thought I would take this opportunity to thank the many people who have either rung or emailed myself and Tania to congratulate me on my recent appointment.

My appointment to this role is bitter sweet. Merv and I were Grand Stewards together in 2013 and we became close friends as a result. His passing continues to occupy my thoughts on a daily basis and I miss the energy and commitment he had for the Kapiti-Wellington District. I have decided that the best way to honour Merv's memory is to carry on with the great work that he started in November 2016. I'm daunted by the size of the boots I have to fill; but owe it to Merv to advance the legacy he has left.

I hope you find my style collaborative and collegial. Our Divisional Grand Master has charged me to nurture and grow every Lodge within my District; and to promote a spirit of harmony and goodwill amongst the Lodges.

I will never replace Merv, but I hope, over time, to emulate the vision, energy and commitment he had for the Kapiti-Wellington District.

Thank you in advance for coming on this journey with me.

Russ

District Grand Master (elect)

6 March, 2018

Merv's Archive Page