

Snippets

BITS AND PIECES FROM WIVES, PARTNERS AND FRIENDS OF FREEMASONS

Hi everyone!

A belated Happy New Year to you all! I do hope you had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year and that 2015 has started well for you. John and I had a wonderful time catching up with all our family, who came together in January. It was such a treat to have everyone together in one place.

This weekend, John and I will begin travelling again to different parts of the country. I am really looking forward to it. So much is happening and I love meeting many 'old' friends again and making new ones. I also love hearing from you all so please email me (diana.litton@freemasons.co.nz) with your comments and ideas - and let me know what you have been doing or plan to do this year - and please send lots of photos!

2015 will be so special with so many anniversaries to commemorate in different ways, not least of which is of course the **125th Anniversary of the formation of the Constitution of New Zealand Grand Lodge**. As I am sure most of you will know by now, New Zealand Freemasons will be 'joining hands' with the **Foundation of the Blind**, who are also celebrating their 125th anniversary this year. The national project is raising funds for **Daisy Players** which are special CD players for talking books used by those with sight problems.

They are portable and enable users to skip from chapter to chapter or from page to page. Another feature is a speech synthesizer which can read Word files and they are also internet capable for downloading audio books. The aim is to raise sufficient funds to provide 125 Daisy Players and Lodges are encouraged to be pro-active in organising fund-raising events or programmes to this end.

The organisers are also keen to have the input and involvement from the ladies so do please think of what we can all do to help this very worthy cause - and have lots of fun along the way! The Blind Foundation have speakers who would be willing to

address groups and if you would like more information please let me know. They have put out a very impressive short video clip on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrNNvZGTt38&feature=outu.be>. Do watch it if you can.

Raising funds for Daisy Players and supporting the Blind Foundation is just one way Freemasons and their partners will be celebrating the 125th anniversary. There is a **commemorative boxed set of two bone china mugs** available to purchase @ \$22 for yourselves or others and due to popular demand, these will still be available for another two months. Orders will be taken until 30 April and be dispatched to the various lodges within two weeks of that date. Visit www.fundraise.biz/freemasons to complete your purchase. **Please** give your support to the purchase of both the Daisy Players and the mugs.

The Potter Masonic Trust is also giving a grant of \$450,000 towards the building of a facility to be built at the **Homai campus for blind and low-vision children** in Manurewa, Auckland. Construction is already well under way with completion expected by April.

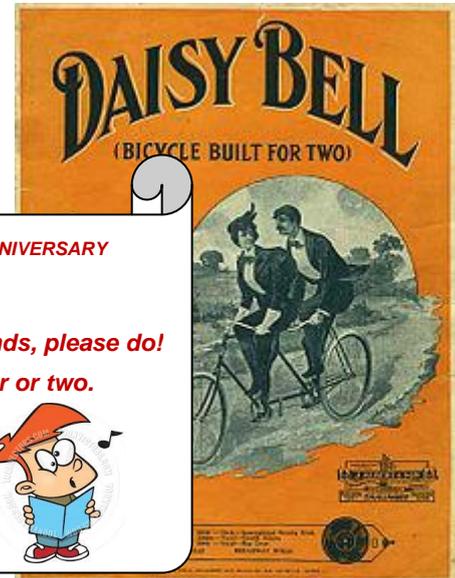
Other anniversaries this year include the 175th year signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, 200 years since the Battle of Waterloo, 800 years for signing the Magna Carta, the 50th anniversary of the death of Winston Churchill and 70 years since VE day.

The very notable event this year for New Zealand is of course the **100th Anniversary for the Landings on Gallipoli in WWI** - this was the making of the ANZACs and put the stamp on our military status. One Lodge commemorating this event is the **United Forces Lodge No 245** in April. A solemn service has been designed to mark the occasion with dignity and respect. The service will be conducted at the Air Force Museum at Wigram, attended by a great number of veterans, widows of veterans, all three cadet Forces, civil and military



FROM THE ORGANISER OF THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS – MARK WINGER:

**“Lodges, lodges, give me your funds, please do!
We're collecting and need a dollar or two.
It is our anniversary,
So let's help those in adversity!
You'll be great, to participate,
In a project designed for you!”**



dignitaries and Freemasons from all constitutions. The Service will most certainly be a very memorable experience for all who attend.

A Patriotic Call to Yarn: The National Army Museum is asking the general public to **knit or crochet poppies** to honour the NZ troops who fought for the country in WWI. They would like to have 18,166 poppies to form a cascading waterfall of poppies in the Museum's memorial area, one poppy for each person lost in WWI, aiming to reach the 18,166 target by the end of May. I have some simple knitting and crochet patterns available so if anyone would like them, please email me at diana.litton@freemasons.co.nz. If everyone could knit just a few we would be able to provide a really good quantity to give to the Army Museum on behalf of the Freemasons of New Zealand. I will be delighted to personally collect all the poppies at the **Northern and Central Divisional Conferences in May** and for those in the South Island, receive any by mail (email me for details). So, please, ladies, get those needles clicking - and maybe, a few gentlemen might like to have a go, too!



Freemasonry - as researched by Anne Mace

Freemasonry is a fraternal organisation which provides camaraderie, interest and challenges for the men and is supported, appreciated and enjoyed by the wives, widows and partners.

It is an organisation that promotes self development, family and community values, while providing strong affiliations, trusted and lasting friendships for those who share a concern for human values, moral standards and the rights of individuals.

Around 300 years ago Freemasons built the cathedrals and castles that Europe and the UK are so well known for, while forming an organization to protect their expertise and pass it on the apprentices, to ensure the future of their craft. Building a cathedral requires all work to be done on the level, with all corners as perfect squares, to ensure the stability of the structure. The square and compasses, and the levels used in the structure of Cathedrals remain as symbols of Freemasonry to this day.

By 1842, Freemasonry with its principles of kindness, care, honesty and fairness, had travelled with the settlers to become established in New Zealand, with the NZ Constitution being formed in 1890.

Caring for people through charity is a key to Freemasonry, something which Freemasons were slow to talk about in the past, 'though in recent times there has been greater discussion and recognition of the philanthropic work undertaken by Freemasons.

Freemasonry provides help to individuals in need, looks after the widows and the wider Freemasons communities, supports Lodges and Districts in projects that benefit their local communities from gliding to gymnasiums; provides Freemasons University Scholarships to reward academic excellence when combined with community involvement, funds research activities which are working to improve outcomes in Huntingdon's disease, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, as well as enhanced recovery following strokes, and research into paediatrics, neurology and gerontology. As an example of Freemasons charity, in 2013 money was given in one area to assist food banks, to the Brain Injury Association, to support schools, Toy Libraries, Hospices, Kindergartens, Home of St Barnabas and Life Education Trust.

Freemasonry is about creating better people and encouraging members to be the best they can be. The traditional values of Freemasonry are still relevant and important in the development of today's families and communities. Care of people - family, fellow Freemasons, the wider community, university students, researchers and health providers as well as the country - continues to be the cornerstone of Freemasonry.



A letter from Margaret McNutt

Dear Diana - I am enjoying your Newsletters - thank you for setting them up. Now to tell you of my Lodge involvement. My husband Bill, is a PM of The Gate Pa Lodge, No. 407, Tauranga, and is now their only surviving Foundation Member. We have lived in Tauranga for many years, but now we spend much of our time on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland. Bill is now a member of Caloundra Lodge, No. 387, and is currently the Chairman of the Social Committee. This is very active with Lodge members, wives and widows. We arrange monthly social outings, and hold activities for chosen charities. Last year we supported Riding for the Disabled Assn (RDA), and donated \$3,500 to this worthy cause. Twice a year, we hold a Breakfast BBQ. The BBQ's start early and we have a wonderful array of sausages, bacon, hash browns, tomatoes,



baked beans, scrambled eggs. About 120 usually attend. This is a great money-raiser, as we also have a 2 long tables covered with a large number of donated raffle prizes. A lot of work, but with many helpers, always a great success.

The attached photos show myself in one, and Kate, myself and Elsie ready to serve breakfast, (wearing aprons made by Kate).

Kind regards, Margaret McNutt.



Catch up from last year: I have to apologise that I wasn't able to include all the interesting articles I was sent last year in my newsletters. Here is a very special one -

Not your usual Lodge meeting - by David Lowe, Almoner The Gate Pa 407

At one of the Gate Pa's meetings last winter, the Otumoetai Rotary members and friends were invited to attend the presentation of a bar to W B Jack Barlow's 50 year badge commemorating Jack's 50 years in the craft, by Mike Cooke District GM.

Prior to the presentation, the Master of The Gate Pa Adrian Klein explained to the Rotarians and their friends a brief outline of Freemasonry, and after Mike had outlined Jack's career in The Craft the president of Outumoetai Rotarians, Jan Tinetti talked about Jack's dedicated service to the community through Rotary for 60 years.



As it was also Jack's 98th birthday, his Daughter presented a large birthday cake with just two candles, one nine and the other eight! As there was over a hundred guests, including three of Jack's four children present short work was made of the cake. Altogether an evening to remember!



The Amazing Sue Milton

Many of you reading this newsletter will have met Sue over the last 11 years while she accompanies Laurence on his visits to difference Masonic events and celebrations. A lot of you are, I know, very great friends - but then it is very easy to become great friends with Sue :).

One would never call her appearance boring - quite the reverse! She has the tendency to brighten up the room not only with her endearing personality, but very especially with her lovely colourful hair and clothes which are invariably colour-coordinated. It's always a special surprise to see her in the room for the first time because her appearance is never quite the same as the last one. She certainly has the ability to lift the spirits of those around her - quite an achievement!



But, apart from her picturesque appearances and very endearing personality, there is a very special side to Sue which comes right from the heart. She gives so much of her time to sewing and knitting for others, especially the young and the sick, from all walks of life. She has sewn hundreds of quilts for neo-natal babies, knitted numerous garments for them as well and beanies for the cancer kids. She is currently knitting poppies for the ANZAC centennial celebrations for the Army Museum and has just finished sewing softies for the ladies at the Cancer Society.

Some of you may not be aware that one of Sue's passions is motor racing and is a big fan of Formula One. The biggest surprise she got on one occasion when in Melbourne for the Grand Installation was meeting her idol Michael Schumacher while shopping in the Ferrari tent during the F1 practice week. The biggest disappointment was that she had to fly home before the Grand Prix.

Over the years Laurence and Sue have also hosted exchange students. This has been a very rewarding passion. She is in regular contact with a number of them, as each of the "little chickens" as she calls them still refer to her as their Kiwi Mum.

14 Days in South America - by Sue Milton

In 2012 a group of six of us travelled to South America for a Masonic visit as well as tourism. The group consisted of Andrea & Glen Houlihan, Keith Knox, John Wilson, Laurence and I. We had an itinerary that had us visiting Chile & Argentina. While we were in Chile we were lucky enough to have Roberto (our exchange

student from 2000) show us around Santiago. The beauty of this visit was that we were travelling with a Spanish speaker in John and a novice learner in Laurence.

Andrea & I didn't have too much to worry about as we can spend money no matter what language or currency is. Yes ladies, we took the opportunity while the guys were at the different Lodge meetings of hitting the malls. We managed to get a number of bargains, so when you see either Andrea or me we will enlighten you on the best places to go.

The day we arrived in Argentina where John was born it just happened to be his 80th birthday, so unbeknown to him we arranged for a birthday cake, nibbles & bubbles to get this leg of the trip off to a flying start. In Buenos Aires we found the buildings, sculptures and the size of the city overwhelming.



Just like being in NZ we found that the hospitality of the brethren & families was so welcoming that it didn't matter that we couldn't speak Spanish they just took us under their wings and we were treated like long lost friends. The one thing I have found with Freemasonry is that wherever we have visited in the world, you get the feeling of being part of a big caring family.

The photo here was just after a wonderful meal with some of the members & families of Grand Lodge of Argentina.

Stories for your family - by Jeanette Newport

Some years ago my four children asked me to write about my life, particularly the early years so that they could get to know the real me. Although writing comes easily, I found this quite challenging. I showed the first draft to my son-in-law who is a journalist. His comments were: "This is well written Jennette, but I do not feel that I know you any better as the result of reading it". So I threw away what I had done and started again. There is a difference between a biography, which is intended for a wide audience, than a life story which must express the emotional side of life's experiences. Your story cannot be written by anyone else. I was familiar with writing other people's stories but not my own so it is important to constantly keep that in mind. I did finally finish my story and had four copies made with a cover page photograph and a plastic cover. I gave each of my children a copy for Christmas and was very surprised when, in due course, they all thanked me and said it was exactly what they wanted because I wrote about, the effect my upbringing has had on my personality and mistakes that I have made.



Since then I have led many groups to encourage others to do the same. There are a huge number of ways of doing this but this is what I learned in the process: Set ground rules at the beginning. Confidentiality must be a priority. Keep strict control of the group -do not allow individuals to take over. Encourage everyone to participate but do not force it. Make sure members know the audience they are writing for - is not intended for publication. Encourage members of the group to remember the emotions engendered by the various life experiences. Don't just describe what happened but how you felt at the time. Use short sentences and include photos when possible. Avoid writing chronologically. To get started suggest, a first memory, an event that is very memorable, an object that brings back significant memories, a photograph. Paint word pictures of special people who have had an influence on you. In attempting to run such a group, it is important to be aware of the differing needs and expectations of the participants. Some older people feel uncomfortable with things becoming too personal and cultural expectations can be different. It is important to keep things light and not to allow strong personalities to take over. Whilst emphasising the fact that feelings and not just facts are important, the writing is for the family and not for publication.

THANK YOU AGAIN! - to all the really wonderful ladies who keep knitting for Cancer patients, babies and children.

Even though the weather has been warmer the knitting hasn't stopped and I have been fortunate to receive many more knitted items. I must make special mention of some gorgeous little dolls Barbara Jefferies has made. These are so cute, with removable beanies which I am sure will be very valued by children suffering from cancer. Barbara has been very generous in sharing the pattern for these dolls so if anyone would like it, please email me at diana.litton@freemasons.co.nz.



Thank you for reading this - and I very much hope I will hear from you soon, Diana.