

District Grand Lodge of India S.C. & Grand Chapter of U.S.R.A.F.I.C.

FREEMASONS' HALL, SUKHADWALLA MARG, FORT, MUMBAI 400 001.



NEWSLETTER

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District Grand Secretary/Grand Scribe Ezra



This Newsletter is only to convey the news and events under the jurisdiction of the Scottish District and is not its official periodical. The views expressed in this Newsletter are solely that of the Editor.

EDITORIAL

One of my favourite degrees in Freemasonry, inter alia, is the Mark Masons' degree. If performed in the right way, the dramatic enactment of the story as it unfolds, leaves the candidate awe-bound. As the enactment progresses, he swells with pride at having been the major contributor in the allegorical activity at hand. Under the Scottish Constitution, the Mark Degree is also conferred in some Craft Lodges, though it is the first degree that the candidate encounters as he is prepared for exaltation in the Holy Royal Arch Chapter.

Another welcome step while progressing through the Mark Degree is when the candidate is called upon to select his own Mark or token, which is then recorded in the register of Marks for posterity. Mark tokens have been around a long time and one can regularly come across ones dated around 1860. There are hundreds of different tokens in Scotland and many Lodges and Chapters have their own designs. The token is given as wages during the Mark ceremony. There are a smaller number of tokens in England but America has thousands.

What is rarely known is the concept of a Mark Penny. A Mark Penny is given as token wages to a Master Mason when he receives his Mark. These Mark Pennies are full of symbolism. A standard Scottish penny has a mallet and chisel on the obverse with a thistle garland (the thistle being the national flower of Scotland.) The reverse usually has the phrase "to every man a penny".

However, many lodges have created their own Mark Pennies which have a wide variety of designs on the obverse, this adds interest to the collection! They often illustrate something important in the situated area of the lodge, such as one Lodge in Edinburgh having a train, as that center is the main railway station in Edinburgh, and another having an illustration of a king's head. Lots of Lodges celebrate Robbie Burns (who is Scotland's National bard and was a prominent freemason in his day) and these lodges have Burn's head on their tokens.

There is some information to suggest that Lodges handed out a small denomination coin such as a farthing stamped with the lodge number as long ago as the mid 19th century. There is an example of an old penny (Sterling) which was stamped 13 and given by Lodge No 13 to its Mark Masters at some time in the past. That Lodge now has a unique token of its own. The granting of a distinctive and distinguishing 'mark' to the members of an operative masons' lodge is attested in Scotland from the year 1670 when the Mark Book of the Lodge of Aberdeen was commenced and the earliest record of an 'outsider' that is a non-operative person being admitted as a member of a Mason's lodge was in 1634.

In Scotland, you can take your Mark Degree in either Lodge or Chapter, as further advancement here is dependent on obtaining your Mark. This has resulted in some Royal Arch Chapters also issuing their own, unique, Mark Pennies. These Mark Tokens are presented by Lodges/Chapters to distinguished visitors as a memento; or visitors can also offer to buy the Token from the Lodge/Chapter as a memento of their visit.

The Companions of my own Chapter Zoroaster #138, voted to issue their own Chapter Penny in the year 2003. The design of the same consists of the obverse depicting the symbolic arch with the keystone upraised, symbolically to allow sunlight (knowledge) and dispel darkness; along with the working tools in formation.



The reverse depicts the reverse of the Companion's Jewel of the Royal Arch - a double triangle, sometimes known as the Seal of Solomon, within a circle. On the interlaced triangles are inscribed the words, *Wisdom, Strength, Beauty, Peace, Concord, Truth*. Within these is the triple Tau. Along the periphery are the words "Humata, Hukata, Huvarashta", which are in consonance with the divine teachings of the basic tenets of the Zoroastrian religion as preached by Lord Zarathushtra and signify the divine ideals of good thoughts, good words and good deeds to be practiced in day to day life.



SCOTTISH PRESENCE AT THE GRAND FESTIVAL OF INDIA

The Swabhumi (Rajkurtir) Hall at Kolkata was packed to the brim as many as 878 brethren converged there to attend the “Grand Festival - 2022” convened by the Grand Lodge of India on 26th November 2022. Amongst the prominent presence of various Foreign Grand Lodges there were delegates rubbing shoulders from England, Ireland, Mauritius, British Columbia, Russia and Japan. Grand Lodge of Scotland was represented by the presence of Wor. Bro. Kersi J. Limathwalla – Hon. Junior Grand Warden (Scot.), Bro. Noshir G. Paghdwalla – Hon. Junior Grand Deacon and Bro. Anantrao H. Yadwad – Hon. Grand Marshall.

Delegates from Foreign Constitutions.



After the Chapter meeting



The Scottish Brethren also availed of the opportunity of attending the Convocation of the Supreme Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of India and Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of India.

ANNUAL ELECTION AND INSTALLATION COMMUNICATION OF THE DISTRICT GRAND LODGE OF INDIA S.C.



Saturday, 17th December 2022 was the day all Freemasons belonging to the Scottish District looked forward to. The event being the Annual Election and Installation Communication of the District Grand Lodge of India S.C. at 6.30 p.m., which was preceded by the Annual Election and Installation Convocation of Grand Chapter Grand Chapter of U.S.R.A.F.I.C. at 5.00 p.m.

Though the attendance was a bit disheartening as major arterial roads of the city were blocked due to a major rally organized by the political powers to be, yet both the meetings went off smoothly. What was heartening was the presence of the Heads of all the Sister Constitutions, who had made it convenient to pay a friendly visit along with their Deputations.



Our Brethren from Lodge St. Andrews in the East, Pune.

Our special thanks to our Brethren from Lodge St. Andrews in the East, Pune, who have always been supportive of the District activities and never been found wanting.

Their whole hearted participation is worthy of emulation of other upcountry Lodges and the District is truly appreciative of their efforts.



The Heads of the Sister Constitutions at the Banquet.



Some of the Ladies in attendance pose with the DGM



The DGM with his Deputies (Lg. & Chp. and Imm. Past Deputy



*Left to right: MEC Bharat Venkat Epur – Depute Grand Superintendent
Wor. Bro. P. Mohan George –Depute District Grand Master
Rt. Wor. Bro. Kersi J. Limathwala – District Grand Master
Rt. Wor. Bro. Bomi S. Mehta – Past District Grand Master
Foreground: Bro. Noshir G. Paghdiwalla – District Grand Secretary*



*Reply to the Ladies' Toast
By Mrs. Zarine Commissariat*

LODGE ENDEAVOUR NO. 474, KOLKATA

During the course of the visit of District Officials to Kolkata to attend the Annual Festival organized by the Grand Lodge of India, we also availed of the opportunity of attending a meeting of Lodge Endeavour No. 474 S.C. on Monday, 28th November 2022. It was a pleasant experience for us to see the Lodge functioning smoothly after a long period of inactivity over the past many years. The hospitality and camaraderie shown by the brethren of that Lodge left our District Grand Master highly impressed and with a feeling of satisfaction at having revived the Lodge last February.

Inside the Temple at Kolkata



With guests from sister Constitutions



At the Festive Board with Brethren



CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

I am reminded of a saying attributed to Mohammed Ali which goes like this “Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.” At the cost of sounding repetitive, I can aver that the aspect of benevolence and being charitable is not only deeply imbibed in but also paramount in, inter-alia, our Masonic virtues, since no one has ever become poor by giving.

Our District Grand Master has a penchant for Charitable activities and a belief that ‘It is only in the amelioration of the wants of others that we truly live’. In fact, at every visit to a daughter Lodge or Chapter, he enquires of the Charitable activities undertaken or even takes it upon himself to plan one. Maybe our assistance would not be enough for the entire needs of the beneficiaries, but yet, we ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean; but the ocean would be less full because of that missing drop.



On Monday, 26th December 2022, we from the District, visited the renowned Government run J. J. Hospital and donated Medical Equipment for the use of their Pediatric, Geriatric, and ‘Mother and Child’ Wards. Representing the District, besides the District Grand Master and the District Grand Secretary, was the Chairperson of our Scottish Masonic Ladies Association, with her husband.



On behalf of the Hospital, the Dean Dr. Supriya Saple, Senior R.M.O. Dr. Arun Rathod, Medical Superintendent Dr. Sanjay Surae, R.M.O. Dr. Poonam Jaiswal and Doctors, Matron and Medical staff gratefully received the equipment.



The presentation was made in the foyer of the Hospital with the statue of the founder - the benefactor par excellence - Late Sir Jamshedji Jeejeebhoy - looking on in the background.

We also made it a point to visit the wards and personally interacted with the inmates – some of them terminally ill – which made us realise the truth in the maxim “He who wished to secure the good of others, has already secured his own.” It also made us remember the words of Nelson Mandela when he said “We can change the world and make it a better place. It is in our hands to make a difference.”

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

We take this opportunity of reminding our Brethren of the impending visit of Bro. William Ramsay McGhee, Most Wor. Grand Master Mason of Scotland in February 2023, and implore you all to be present in large numbers at the Communication of District Grand Lodge of India (S.C.) on 13th February 2023 at Mumbai.

OBITUARY

With profound feelings of grief and loss, we mourn the recall of our very Dear late Bro. Narasimha G. Bharati by the GAOTU to his heavenly realms above.

A true Mason, cast in the moulds of devoted brethren of yonder years, he was committed to the cause of Freemasonry, irrespective of the Constitution or the body concerned.

Always ready to help in the cause of betterment of our venerated Order, he was deeply interested in the grooming of the younger generation in the finer nuances. MAY HIS SOUL GAIN IN ETERNAL PEACE.



INSTALLATION MEETING OF LODGE FORMAN NO. 1066, MUMBAI

Lodge Forman No. 1066 S.C. held its Installation Meeting on 1st December 2022 when Bro. Pervez T. Andhyarujina was re-elected to the Eastern Chair for a second term.

Bro. Kersi Limathwalla, District Grand Master led a Deputation of District Grand Officers to the event and wished the Right Worshipful Master and his officers a fruitful year ahead.



Annual Communication of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ireland in India

There are no strangers in Freemasonry, only friends you've yet to meet. Inter-Constitutional visits are the one means of promoting brotherhood, camaraderie and bon-homie, as also to get an opportunity to witness the different ceremonies and rituals as they are performed in Constitutions, other than ours.

Scottish Deputation members at the Festive Board



Brethren on the Dais



Watching the compere at his task



On Saturday, 3rd December 2022, at the invitation of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ireland in India held its Annual Communication at Mumbai, when a Deputation from our Scottish District was invited and bore witness to the proceedings. The meeting was conducted in perfect Love, Peace and Harmony and after the meeting, but prior to the Festive Board, one of the Brethren functioned as the Emcee at the evening and conducted games of fun and frolic where ladies and guests also participated whole heartedly.

Felicitations of the Scottish Deputation leader



Members of DGLI at the Provincial Communication



Group photograph of all attendees



INSTALLATION MEETING OF LODGE AL-AMEEN NO. 1412, BANGALORE



Lodge Al-Ameen, Bangalore held its installation meeting on Friday, 20th January 2023 when Bro. Paul D'Silva was installed as the R.W.Master of the Lodge.

At the invitation of Bro. Neil Krishna, Secretary of the Lodge, District Grand Master deputed Bro. P. Mohan George, Depute District Grand Master as the representative of the District Grand Lodge of India S.C.

REPORTS OF INSTALLATION MEETINGS

The months of December to February are generally witness to Masonic Installation meetings Pan-India. RWMs/First Principals and Secretaries/Scribe Ezras of daughter Lodges and Chapters are requested to send us reports with pictures of their Installation meetings so that we may reproduce them in our Newsletters.

Similarly, any achievements of our upcountry Brethren in various fields of human endeavour may be sent to us so that we may include the same in future issues.

The final decision for publication shall, however, vest with the Editor.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE YOUTH IN SCOTTISH FREEMASONRY

Youth are the backbone of a community. They are the promising future of our cherished Order possessing incredible potential that could be transformed into a tangible accomplishment. Encouraging them with constructive motivation can extend hope and could illuminate the future of Masonry and the World's outlook towards the values that we stand for.

However, most young people are prone to get demotivated these days due to mental pressures relating to society, academic, professional and personal issues, etc. Younger folks can easily be entangled with fears that can shatter their future. This is one of the main reasons behind the youth not being sometimes bold enough to take on new ventures.

Keeping the present scenario in mind, it is important to understand that motivation serves as a universal force for self-realization, and is also one of the key elements for igniting self-determination and self-belief. When young people don't see the connection between what they learn and what they love to do, it's hard to be motivated.

Our Grand Master Mason has a pretty visionary outlook for the future of Scottish Masonry. Under the auspices of the Grand Lodge, he had convened a meeting on the virtual platform with all the Provincial and District Grand Masters and the Secretaries where the stress of deliberations was focused on developing the interest of youth of today in taking our beloved Order on the forward path. An elaborative power point presentation on the roadmap was tabled by Bro. Will Rowan which elucidated all present on the ways and manner in which this thought could be placed in practice.

One of the major plans contemplated is to involve the youth from all corners of the horizon by the formation of a Committee enjoining them to implement new ideas and lines of action. This set in place a thought on how we could carry forward the vision of our Grand Master Mason by implementing the same ideas at the District level. We are working on the same and shall communicate shortly on this very important issue.

REMINISCENCES OF MY VISIT TO LODGE ROYAL JUBILEE NO. 742, SOLAPUR

One of the perks of being the District Grand Secretary is the opportunity to visit the daughter Lodges throughout the country and to interact with our Brethren, assessing their needs, strengthening acquaintances, studying different cultures, witnessing ceremonies and above all, tightening our fraternal bondage with spirit of bon-homie and camaraderie.

I had the privilege, inter-alia, of visiting Lodge Royal Jubilee No. 742 S.C. and Chapter Ganesh Gavankar No. 787 at their Installation meetings at Solapur on 28th and 27th January 2023 respectively. Though no stranger to these Masonic bodies – having visited them often – I was yet, overawed not only by the warmth of their hospitality but also by the depth of brotherhood that exists in their ranks. Right from the welcome extended by their outgoing Master Bro. Vishnu Mondhe and other brethren at our arrival till the final sendoff extended by their newly installed Master Bro. Mohan Deshpande, the visit remains etched in my mind for posterity.

Lodge Royal Jubilee is one of the Lodges which remains vibrant throughout the year as there is one or the other Masonic/Social/Cultural/charitable activity every month as gathered by me in the course of my inspection of their elaborately maintained minute book. What is amazing is that all the annual activities were contemplated in advance by the Master and implemented in toto. I came across a Charitable drive nomenclated as “Humanity Wall” within their precincts which functions on the lines of a ‘garage sale’. They have also donated a Television set and distributed sweets to a school of destitute children in a remote area.

They have also donated a Water Purifier to an orphanage for women. A family trip was organized to Bamnoli forest near Mahabaleshwar with outdoor camping in tents and numerous social events. The Lodge also collectively celebrated Mahashivratri festival with religious ceremonies.

On Environment Day, they had a tree plantation drive in their compound. Yoga day was also celebrated with teachings by a professional Yoga teacher. A family get-together was observed on the “Kojagiri Poornima” day. For a change, one regular meeting was held in the pristine surroundings of Lodge Barton at Lonavala.

With nationalistic fervor, Independence day was celebrated with a Flag Hoisting ceremony in their premises. A Ladies’ night was organized amid pleasant ambience of Verna Resorts. Senior members were felicitated for their contribution to Masonry at a special dinner meeting in December.

What impressed me most was their having organised as many as three charitable drives at remote sites during my visit. The first amongst them being donating an imbedded stand for a pyre at a village crematorium under Savleshwar Gram Panchayat. This cast iron contrivance, I gathered, would substantially economise the cost of wood as compared to a traditional funeral pyre.



The second was an introduction to the local villagers at an impromptu meeting with village folk at another center which has been a benefactor recipient of the Lodge, and which is held in awe of it. The third was a noteworthy munificence of



the RWM on his wedding anniversary to the ‘Robin Hood Army’ at another village housing a Leper’s Camp, where free food was served to hundred recipients. Surprisingly, the Robin Hood Army service organisation is a voluntary force of educated youth who undertake to feed the underprivileged and the ailing every day.



Most of them had chosen Engineering as their academic pursuit, yet, at this age they had chosen to while their time by being volunteers of this worthy cause instead of indulging in other worldly pleasures.



I am thankful to Bro. Furokh Santoke, Hon. Depute District Grand Master, who accompanied me in my journey and for his assistance at all times.

Undoubtedly, on my return from Solapur, I was fully convinced in my belief that Lodge Royal Jubilee functions in a manner worthy of emulation by others.

PONDER A'WHILE ON FAMOUS QUOTES ON OUR ORDER

By many a Famous personality

You wear Aprons – good. You wear Lapel Pins – nice. You wear Masonic Hats – fine. You wear Masonic rings – right. However, all these are of no use of you being a Freemason. The Truth is only when you live the Tenets and the Principles of Freemasonry when it was founded, you can be known as a Freemason.

God hides some ideal in every human soul. At some time in our life we feel a trembling, fearful longing to do some good thing. Life finds its noblest spring of excellence in this hidden impulse to do our best.

Freemasonry is 'veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols' because these are the surest way by which moral and ethical truths may be taught. It is not only with the brain and with the mind that the initiate must take Freemasonry, but also with the heart.

Masonry aims at the promotion of morality and higher living by the cultivation of the social side of man, the rousing in him of the instincts of charity and love of his kind. It rests surely on the foundation of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God.

Freemasonry has promoted fellowship, it has nurtured brotherhood, it has practiced charity. It has education, it has been founded on truth and the cardinal virtues. But what is Masonry's greatest mission in life today? What should be the thrust of modern Masonry? Those are the answers we are presently seeking, and on our success in finding the answer depends the future of our Fraternity.

Masonry was not made to divide men, but to unite them, leaving each man free to think his own thoughts and fashion his own system of ultimate truth. All its emphasis rests upon two extremely simple and profound principles, love of God and love of man.

We Masons are among the fortunate ones who are taught to meet together with others opposing convictions or competitive ideas and yet respect each other as Brothers.

Masonry is too great an institution to have been made in a day, much less by a few men, but was a slow evolution through long time, unfolding its beauty as it grew. Indeed, it was like one of its own cathedrals which one generation of builders wrought and vanished, and another followed, until, amidst vicissitudes of time and change, of decline and revival, the order itself became a temple of Freedom and Fraternity.

That one things we have to teach, that one thing we Masons have as the key to our secret, the end-all and the be-all of Freemasonry is, you are my brother and I am yours.

Freemasonry must stand upon the Rock of Truth, religion, political, social, and economic. Nothing is so worthy of its care as freedom in all its aspects. 'Free' is the most vital part of Freemasonry. It means freedom of thought and expression, freedom of spiritual and religious ideals, freedom from oppression, freedom from ignorance, superstition, vice and bigotry, freedom to acquire and possess property, to go and come at pleasure, and to rise or fall according to will of ability.

