



1521 NEWSVIEW

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF EVENTS IN
WELLINGTON LODGE
No. 1521

Volume 22 Issue 9 December 2019

24 Aspiring Terrace, Aotea, Porirua 5024
Tel: 04 2382873, Mobile: 0274 446207 Email: mmck@xtra.co.nz

REFECTORY

Meal bookings are essential and should be made not later than the Tuesday before the meeting in question. To book, send an email to Wade Craze at wade.craze@gmail.com

NOTE: As from the November 2019 meeting, the normal meal charge will be \$35. The Christmas meeting meal charge is \$50 per person.

LAST FOR THE YEAR

Not the last meeting – there is still the Christmas meeting on 18 December. No, I meant that the November meeting was the last working of the year – the raising of Bro. Sharlon Bolivar to the Degree of Master Mason.

It was a considerably easier time than the Third Degree worked in October although, with Bro. Brooke Butler still out of Wellington, it fell upon Secretary W. Bro. Bob McKillop to repeat his doubling-act as Senior Deacon. And with Bro. Leon Craze, our Senior Warden now transferred to his new job in Tauranga, his seat in the West was filled by W. Bro. John Hume. But we knew about both of these in advance and were spared the last-minute adjustments we had to make the previous month.

In the event, it appears the Third Degree went off very well. For this I am reliant on the remarks of others since, for all but a short part of the ceremony, I was outside the lodgeroom, mentoring an Entered Apprentice who had had to retire from the meeting when it moved out of the EA degree. However, the visitors were very complimentary about the standard

of the working. We had with us on that evening W. Bro. Jerry Johnson, Master of Lower Hutt, a member of Westminster Lodge and three from our sister-lodge Aorangi, led by their newly installed Master, W. Bro. Andrew Vincent. It is reported that Bro. Bolivar answered the test questions impeccably and comported himself well during the ceremony.

The situation, after our last working for the year, is that all our Fellowcrafts at its beginning have now been raised to the Third Degree and we have three Entered Apprentices awaiting passing to the Second. Another initiation, tentatively scheduled for an emergency meeting in March, will bring that number up to four, ensuring enough workings through to the end of 2020, even without any further candidates. Happy days!

DOWNSTAIRS

Once again, our refectory had been assigned to the Scott Room on the Ground Floor. But, as we had somewhat fewer number than two months previously, it was not as cramped and uncomfortable as on the former occasion.. In fact, your Editor found it quite enjoyable.

The Toast to the Candidate was proposed by W. Bro. Bob McKillop. Because it gave a resumé of his career, the full text of the toast is reprinted separately (below). Bro. Bolivar replied with some feeling.

The reply to the Toast to Aorangi was delivered by one of their Past Masters, W. Bro. Rodney



(from left) W. Bro. John Hume (Acting SW), Bro. Wade Craze JW, W. Bro. John Rapanut Master, Bro. Sharlon Bolivar MM, W. Bro. Bob McKillop (Acting SD)
Photo: Bro. Cameron Macfarlane

Heatherington, deputising for their Master. who had been unable to stop on for Refectory. The reply to the Toast to the Visitors, which had been given by Bro Wade Craze JW, was in the hands of W. Bro Jerry Johnson, Master of Lower Hutt Lodge. And so another evening ended.

TOAST TO THE CANDIDATE

Bro. Sharlon Bolivar has now been a member of the Lodge since 18 April 2018 and in the intervening months we have all come to like and respect one of the best members we have had as a brother and colleague.

He came to us through a contact via the Rita Angus Retirement Village and W. Bro. Tony Cross. On 3 November 2018 at the District Grand Lodge Communication, he was the candidate for a well-

received Second Degree working in a fairly full lodge room and now, after a year as a Fellowcraft, he has taken his third step to become a Master Mason.

It might be worthwhile reminding ourselves of his extraordinary background. He was, as we all know, born in The Philippines where he received his initial nursing training. After three years of practical experience he went in 2009 to work at the National Heart Centre in Libya, specialising in critical care. The First Libyan Civil War in 2011 saw the removal of the expatriate nursing staff and, after a brief period back in The Philippines, he went to the National Hospital in the Sudan, returning to Libya when the political situation seemed to have stabilised. It was not to be for very long – the outbreak of the Second Libyan Civil War saw him return to The Philippines and in 2014, opting for a quieter life, he came to New Zealand, working in an Auckland retirement village while awaiting verification of his nursing qualifications, which led to his registration here.

Three years ago he moved to Wellington and the Rita Angus Retirement Village where he became Hospital Co-ordinator. More recently, he has moved to Wellington Hospital as a surgical nurse – like Bro. Kyle Sia (one of our Entered Apprentices). Between them in the course of their nursing, they have even helped to repair a broken Mason.

Sharlon's interest in Freemasonry started when he noticed one of the Rita Angus residents wearing a square-and-compasses lapel badge. He knew that Freemasonry was greatly respected in The Philippines and his enquiries led to his joining Wellington Lodge.

We could not have asked for a better candidate. He has simply become one of the most respected members of the Lodge and we have all watched his progress with considerable pleasure. In every sense of the word he is a gentleman. He displays so many of the qualities we aspire to as freemasons and it gives us every reason to believe that, in the coming years, he will play a significant part in the affairs of Wellington Lodge.

Sharlon, we are all delighted to see you take your third step and now I ask all of the brethren to rise and drink a toast to Brother Sharlon Bolivar, Master Mason.

FROGS IN APRONS Pt.6 (Conclusion)

To Be a Freemason in France

Freemasonry is not as secretive in France as it is in English-speaking countries. You can walk into almost any bookshop and find books on public sale about the history and teachings of Freemasonry – books of a very high standard of production. Every French book I own about Freemasonry I obtained from either an ordinary bookshop or one of the second-hand *bouquiniste* stalls on the banks of the Seine.

It has to be admitted that, without a shadow of doubt, Freemasonry in France is elitist – socially, intellectually and financially. My feeling is that perhaps up to 30% of current New Zealand Freemasons would not qualify for initiation into a French lodge.

A candidate would find it difficult to be accepted without a tertiary qualification, an employment history within a socially acceptable profession or the French civil service – and he would also have to be prepared to pay annual dues from the equivalent of NZ\$1,000 upwards. It is not unknown for applicants to be discouraged from joining on the grounds of “unsuitability”.

Once accepted and initiated, he would have to wait at least a year before progressing to the Second Degree. In that period, he would have to attend regular instruction in the philosophy and teachings of Freemasonry and pass written tests in those areas. In some cases, he is also required to write a short paper on what he has learnt about those teachings and read it in person before a select committee or even in open Lodge. In some Orders, having heard the paper read, the Brethren may then vote by secret ballot on whether the candidate is to be permitted to advance to the next degree.

The same procedure follows for advancement from the Second to the Third Degree. It is not uncommon for it to take up to five years from initiation to raising to the Degree of Master Mason.

I think it can be said that, in some French Orders, once a member reaches the rank of Master Mason, he will have a more detailed knowledge of the history, symbolism and teaching of the Craft than many Grand Lodge officers in one of the English-speaking “regular” Grand Lodges.

You can imagine the result if this system were required in New Zealand. In France, there is a waiting list for initiation in most Orders.

In a French Lodge Room

The set-up in a Lodge Room is usually similar to our own although, in some Orders, they have retained the early 18th century practice of seating both Wardens in the West.

The one French Grand Lodge generally recognised as regular (the National Grand Lodge of France, or GLNF for short) follows the English tradition of promotion to the Chair by a ladder of offices. Many of the other Orders, however, select the most suitable man for the job, and he may continue to hold the

position of Master for several years, until a more suitable Brother is available.

As well as the regular meetings, at which degrees are worked, and the instruction meetings which Entered Apprentices and Fellowcrafts are expected to attend, most non-regular lodges will hold a number of meetings each year at which current social questions will be discussed in the light of the ethical responsibilities of Freemasons. The *Grand Orient* has a particular interest in matters concerning the complete separation of Church and State and the removal of religious instruction from the state education system. The co-masonic Order *Le Droit Humain* operates similarly in the fields of violence against women, enforced prostitution and the rights of children. Unlike the “regular” Grand Lodges under the anglo-saxon system, the various French irregular Orders make official submissions to Government and join public demonstrations in support of their principles.

Their attitude is that, if Freemasonry supports ethical standards, it has a responsibility to stand up and be seen to be expressing those standards.

Attendance at meetings and discussions is required of members and absences are monitored. In some Orders, repeated absences can be followed by suspension of membership or expulsion. These responsibilities are fully explained to candidates before initiation. Resignations are said to be rare.

I have previously mentioned that the three Craft degrees worked by the recognised GLNF are very similar to those worked in England. The GLNF also set up an associated Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter which works a Royal Arch Degree which is virtually a straight translation from the English.

However, in those Orders not recognised by the Grand Lodge of England, and specifically in those where the VSL has been removed from the pedestal, the first three Craft degrees, while still supporting the grand principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, are said to have an emphasis which is less spiritual and more philosophical.

As a faithful member under both the Grand Lodge of New Zealand and the United Grand Lodge of England, I have not attended meetings of any of these

irregular Lodges, nor have I yet been able to get my hands on any of their rituals. My information is based on research and conversations with some French acquaintances who are members of those Orders.

Wind-Up

So that is the situation.

One Grand Lodge (GLNF) and Grand Chapter, whose members may not visit, nor be visited by, other French Lodges, but are recognised by most English-speaking Grand Lodges.

On the other side, around thirteen other Grand Lodge type organisations, of various sizes, all of whom fraternise happily with at least some of the others. The *Grand Orient*, while it does not admit women to membership, does permit women who have been initiated in certain other Orders to attend some of its meetings. None of these organisations are regarded as “regular” by the English-speaking Grand Lodges, usually for one or more of the following reasons:

- they admit women
- they allow a Council of the 33rd Degree to rule the first three Craft degrees
- they do not have a religious VSL on the pedestal
- they are involved in political action on social issues

How do the irregular French Lodges feel about this exclusion? My impression is that they don't give a tinker's cuss. They don't appear to have any objection to the regular GLNF working away in its own ghetto.

They do occasionally grumble that the Grand Lodge of England, on the basis of having been the first to form a Grand Lodge organisation, has taken upon itself the right to decide which systems are “regular” and which “irregular”. Particularly since all masonic organisations observe the basic principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. At the same time, they noted with interest that the majority of “regular” Grand Lodges were increasingly battling falling membership, which they themselves were not.

Their explanation for this is that the regular Grand Lodges, resistant to change, have remained locked in an 18th century mind-set, which is no longer relevant to their target membership pool.

A member of one such irregular Order put it bluntly to me. I make no apology for these remarks – I simply report them as they were made to me. He said: “Regular Freemasonry is standing on the deck of the Titanic with its hands tied behind its back and its ancient landmarks slung round its neck like a millstone - it is only a matter of time”.

I sincerely hope he is wrong.

=====

COMING EVENTS

Monday 9 December 2019 5.30pm Wellington Lodge rehearsal WBH (Subject confirmation)
Monday 16 December 2019 5.30pm Wellington Lodge rehearsal, WBH (Subject confirmation)
Wednesday 18 December 2019, 1200, Aorangi Christmas Luncheon, WBH
Wednesday 18 December 2019 5.15pm Wellington Lodge Committee Meeting, WBH
Wednesday 18 December 2019 6.30pm Wellington Lodge Christmas Meeting WBH
Wednesday 25 December 2019 Christmas Day
Thursday 26 December 2019 Boxing Day
Wednesday 1 January 2020 New Year's Day
Monday 20 January 2020 Wellington Anniversary Day
Thursday 30 January 2020 North Island English Masonic District Charitable Trust Meeting
Thursday 6 February 2020 Waitangi Day
Friday 6 March 2020 Board of General Purposes meeting EMC
Monday 9 March 2020 5.30pm, Wellington Lodge Rehearsal WBH First Degree Working
Monday 16 March 2020 5.30pm Wellington Lodge rehearsal WBH First Degree Working
Wednesday 18 March 2020 6.30pm Wellington Lodge Emergency Meeting, First Degree working.
Thursday 19 March 2020 TBA Tongariro Lodge Installation Meeting, Dublin St, Whanganui
Tuesday 7 April 2020 6.00pm Aorangi RAM meeting JMC
Tuesday 7 April 2020 7.30pm Aorangi Lodge of Mark Master Masons meeting JMC
Wednesday 8 April 2020 6.00pm Aorangi Lodge meeting JMC
Thursday 9 April 2020 5.30pm Wellington Lodge rehearsal, WBH

Friday 10 April 2020 Good Friday
Sunday 12 April 2020 Easter Day
Monday 13 April 2020 Easter Monday
Monday 13 April 2020 5.30pm Wellington Lodge rehearsal WBH
Wednesday 15 April 2020 5.15pm Wellington Lodge Committee meeting WBH
Wednesday 15 April 2020 6.30pm Wellington Lodge meeting, First Degree Tracing Board.
Saturday 25 April 2020 Anzac Day



UNITED GRAND LODGE
OF ENGLAND