

DISTRICT GRAND LODGE OF SOUTH AFRICA, NORTH

Of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of England



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Annual Meeting, District Grand Lodge of South Africa, North

DGM's Address – 5 October 2013

Brethren welcome to this our 118th Annual Meeting of District Grand Lodge and thank you all for your attendance here today. I would like to thank those Brethren who have travelled far to be with us for this occasion from all corners of our District, from Botswana, Swaziland and including Mauritius, of which I will say more later. I trust you are all enjoying your stay in Johannesburg.

I acknowledge the presence of RW Bro Gerald Fotinakis, Past District Grand Master and I thank him for his attendance. I also would like to acknowledge the presence of W Bro The Hon Mr Justice Cloete who has returned to us after being in “exile” for almost 12 years, having had to resign from Freemasonry because of his position in the judiciary. Recently, Bro Tom Cloete officially retired from the judiciary and we were delighted to learn of his re-instatement by the Most Worshipful, The Grand Master to the Craft and his former rank, welcome home Bro Tom.

It is also a pleasure to acknowledge W Bro Louis van Zyl, W Master of South Africa Lodge, London, who is accompanied by W Bro James Dow, Secretary of South Africa Lodge. Both of these Brethren have a close association with this District and South Africa Lodge in London is home from home for many of us. It gave me great pleasure to invest Bro Louis van Zyl earlier today, as PDistJGW. He is a long-standing member of Orphic Lodge. I trust they are also enjoying their visit to Johannesburg.

I extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guests and I will formally acknowledge them at the end of this address. I hope that you have enjoyed our ceremony and that you will join us at the Festive Board at Freemasons' Hall, Park Lane following the meeting.

I congratulate those Brethren who have received District Grand rank today. In particular, to W Bro David Whitfield on his promotion to Deputy District Grand Master and wish him well in his

appointment. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Very Wor Bro Iain Fraser for his past services. Brethren, Bro Fraser has been an active District Officer for a continuous period of some 18 years, 17 of which he has served on the Board of General Purposes, and 8 as a chain. We wish him well in his retirement. I also extend my sincere congratulations to W Bros Graeme MacKenzie and Brian McDermott on their appointments to Assistant District Grand Master. I look forward to working with them both. Likewise, I thank W Bro Colin Lewis for his past services of some 14 years as an active District Officer, serving in several offices, including District Grand Director of Ceremonies and as Assistant District Grand Master.

I also extend my sincere congratulations to those Brethren who received Grand rank earlier this year. First appointments were received by: Bros. Marc Burton, Graeme MacKenzie, Tim Smith and George Watson to PAGDC. Bro Pieter Wessels received a promotion to PJGD. I look to them for ongoing commitment to the Order and to this District.

Brethren the District is progressing well. However, in contrast to the Royal Arch where there has been an increase of 5 in membership and a third successive year of growth, membership in the Craft showed a decrease of 5 members. Although this represents only approx. 0.25% of our total membership, I will only be satisfied with sustained growth.

In April this year, I had the pleasure of attending the Annual Investitures of Grand Lodge and Supreme Grand Chapter. Emphasis was again made to the fact that in 2017, in four years time, United Grand Lodge will be celebrating its Tri-Centenary. During the past 300 years our relationship with Society has changed from periods of secrecy and silence to those of openness. Grand Lodge has set a target that by 2017, we will have dispelled many of the myths held by non-Masons through a new communications strategy. I repeat what our Grand Master, HRH The Duke of Kent, has stated “Talking openly about Freemasonry, as appropriate, is core to my philosophy, central to our communications strategy and essential to the survival of Freemasonry as a respected and relevant organization.”

The strategies that I have put in place in the District are addressed towards the Masonic 3R’s – Recruitment, Retention and Retrieval:

First, the Mentoring scheme advocated by Grand Lodge is being implemented by Lodges. Currently 75% of our Lodges have appointed Lodge Mentors and in many cases within a Lodge, Personal Mentors have been identified who will normally be the Candidate’s Proposer. We still have work to do to set-up

Regional Mentors who will help with communication and guidance over groups of lodges within the District.

Open days organised by Lodges, where members of the general public are invited into the Lodge building and listen to a presentation on Masonry are proving to be most useful and highly successful. Their success requires that the Lodge Mentor or Regional Mentor ensure that a competent speaker is available to address members of the public.

Under the Mentorship programme, I would like to thank W Bros Dick Glanville, Geoff Spiller, Paul McKinley and the District Grand Mentor W Bro Roger Webster and others who have been actively involved in presenting Lyceum Lodge of Research's series of seminars. Each seminar is held twice during a year, They are:

First, *An Introduction to Masonry*, for prospective Candidates, wives/partners.

The second type of seminar, entitled *The New-Made Mason*,. addresses the fundamental aspects and meaning of Masonic ritual, and the third seminar entitled *Masters in the Making* is for Wardens or new Masters.

These seminars are proving to be highly successful and I feel this has been a positive move by the members of Lyceum Lodge of Research emphasizing that Masonic education and Masonic Research go hand-in-hand.

Another major step forward has been the production of a Guide for Initiates. This project has been developed almost single-handedly by Wor Bro Simon Knutton, with some proof-reading from the District Grand Mentor and myself.

First, the guide is based on a similar booklet developed by the Province of East Lancashire and has been adapted with their permission and modified for local usage and will be most useful in presenting to a Candidate at his Initiation.

Secondly, a disc has been produced, included at the rear of the booklet, that contains a copy of the First degree emulation ritual, an explanation of the ritual and suggested reading lists. It also contains several out of print texts (still highly relevant), which the Initiate will find useful for his journey into Freemasonry. In addition, it also contains an official downloaded version of the Book of Constitutions

from the UGLE website, ensuring that each Candidate will have a copy of the Book of Constitutions. The booklet and disc are available from the front foyer today or from the Office of the District Grand Secretary. I suggest that the development of this guide is highly significant and will be most important not only to the Initiate, but indeed to every Master Mason. On behalf of the District, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Bro Simon Knutton on this achievement. I believe that work on the Second degree is well underway, to be followed by the Third degree.

Unlike many Provinces in England, we do not at this stage have a dedicated Press Officer, but W Bro Roger Webster, with his personal experience as a media correspondent, is taking on this responsibility with myself. I would like to thank W Bro Webster for his handling, in particular, of a response to an anti-Masonic article which appeared in the Community Newspaper in the Klerksdorp area recently. An active response to the publication of these anti-Masonic articles is proving successful and press editors are at least allowing our viewpoint to be published, but I doubt it will ever alter the opinions of the authors of these anti-Masonic articles.

The second major strategic thrust has been the implementation of the Almoner's programme. Most of you will be aware that in cooperation with W Bro Brian Kretzschmar, President of the Board of Benevolence, I have restructured the duties of this Board, to manage and give oversight to applications, where there is a real demonstrable need, for grants from the Transvaal Inter-Constitutional Masonic Charity and more recently to the Grand Samaritan Fund in London. Secondly, this Board vets applications for our major donations to non-Masonic charities.

Grant applications are made initially through Lodge Almoners and it became obvious that an Almoners programme was essential to train and "re-tread" our Lodge Almoners. Not only to give the Lodge Almoners guidance on how to assist in the completion of application forms, but to ensure that the Lodge Almoner is made fully aware of his duties and to convey what is available to assist those in need. I would like to thank Wor Bro Brian Kretzschmar, President and members of the Board of Benevolence for their outstanding work. They have rewritten the Almoner's Manual and are extremely active in rolling out a powerpoint presentation on the Almoner's duties to Lodges throughout the District. The welfare of our Brethren and their Families is absolutely essential for the future development of the District and forms an essential component in Membership retention.

Having restructured the Board of Benevolence, I became aware, however, that we needed a District Officer to give oversight to the welfare of our District and Grand Officers and their Families and to keep the Boards, the office of the District Grand Secretary and myself fully informed. To-day, it gave me pleasure to invest W Bro Mike Armour as District Grand Almoner and I wish him well in his duties.

Our District Charity and general funds are well-managed. Thank you once again for your generous support. In February this year, we donated R850 000 to the Mothwa Med-Step Clinic in Pretoria. This is a registered rehabilitation centre for post-surgery treatment, brain injuries and strokes. The monies have been used in a capital project to refurbish the clinic, thereby increasing bed capacity and making the clinic self-sustaining. Brethren are directly assisting with managing the refurbishing process and the clinic will be re-opened on Monday 21 October. My grateful thanks are extended to W Bro Dave Griffiths, Dist G Supt Works, W Bro Charles Burn, DG Treasurer and to W Bro Brian Kretschmar and his team for giving oversight to this project. Secondly, a sum of R 100 000 was allocated to the District Samaritan Fund to assist with applications to the Grand Samaritan Fund in London through the Grand Charity portal "Freemasonry Cares".

Brethren my visit this year to Mauritius, warrants reporting here today. We had a District delegation of some 24, which included 18 Masons which visited Mauritius three weeks ago. First, I would particularly like to acknowledge Wor Bro Kailash Juddoo, Master of Lodge of Friendship who is here today. He is accompanied by his Senior Warden, Bro Dan Seewooruttun, Junior Warden, Bro Dev Naeck, Secretary W Bro Shyam Modadeb together with W Bros Koon Kam King, Meeram Beekhee, Randhir Ramloll, Ajay Nunkoo and Keewal Bhuruth and thank them most sincerely for their hospitality. The Installation ceremony was carried out in a first class manner followed by a superb banquet organised by Kailash Juddoo.

In addition, we held the first Installation of Phoenix Lodge in Mauritius, following the relocation of the Lodge and I would like to acknowledge the presence of W Bro Ajay Nunkoo who was installed as Wor Master and W Bros Wilfrid Koon Kam King, as Treasurer and Randhir Ramloll as Secretary. The Installation was carried out by W Bro Wally Tucker and together with WBro John Malone, Past Masters of Phoenix who travelled to Mauritius for the occasion. I would also like to thank WBro Ajay Nunkoo for the manner in which he invested his officers and the hospitality of himself and the members of Phoenix Lodge. I think it is highly appropriate that Phoenix Lodge has found a new home at Phoenix, Mauritius. Already they have several candidates awaiting initiation and joining and we wish Bro

Nunkoo and his officers best wishes for the coming year. Finally, although I mentioned it earlier in the Royal Arch meeting, we consecrated a new Royal Arch Chapter, the Chapter of Friendship, to serve members of both Lodge of Friendship and Phoenix. I would also like to acknowledge, here, the presence of W Bro Randhir Ramloll who is the Charter First Principal.

Brethren, President Lodge was officially accepted a member of the Universities Scheme by the Assistant Grand Master two years ago. Since then the Lodge has made excellent progress. The Lodge has its own set of challenges which are being effectively managed by the senior members: W Bros Chris van Gaalen, Bernie Krone, Chris Adams , Dirk Norton, Mustapha Adamjee and Eugene Bernhardt. Bro Chris Adams has recently been accepted to give a presentation at the second Universities Scheme Conference to be held in November in Nottingham. His presentation will cover the first two years of President Lodge as a Universities Scheme Lodge – An honour indeed for Bro Adams and this District. With the expertise gained in setting- up this Lodge, we will shortly be starting another Universities Scheme Lodge in Pretoria, where there are at least three major Universities. W Bro Brian McDermott has kindly offered to champion this project.

Now, I would like to share with you all, the enthusiasm and capabilities of the young members of President Lodge. I have asked two of the President members to present a poem ***“I am Freemasonry”***.

[Bro Director of Ceremonies]

Bro Reneou Koertjaas recently graduated with a B Com (Information Management) at the University of Johannesburg and is currently studying through UNISA.

Bro Mike Ford recently completed an Honours degree in the Performing Arts (Orchestral Conducting) at the University of Pretoria and is currently reading a Masters in Musicology at the same institute.

[Following the Presentation as a dialogue]

Bros Koertjaas and Ford, I thank you both for your rendition.

Brethren I hope you enjoyed that presentation. Both of these young Brethren are part of the future of this District.

Finally Brethren, I would like to express my thanks to the District Grand Secretary, W Bro David Pickard and Mrs Fern Rowles and the staff at Freemasons’ Hall who are involved in the administration of our District. They together with W Bro David Johnston who assisted setting-up the meeting and W Bro Graeme MacKenzie, Chairman of the Organising Committee and members of his committee

together with W Bros Richard Fahrenheit and the DC team, have all contributed to the success of this Annual meeting.

I wish you all a safe journey home

RW Bro Prof. E Guy Charlesworth
District Grand Master
5 October 2013,
Johannesburg

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