

TO FEED THE FLAME

“The light of the body is the eye. When thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light. Take heed therefore, that the light in thee be not darkness.” – Luke

A HISTORY OF THE BARBERTON LODGE No 2719 E.C. FROM ITS INCEPTION TO THE YEAR OF ITS CENTENARY.

by Navarre de Villiers Snr.

1. THE BACKGROUND.

On the 24th June 1898, John the Baptist's day, and the anniversary of the opening of the Grand Lodge of England, the Barberton Lodge was consecrated. Not only was this a great day in masonic history, but fourteen years before to the day, Barberton had been named. Mining Commissioner Wilson did not use corn, wine, oil and salt, but more appropriately, broke a bottle of “square face” gin over the Umvoti reef. Fabulous strikes turned men from sober cynics to the bubbling euphoria of champagne. Gold was not a dream; you could see it, feel its comforting weight heavy in the hand. So the camp grew almost overnight into a rollicking, swaggering, honky-tonk Wild-West gold-rush town. With a canteen to every 15 inhabitants and pubs placed like milestones every mile on the road to Sheba, you were never quite sober enough to lose your optimism. Stock exchanges, newspapers, billiard saloons, barmaids - including the enterprising Cockney Liz who sold her “claims” by public auction on Saturday nights when that showman Stafford Parker, his grasshopper-long body imperturbable in top hat, placed her with great decorum on the bar counter, and began to call for bids - all these fanned the fever of excitement. At one moment a man was down and out and despondent; the next rich and arrogant. All you had to find was a single fair sized nugget. But gold is a fickle mistress - she refuses to be confined to the humdrum connubial couch. Reef after reef petered out. The honky-tonk pianos began to lose their joie de vivre. Cockney Liz had bloomed like a flower only to disappear. No one knows whence she came nor where she went. She was apparently of a good family but was not from London. She earned the nickname because of her gifts as a mimic. Who knows what made her take the course she did - a tragic love affair, a child to support with the father denying his responsibility? We know that she became an extremely successful businesswoman. Beginning as a singer, she soon owned canteens like the Red Light and the Marble Arch as well as gold claims. If you go into the antechamber where candidates wait to be called to the temple, you will find a picture of a beautiful damsel with dark lustrous hair falling down to her waist. She is rumoured to be Cockney Liz. She was never admitted no matter the gossip and wishful thinking, for I can find no trace of her in the minutes! Then again, perhaps after all, the old minutes were lost in a fire! There were two fires not just one, and the first one, about the turn of the century, could have been deliberate. Were the brethren suddenly contrite — overwhelmed by what they had done and fearful of Grand Lodge?

Now only poinsettia, bougainvillaea and hibiscus painted the town red; the financiers, prospectors and barmaids had left. In the Barberton Club sadder and wiser men thoughtfully sipped their gin as they remembered how they had bid - or regretted that they hadn't.

Amongst the few that remained was A W Bayly, who in 1886, came from Maritzburg to begin business as printer and publisher in Barberton. Meiring, in his book “Dynamite and Daisies”, recounts the story of an assault on Bayly by sanitary inspector Smith; allegedly for having defamed him in the Barberton Herald. Not content with knocking him down he kicked him in the ribs. Bayly, who was destined to be the first Master of the Barberton Lodge, no doubt felt that such disrespect impugned his masonic dignity. Then again, calling a man a ‘sanitary inspector,’ in itself smacks of libel, or am I mistaken? Bayly was, I think, also a musician and conductor of the local orchestra.

Another man who remained in Barberton, was the pharmacist J W Winter who was a descendant of the

Thomas Winter found guilty of aiding and abetting Guy Fawkes in his attempt to blow up the English Houses of Parliament. For this indiscretion, Winter paid with his head. His descendant kept his, being content to fight the ravages of malaria, to prescribe pills, mix salves, ointments, potions, physic and placebos for hangovers; perhaps with a homily on cirrhosis or a warning that at the bottom of the bottle lurked delirium tremens. According to Errol Duncan, to whom I am indebted for these early, and indeed for many subsequent years, the real force behind the new lodge was J W Winter. Unlike his ancestor, he built instead of blowing-up.

The founders were A W Bayly, A Heller, S C Williamson, J W Winter, W A Gregory, S Wasserberg and W Bales. They petitioned for a Lodge under the English Constitution.

2. CONSECRATION AND FIRST INSTALLATION.

By command of His Royal Highness Albert Edward, Prince of Wales and Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England and Wales, a Charter was granted on the 13th June 1898.

The officiating and consecrating officer was R Wor Bro C Aburrow, Deputy D G M of the Transvaal, who installed the following brethren : WM A W Bayly; IPM J W Winter; SW A Heller; JW S C Williamson; Secretary W A Gregory; SD S Wasserberg; JD W Bales; IG TB Robinson; and Acting Tyler, J W Winter.

At the time, RW Bro George Richards was DGM, and I wondered why he had not come in person. Charles Aburrow, according to 'A Century of Brotherhood,' was DGM from 1905 to 1922; but served a further six years during the absence in England of the DGM. The Charge in the First degree enjoins us to obey the laws of the State which may for the time being afford us residence. RW Bro Richards must have forgotten this in his indignation concerning the rights of Uitlanders, for he became a member of the Reform Committee which plotted to seize power by smuggling in arms. Jameson and his troops were to cross the border, and Kruger was expected to give way to reason. When their conspiracy became an open secret, Rhodes tried to stop the impatient Jameson; who, like Nelson, looked at signals with a blind eye. Instead of waiting for instructions he, in the words of Rhodes, "took the bit between his teeth". President Kruger waited till "the tortoise stuck its head out." The leaders were found guilty of High Treason, and the subordinates of lésemajesté. Richards eventually had his sentence commuted to five months imprisonment. On his release he went to England, where he was when the Barberton Lodge was consecrated.

I mention this, because history is about people - the more alive the better the history. And brotherly love requires understanding not judgement. In Richards' defence, one can say that 'brotherly love' was being denied. As Carl Jeppe, Member of the Volksraad for the Witwatersrand, put the case for the uitlanders; "... (they) know no other fatherland than this republic, but whom the law regards as strangers ... They have settled for good. They have built Johannesburg, one of the wonders of the age ... they pay at least three quarters of the taxes ... " In "A Century of Brotherhood" we learn that Richards was arrested by Charles Christian Peterson, a member of The Gold Fields Lodge, and subsequently tried by Judge Gregorowski, who was subsequently to become a mason. Amongst the brethren of Gold Fields, was one Carl von Brandis, who was both the first Landdrost and the Mining Commissioner of Johannesburg. He is reputed never to have found a woman guilty. There's a mason for you! No wonder he earned the respect of all who came in contact with him. Barberton and Johannesburg share a similar early history: bars and barmaids - the bar which does not boast one of these ladies is as deserted as a school in the holidays - brawls and fights, gambling etc. They also shared very similar landdrosts. The story is told of Landdrost de Villiers and Gold Commissioner van der Merwe, celebrating too well at a banquet. Both had been called on to make speeches, and the champagne had bubbled. Sergeant Smith, sick of the riotous and the disorderly, waited outside for the revellers to emerge. Landdrost de Villiers came out with three others, singing, ... 'discordantly,' says Meiring. Smith took out his notebook and charged the three with riotous behaviour. The next day the three appeared before the beak. De Villiers, although stressing their disgraceful conduct, let them off with a warning. He then turned to Sergeant Smith and asked if there was not a fourth accused? Smith became embarrassingly

inarticulate. Then, descending from the bench, the Landdrost solemnly found one, Jacob Zulch de VHF guilty of disturbing the peace. He said that he was afraid that he could not show the same leniency in view of the position he occupied in the community, and had to make an example of him. He fined himself two pounds, which he paid there and then. I wonder if he ever became a mason? I hope so!

“There is properly no history, only biography,” wrote Emerson. So inevitably, this essay is concerned with the work done under a succession of masters, and, to keep it alive, I have had to touch on various virtues and characteristics in the cases where I have known something of their lives. Most, I have not known well enough. But their years in office speak for them. I have to ask forgiveness for pulling a few legs. Please don’t sue me. I meant no malice; indeed, I think all the brethren will join with me, when I say that our Lodge has been blessed with the cheerful camaraderie, and the banter which comes when men are happy in one another’s company. In the words of William Morris:

“Forsooth brothers, fellowship is heaven and lack of fellowship is hell; fellowship is life and lack of fellowship is death ... “

A report in The Gold Field’s News says that certain brethren applied in 1886 for a Charter from United Grand Lodge, but for some reason - possibly because it fell in a country outside England’s jurisdiction - it was not granted. Scotland was approached but without success. Finally, the Grand East of the Netherlands granted a charter to the Jubilee Lodge which became the first masonic lodge in Barberton.

3. PLACE OF MEETING AND EARLY HISTORY.

Premises were rented from Lodge St John in the South who shared with the Jubilee Lodge. That building - their present lodge - was originally built as a Congregational church and later taken over by Jubilee Lodge N C. Due to the Anglo-Boer war, all masonic business was suspended from Sept 25 1899. 1901 saw the resumption of labours, and, amongst others, Barberton Lodge was given permission to resume. J W Winter now took the chair of King Solomon. He was followed by G G Duncan, who had been initiated in Forbes Lodge in Rosehearty in Scotland. (He was to be the father of Errol Duncan and the grandfather of Lal.)

G G as he was known, began life in Barberton carrying a sack of meal over his shoulders and ended by being the proprietor of the leading store. You could buy anything there. True to his masonic principles, he gave credit to farmers - they could pay when they reaped their harvest. In 1905 a Dr Worrall became WM. It was from him that a future WM, J van O de Villiers, bought his medical practice. WM Arenhold afterwards became owner of a bottle store so perhaps contributed to the Festive Board. 1913 saw Dr Watts as master. He, together with my father, assisted at my birth - with two masons attending, no wonder that all five of my sons became masons! Next comes J A Spear, auctioneer and undertaker. Rumour has it, that once while exercising his latter capacity and being short of a coffin, he placed a corpse next to him on the driving seat. To disguise the body, he put a hat on its head. On passing a lady, Spear doffed his. Afterwards the lady complained: “Who was that rude man with you; you raised your hat but he simply sat there?”

Unfortunately, on May 7th 1929, a fire in the premises of J A Spear, who had all the documents for safe keeping, destroyed them, including the minutes rendering the early history an onerous task for Wor Bro Errol Duncan. The extant minutes begin in May 1929. At that meeting Bro Maxwell Tylden-Wright was made master elect. The Master was S N Spear. J W Winter also a pharmacist like his father, was passed. The Brethren expressed sympathy to J A Spear for losses in the fire.

In 1929 they purchased an old wood and iron church from the Anglican denomination, where the lodge stands today.

It was the engineer, Burt Andrews DGM, who had suggested that it was time they had a temple of their own.

Before leaving those early years let us glance at them with a treasurer's eye.

Annual subscription.. two guineas. (At present R260)
Initiation: four guineas.
Passing: three guineas
Raising : five guineas.

These figures, Bro Errol remarks, remained static for more than thirty-five years. Collections for benevolence amounted to between one and five pounds. Many children received grants to attend high schools.

Wor Bro Errol also mentions the problem of getting to lodge in the days before Henry Ford introduced his 'any colour you like so long as it is black Model T. So many came on horseback, or harnessed a horse to the trap, and a good many walked. In my mind's eye I can see some of those worthy brethren blissfully asleep on the veld after a celebration of brotherhood. No wonder meetings were held when the moon was full! But imagine saddling a horse, when full of the joys of festive board! You have barely the strength to tighten the girth, and, if the saddle doesn't slip round when you tread on the stirrup; the exertion you exercise in heaving yourself up, is likely to cause you to fall off on the other side! What senses of humour those horses must have had!

To help brethren attend DGL, the manager of the railways sent a letter offering tickets at half price. (Perhaps he was a mason who owned a horse!) The letter is dated 8th October 1904.

4. J T M TYLDEN-WRIGHT. 1929 - 30.

A tall man, 6 feet 4, moustached, glossy, black hair brushed; he was the epitome of "the old school tie" - an English gentleman. Indeed, he described his occupation as "gentleman". A product of Harrow and Sandhurst, he served with distinction in the R F C earning a D S O and D F C and Bar. At one time he and a partner, G G Sale, owned the Devonian Mine. Every morning, he would call at the post office, collect his letters and repair to the Barberton Club, bark at the steward, and order his first noonday gin. (I don't think there was anything in the 'bark,' he was kind hearted and much was said tongue in cheek.) That done, he was ready to attend to his correspondence.

The July meeting saw Allan Fish aged 23, balloted and initiated. As I write this, Allan is within a month of his 92nd birthday. Seventy years a mason! At the next meeting Wor Bro C A Yates was invested as D C. I have on my bookshelves some of his prizes leather bound and engraved -*mens agitat molem*.

Bro Tullues advised that the Library fund amounted to over 30 pounds, and this when bottle store accounts were in shillings! In September Allan Fish was passed and in October raised. (Clearly they certainly didn't expect him to live much longer, still less to become a nonagenarian!) At the February meeting the W M was absent. A load of dynamite had exploded and killed his partner. In the April meeting Bro de Villiers talked about the building fund. In May he was chosen as Master elect.

5. JULIUS VAN OUDTSHOORN DE VILLIERS 1930 -31.

He was born in the Karoo village of Beaufort West. After completing his schooling as dux scholar he went to Edinburgh University to study medicine. Qualifying with distinction, he returned to South Africa to look after lepers in a leper colony. From there in 1913, he went to Komatipoort. There he met the world's most formidable killer - the mosquito. They say that for every sleeper laid on the Selati line from Komati to Skukuza, a corpse was buried. My father riding on salted horses and by railway coach, injected quinine and drank whisky with the customs officials on the border.

When Barberton was separated from the rest of the world through floods in the thirties, The London Illustrated News reported on the seriousness of a malarial area being cut off from supplies of whisky! (He was touching on ninety when he passed away without any damage to his liver, so perhaps whisky

should be added to the toast list of the Scottish fraternity!)

In 1920 he came to Barberton, where he bought the practice of Dr Worrall, a brother mason. There are stories that when he found patients in need, G G Duncan would be requested to send a basket of groceries, with the doctor as anonymous donor. He often saddled his horse Comet and rode up into the mountains to attend a patient. He must have had some harrowing experiences; on one occasion removing an appendix on the kitchen table with the sweating husband administering chloroform under his direction. No preliminary enquiries re payment; indeed no account if you were indigent. Will a future Gibbon write of our decline and fall? Truly a mason worthy of the name. He is the only man I know, who in his old age, pulled out a troublesome tooth with his own hand!

In the August meeting he explained the scheme for building a temple of their own. In September the W M proposed that the bylaws be amended so that the dates of meetings could be changed from the “Thursday nearest the full moon to the third Saturday.”

6. THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.

Wor Bro Errol Duncan wrote, that mainly through the efforts of brothers M Tylden-Wright, J de Villiers and R A Tullues and “the lesser efforts” of the other brethren a new temple was built.

The following were on the Building Committee: Wor Bros J van O de Villiers, JTM Tylden-Wright, JA Spear and Bros Tullues, Hockly and King. Stands were acquired from the Anglican Church at a cost of 125 pounds. The existing building on the stand was used temporarily as a Refectory. No bond was applied for.

The architect and builder of the Temple was Robert Tullues, a man with a smile, and a laugh never far from his lips; a man who could sing like Caruso - *La Donna e Mobile*, and many an Irish ballad. Children, including myself loved him. The success of the design is there for all to see and admire. It is clear that he made a deep study of masonry. His initials are on the floor in the doorway to the temple. Subsequently he was also to design the Crest.

The words *alere flammam* mean “to feed the flame” —the flame of brotherly love, the flame of love to all humanity, the inner flame of the Spirit — hence the dove of peace ascending to the Blazing Star.

The organ cost thirty seven pounds ten shillings and the benches and table in the refectory one hundred and eight pounds. Neale Hannah of Lodge Kilwinning No 0 gave us the VSL.

Wor Bro JTM Tylden-Wright, then IPM, donated the magnificent furniture, the master’s and warden’s chairs.

The donor of the V S L had a store where the road from the Sheba Mines meets Sheba Siding. On his way to attend the sick at the mine, my father would call, bring out the nest of aluminium glasses, pour the whisky and examine Neale’s ear. Cancer had dug a hole, where it should have been.

7. CONSECRATION AND DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE.

This was carried out on the 28th October 1933, by RT WOR G S Burt Andrews DGM and a delegation consisting of Wor Bros Hayes, Cotton, Oliver, Williams and Thurber. They were accompanied by Max Tylden-Wright PDGW and Julius de Villiers DGSB from the Barberton Lodge. The latter was represented by Wor Bro Hockly WM, Wor Bro R A Tullues IPM, Bro Errol Duncan SW, Bro A H Fish JW, Bro Philip Chaplin; Bro W King Treasurer, Bro Heath Secretary, Bro M Joubert SD and Bro Prinsloo JD. Wor Bro de Villiers was Tyler. Bro Errol records that “the ceremony was carried out with great dignity and all were impressed by the wonderful sacred ceremony ...”

Lodge Friendship No 1284 SC sent a delegation from Lourenco Marques.

To celebrate the occasion a masonic ball was held in the town hall. To demonstrate the unanimity of the local lodges, Lodge St John in the South and the Rudyard Kipling Lodge belonging to the Order of the Sons of England; the ball was made a joint affair.

Grand Lodge wrote from London, congratulating Barberton on its new temple.

8 MASTERS OF THE LODGE from 1931.

R A TULLUES 1931 and 1932 - 33.

On reading through the minutes of those years I found that W Bro de Villiers had proposed taking 75 pounds from the drinks fund and giving it to the building fund. (A brave man indeed!) That was an enormous sum, when you read that the alms collection at an installation amounted to two pounds four shillings! Any objections were not recorded. We have not changed and I suspect that the glass passed round for refreshment rivals the amount given for charity! During the September meeting, there was an open discussion on freemasonry. October saw a dissertation on the first degree by the Master. At the November '32 meeting, they decided to wear white on hot nights when there was no working. (I wonder if that was ever carried out!) January saw the temple insured for six-hundred pounds at a cost of four shilling per hundred. In December, Bro Philip gave an address on literature, ancient and modern. In January the brethren were given a talk on the pillars outside the Lodge; whilst another Bro explained their Egyptian origin. In February, Bro Matthews, of Lodge St John, presented the entrance door, and Wor Bro Tylden Wright proposed that the title deeds be lodged in Barclays Bank. In March there was an address on secret societies; and in May a lecture on the third degree.

In the wider world, freemasonry was attacked by the Dutch Reformed Church. "The God of the Freemasons is not the Father of Jesus Christ ... freemasonry proceeds from the recognition of the inherent power of man to bring himself a stage nearer perfection, while the Holy Scripture teaches the sinfulness of human nature, and of redemption only through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ ... a spirit of materialism and free thinking characterises freemasonry." DGM Burt Andrews, counselled silence and exemplary conduct. A Dr Kikillus alleged that we were a rival to the church.

WALTER HOCKLY 1933 - 34.

The R W DGM regretted his inability to attend and deputed J van O de Villiers D G Standard Bearer to act in his stead. The relevant minutes read that the "WM commented on the importance of this occasion, as being the first time that a member of the Barberton Lodge had been appointed to deputise for the R Wor D G M". The minutes continue: "Wor Bro de Villiers as 'Deputy Grand Master', addressed the meeting ... "(I might mention that this was a great surprise to the writer. Never did he mention it.)

At a committee meeting in September, it was decided to sell the old church building which they had used as a refectory, and build a new one onto the temple. The cost was estimated at three hundred pounds. A cushion for the VSL was donated by Kosmos. Walter Hockly practised as an attorney in the firm of Rose-Innes and Hockly. As he was destined to become master on three occasions, and to act for one who was away on active service, I shall come back to him.

ERROL DUNCAN PGStdBr (Eng) 1934 - 35.

He was the next to occupy the chair. During his time, there were the usual workings and lectures. He was to prove an excellent mason, a very distinguished secretary, and one of the leading lights in the lodge. In his valedictory report - the first that I can find - he mentions presentations being made to Wor Bros de Villiers, Tullues and Fish for services rendered.

ALLAN HILDRED FISH 1935 - 36.

Next it was our oldest brother's turn - he will be 92 on 26 November 1997. Of 1820 Settler stock and

educated at Bishops in Rondebosch, he came to Barberton as secretary of the Empire Cotton Growing Corporation, which conducted an experimental farm on the outskirts of the town. After the war, (he was awarded the MBE) he and his wife Beth, who was the niece of Ethel, the wife of R A Tullues, eventually settled in Somerset West. There, they typed manuscripts into Braille for the blind.

Again one is struck by all the lectures, e.g. the place of women in the craft, the meaning of the third degree - no meeting consisted solely of an opening and closing. He also suggested the compilation of a history of the lodge. In the absence of the minutes up to 1929, this was an onerous task which Wor Bro Errol Duncan undertook. At the time of writing it is missing. Fortunately, I have my notes made for "A Century of Brotherhood" which to my delight, were quoted by R Wor Bro Vieler. I wonder whether Allan knows Carlyle's line: "Happy the people whose annals are blank in history books." (And happier he, who does not have to write them!)

Whilst in the Cape I was approached by the brethren of the Lord Robert's Lodge, to pay tribute to a man who had been a mason for three score years. If you knew Allan, you would know that a eulogy wasn't as difficult a task as it might have been. His character is such, that it practically wrote itself. I remember with affection the tears in his eyes when I read it out and presented it to him. A copy is in the Refectory. I repeat it here:

Allan Hildred Fish

*For three score years you've laboured at your temple,
using the 24inch gauge, not squandering the precious hour,
applying the conscience gavel, the educating chisel
to shape the heart, to point the mind.
On the square, you have always been seen to be
level and upright with your fellow man,
your steps straight with-in the compass bound,
unhesitating towards the East;
whilst inside, the shining shrine of the Inner Light,
the kindled candle of brotherly love.
Now we salute you,
hold you high in honour and esteem,
both as brother and as man;
your name a symbol of masonic devotion
in the hallowed portals of your Mother Lodge,
amongst the brethren of Somerset West, and indeed,
amongst all Freemasons standing foursquare throughout the world.
By your reverence of the Sacred Volume,
you have made merit your title,
dignity your character,
and love your life.*

But he was also capable of distinguishing himself at the festive board. I tell this story with considerable trepidation. The scene is the banquet after an installation. A lady complains that her knife is blunt. "Is that so Mrs G? Here give it to me," responds Allan. Whereupon he takes a pat of butter and proceeds to sharpen it on his dress suit, along the length of his thigh! I don't know whether it was on the same occasion, but at some stage he decided that he'd had enough. He found a bed on the left hand runningboard of a car, in that groove between the engine and the mudguard, as motorcars were made in those days. Eventually, the owner of the car drove home and was astonished to find his stowaway when he stopped!

I hasten to add that this anecdote may not be authentic; but judging by the smile in his eye when I confronted him with it, I wonder!

A PHILLIP 1937 - 38.

He was editor of *The Gold Field News*. In this, he followed in the footsteps of our first Master AW Bayly. More famous still, was the columnist who wrote "Chat of the Camp" - Percy Fitzpatrick. He delighted in exposing the 'upper crust'; so much so, that he was threatened with a horsewhipping.

The Herald was the first newspaper on the scene. You can judge how much brotherly love they showed from this Gold Fields editorial on its rival: "I have never in the course of my whole journalistic experience seen such silly rubbishy writing ..." One of the editors was charged with blackmailing two directors of the Great She mine. His rival editor seized the opportunity to expose his weakness for intrigue and worse. Meiring, in his "Dynamite and Daisies", says that Fitzpatrick joined in the fray, by calling one editor a "fussy old lady".

Amongst the books in the lodge library is a translation into Esperanto of Oliver Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm*. The fly page states that it was given to the editor and I take it that he presented it to the lodge.

In the July meeting it was decided that the by-laws be amended so that only masonic meetings could take place in the temple. Errol Duncan then talked of the Great Pyramid. On a subsequent occasion, Bro Marshall spoke on the anthropological schools. There is mention of a letter from District Grand, thanking them for a donation of ten pounds for the new temple in Johannesburg. (Oh for the currency of yesteryear, when money kept its value!)

WALTER HOCKLY. 1937 - 38.

This was his second time in the chair. This was the year in which the D G M, Burt Andrews, died as a result of injuries sustained in a car accident. The brothers Tullues and TyldenWright proposed a plaque commemorating the consecration of the temple by the late DGM. This was placed at the entrance. Errol Duncan presented the table and stool which still stand in the hallway. I shall come back to Walter Hockly later, because as I wrote, he played an exceptional part in the Lodge.

O B ANDREWS 1938 - 39

The new DGM Maple-Polmear delegated Wor Bro Maxwell Tylden Wright PDGSW to deputise for him at the installation. In September my father surprised them by lecturing on the blood and its groups. The second degree was to study nature and science, he told them, hence his choice of subject. I suspect that he did not have time to prepare more conventional matter. January saw Bro Tullues complaining about the standard of a working and suggesting more rehearsals. A working was postponed because the floods had cut off some of the brethren.

E H BOWEN 1939 - 40

If I have my facts right, he was a Welshman. "You're a bloody foreigner," he told Cyril Worrall who was of Welsh extraction, when he admitted that he couldn't speak their language. Bro Hockley complained about the weeds. He would be disturbed to know that time has not altered circumstances. The War had broken out and a letter came from D G L telling them that no Bro. of an enemy country was to be admitted.

J MARSHALL 1940 - 41

Joe was an entomologist attached to the Empire Cotton Growing Corporation. He and Bro Tullues were partners in a cinema venture and built the Savoy theatre. So there were now two - the Orpheum being the first. I remember as a small child, going round to inspect the thickness of the wall on which the film was screened, because I wondered how they got all those scenes into that wall! Alas, today, like the canteens, the cinemas have disappeared. No longer can you sit with your girlfriend in the back row.

Almost immediately after his installation, Wor Bro Marshall went on active service, and Wor Bro Hockly became acting master. It proved to be a busy year, despite the fact that there were only six active brethren left, because a military camp had been established at Barberton and there were many masons whose masonic progress had been interrupted. Their mother lodges requested Barberton to advance them. Often, Lodge St John in the South brethren came to assist at the workings. I see that a Bro Trehair was given rapid promotion from the 1st to the 3rd in a matter of months.

W. HOCKLY 1941 - 42

At long last a valedictory report appears, and *typed* forsooth! What a struggle to decipher the minutes, despite some beautiful handwriting. In the report as acting master, he mentions that they considered closing down during the war, but fortunately did not, and so could help all the brethren in the Camp. In the circumstances there were two visitors for every member. Thus, Wor Bro Hockly was master virtually four times.

A Christmas message came from Alpina Lodge in Switzerland *Ex Oriente Lux*. Out of the East comes the Light.

Walter was to be called to the Grand Lodge above in 1961. Wor Bro Hobson in the chair at that time, wrote: "He was the very essence of what freemasonry stands for, not only in the lodge, but in all his fields of activity outside ... He was a member of the Royal Arch and Rose Croix Orders ... He will be particularly remembered for his dignified manner as D C ... and was an inspiration ... He was indeed a Freemason."

SO TRUBY 1942 - 43

He too, was a practising attorney. He came from the Free State and could never get over all the firewood in the bush; especially as he loved meat grilled on the glowing logs of a fire. No doubt in the Free State, he'd searched for miles only to find consolation in the discarded, combustible material of some kind cow! He dearly loved his dogs and at a braai would share his boerewors almost bite for bite. A kindly modest man, happiest when he was camping. I subsequently bought his practice and he did me a very great favour in the true spirit of freemasonry.

In his valedictory report, he records that there were 37 members and the average attendance was 19. Three brethren were affiliated. There were three initiations and two thirds. Finances were sound because the debt owing on the renovations was now finally paid. Max Tylden-Wright donated a piano.

C KOOL 1943 - 44.

Membership now stood at forty and the average attendance was 23. Eight workings took place; one initiation, one passing and three were passed and raised.

R JAMISON 1944 - 45

He was a doctor in Swaziland. On the 22/5/1945 an Inter Constitutional Thanksgiving took place on the cessation of hostilities: All lodges met simultaneously to express gratitude ... [and hope] for the great conciliatory task. [They] remembered the valour ... the maimed ... the women and children ... the bereaved

In his report he mentioned that there were 44 members of whom 20.7 attended. The lodge recommended the formation of the Komatipoort Lodge, which unfortunately, was soon to cease functioning.

J H BROADBENT 1945 -46

He reported a quiet year but ill health prevented him from performing his duties; so much so, that he was unable to read his report. (I don't remember him but I do remember his two pretty daughters! Alas! where are the snows of yesteryear?) When he was ill, Bros Hockly and Kool acted for him. Two lectures took place.

P J ROUX 1946 - 47

He mentioned the presence of Lodge St John in the South at every meeting and was duly grateful. A very instructive third working was carried out at the Connaught Lodge which he attended. An association with Whittington Lodge of London began.

D H FORWARD 1947 & 48 to 49

In '47 there were 47 members and in August '48 they celebrated their golden Jubilee. Bro Hockly gave a résumé of the history to that time. The banquet was held at the Phoenix Hotel, which they decorated in the lodge colours. The menu consisted of hors d'oeuvres; potage; fried sole; crumbed cutlets; braised turkey; leg of pork; sirloin of beef and Yorkshire pudding; fresh strawberries and cream; cheese and biscuits. 131 people attended. After dinner, and the speeches, the guests retired to the lounge for a musical evening. The printing cost of the menus was two pounds seven; the total price of the dinner provided by Bro Neuman, was 81 pounds seven shillings, which apparently, was collected from the brethren. That is, the meal came to about twelve shillings per head if my arithmetic is right. Changes to the temple also took place, the porch and lavatories being built on.

CANON N KING 1949 - 50.

By this time there were 53 members and a keen interest in the tenets of the Craft was evinced by the brethren. Apart from one, when there was a lecture on the Tracing Board, there were workings at all the meetings. The Master himself gave a talk on the Lodge as being the ideal world as opposed to the real: Masons leave behind their quarrels, their false ambitions. They are 'stones' in the temple, but stones alive with wisdom, strength and charity.

J GREYLINGH 1950 -51.

When there were no workings they held practice ones. R Wor Fairbrass came from White River, where he had a farm, to talk to them of freemasonry.

A G TEASDALE 1951 - 52.

During this year the Grand Master came out from England. Whilst in South Africa, he consecrated Arcadia Lodge Pretoria, which the Master and several brethren attended. There were 53 members and workings were held at all their meetings. Vernon Fairbrass represented D G L at his installation. Emulating DGL, the brethren attended a service at All Saints Church conducted by Canon King. This was a 'first' and the brethren felt it should continue.

H W F NETTMANN 1952 -53 & 53 -54

Canon King paid a visit while in London, to Lodge Whittington and was made welcome. The wall outside the lodge was built by Joubert Bros. In '52, a combined Xmas tree celebration was held with Lodge St John in the South. The '53 report mentions the death of Wor Bro Tylden-Wright and Bro King, both of whom "had rendered the greatest possible service to the lodge". There were no less than 5 initiations, 4 passings and 6 raisings! So busy were they that they had to hold emergency meetings. The master attended the laying of the foundation stone of the new temple in Johannesburg in February '54. It was laid by the R W Bro Maj-Gen Sir Allan Adair, Assistant Grand Master. Nettmann was also present

at the consecration of University Lodge. Once again, a church service, coinciding with that held at St Mary's Cathedral, was attended.

C KOOL 1954 - 55

By this time membership had risen to 64. H G Duncan, who was to be a distinguished mason, was passed and raised. A paper was read on the Ancient Landmarks. The laying of the foundation stone of a new temple in Nelspruit was attended. A masonic bowls day raised 50 pounds.

A J TECKLENBURG 1955 - 56

In his report he was pleased to note that three Grand Lodge officers were present - Folly , Fairbrass and Wheal. Assistance was given to the widow of a deceased brother. He attended the opening of a new wing at the Boys' Masonic Hostel in Boksburg.

J G GREYLINGH 1956 - 57

During his second term of office, the by-laws were completely revised by Wor Bro Errol Duncan, assisted by Bro Nettmann. The initiation fee was now 15 guineas. There were now 57 members. Bro Grieve, who is one of our honorary masons, was initiated, passed and raised.

J PRATT 1957 - 58

There were now 60 brethren. He saw his son initiated, passed and raised.

ERROL DUNCAN 1958 - 59.

It was his second time in office, and I suspect that the brethren, wishing to show their indebtedness to him, voted him into the chair of King Solomon, particularly as this was the Lodge's Diamond Jubilee year. To the delight and relief of the writer, he gave an address on the early history which I have already recounted. He mentions that all had not gone on "well oiled wheels - far from it!" But having excited my expectations, he says nothing, much to my chagrin. Minutes are important as records, but they are not of the spice of life. I wonder if Henry Ford was reading minutes when he remarked that history was bunk? No. On looking it up, I see he was in the witness box during a libel suit. Presumably he was sworn to tell the whole truth, so many brethren, after reading this, will probably agree with him! But banter is like a good wine; and history, with respect, (we are polite fellows, we lawyers!) is not bunk, for even such dry matters as minutes, occasionally take on a little flesh as tempers rise.

Errol mentions that we had a good name in the town, and tells of Bro Crosse, who was struck by lightning on his way to the station. The brethren collected enough money to send his widow and the six children to England. The lodge subs were raised from two and a half pounds to three. Bro Grieve was invited to explain the Tracing board to Lodge St John and to Nelspruit United - a singular honour.

During this year, a distinguished brother, who still regularly attends lodge to this day - close on forty years later - was balloted for, and found 'a proper person to be made a mason.' (Knowing how James and I pull one another's legs, it is nice to record that!) J E van Rooyen of Townlands Dairy, a farmer, is how he was described; but more of him later. He was proposed by Bros Grieve and Frank Gibbon, both of whom are members of long standing.

F GIBBON 1959 - 60

During his year, two brethren became involved in a dispute over chairs - one of them removing his apron. Thereupon, they went outside, (an unhappy phrase that: most of the people who have taken me outside, knocked something unmasonic into me!) came back smiling, and the lodge was restored to harmony! The membership stood at 62, and G D Stott, the father of Roy, one of our stalwarts, was

initiated. Altogether, 6 initiations, 3 passings and 2 raisings took place. They worked hard and the average attendance reflects this - 28.

C S HOBSON 1960 -61.

Dr Hobson has retired and is no longer living in Barberton. To my delight, his year is marked by typed minutes! Walter Hockly died. As the Master put it, the lodge suffered a grievous blow. For nearly thirty years he had been with them. There were now 64 members. The lodge qualified as a Jubilee Lodge in having contributed to the new temple in Parktown. A lecture was given on the duties of office bearers. As in all the previous years, they kept in touch with masons belonging to sister constitutions. Mrs Kool presented a cushion.

W J DIMOND 1961- 62.

Bill Dimond was a humble man, and as such, a good mason. He became interested in the side degrees, and later joined Harmony Royal Arch, the Harry Laver Chapter of Rose Croix and the Lawrie Tressie Preceptory, all of the Scottish constitution. He and I drove up together, often through the Nelshoogte mists to Middelburg and Witbank. (A very attractive daughter still brightens Barberton, but this is not for the record.) His valedictory report records the passing away of Wor Bro Broadbent, who rendered sterling service as treasurer. Bill also mourned the death of Arthur Needham, of whom Jack Folly said: "one of the greatest characters we have known ... a man without an enemy ..." (A Century of Brotherhood.)

H G (Lal) DUNCAN 1962 - 63.

In his valedictory report, he said that it was a great honour to be installed by his uncle Errol, "because the name of Duncan, has been connected with the lodge since its inception - GG Duncan being the first." In a Century of Brotherhood, we learn that Jack Folly was no show-off. Lal too, was no show-off. Typically, his signature occupied the least possible space, and when he built the house on his farm, (he was a bachelor) he occupied a small bedroom instead of the main one en suite. I don't think I have ever met any one more honest than Lal - humble, kind, meticulous and scrupulous in his integrity. He concluded his report by saying: "The general demeanour of each member has inspired a feeling of goodwill ... and has urged all to greater efforts." Lal grew up in a wood and iron house with magnificent metal ceilings. Subsequently, the government expropriated it as part of a museum complex, throwing Lal out. He was educated at St John's College, and later had a trading store on the Consort Mine. On the breakup of the partnership, he retired to his farm on the nearby hills. There he established avocados, grape fruit, lemons and litchis. Alas, he was never to reap the fruit of his labours, for before they could give him an income he was to die of cancer. We miss you, Lal.

During his year, Lodge St John celebrated its 75th year. Frank Gibbon was made an active Steward in District Grand Lodge. The conferment of the Distinguished Order of Freemasonry on Bro Easton of Whittington Lodge No 862, pleased the brethren, and they sent their congratulations. To which Bro Easton responded. The regalia of Max Tylden-W:ight were sold for 80 pounds.

Writing this history, seeing brethren rise to the chair, and then disappear beyond the veil, makes one reflect on the brevity of life. As Keats put it: "Mortality weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep." But PJ Bailey is more cheerful: "We live in deeds not years, in thoughts not breaths; ... He most lives who thinks most - feels the noblest - acts the best." Well, Lal's scrupulous honesty was certainly an inspiration. Characterwise, he would have had nothing to regret.

N J P WATKINS 1963 - 64

I remember Noel doing the North-East Corner, and his disregard of the order of the paragraphs in the Exhortation, in the third. Nevertheless, it was all there; but still, somewhat surprising -and refreshing? - coming from an accountant! During his year, Lal and Errol attended an installation in Swaziland, to find

their Master dismayed and in a quandary. Apparently he had not realised that he had to install his successor. Lal came to the rescue and acquitted himself splendidly. New curtains were purchased for the temple, and the organ was cleaned. Bro Hobson reported that one brother would not be returning, because he regarded the blackballing of his candidate as a slap in the face. However, the matter must have been settled, because the indignant brother returned. Bros Lal and Grieve donated paint for the painting of the lodge both inside and outside. Frank Gibbon cleaned up the temple and grounds. In his report, he mourns the passing of DGM McAdam - a great orator. Of whom it was written in the Masonic Journal, that Kipling had just such a man in mind, when he wrote: "E'en as he trod that day to God, so walked he from his birth. In simpleness and gentleness and honour and clean mirth." (Century of Brotherhood.)

R W GRIEVE 1964 - 65.

Snowy was born in Barberton and had an engineering works. During his year, Bros Hobson and van Rooyen, proposed that committee meetings only be held when necessary, and not before every meeting as hitherto. Snowy tells me that the committee decisions had a disturbing effect on the brethren; because any discussion was cut short by a brother standing up and saying that, "the Committee has decided."

D R DIESEL 1965- 66.

During his time, another of the present stalwarts of the lodge, Wor Bro Bob Tecklenburg, was initiated. Noel Watkins found the minutes of the Harmony Royal Arch Chapter, and gave them to Bro Ling Braithwaite of Lodge St John. (Ling must have rejoiced, living, eating and drinking masonry, as he did.) Poor Ling! But masonry was the light of his life, let us rejoice in that. Lodge meetings were changed from the 3rd Thursday to the 3rd Wednesday.

A J H (Jack) TECKLENBURG 1966 - 67.

The Jubilee jewel, symbolising the Lodge's contribution to the new Temple in Johannesburg was received. His cousin, Bob Tecklenburg, was raised. The WM wanted to know why certain brethren no longer attended, and remarked on the poor attendance at lodges of instruction. He was the second of the Tecklenburgs, and soon there would be four in the lodge - a father, two sons and a nephew. Jack was to be an outstanding secretary.

W L BOSHOFF 1967-68.

In October, Bro Hookham came down to deliver a lecture: "From the Guilds to Modern Lodges - 400 years of masonry." Bro Hookham took a BA majoring in French. He extended his love for languages to German, Dutch, Spanish and Italian. He never married and he never learned to drive. (Is there a connection? If so, how many would rather return their driving licences?) Masonry became his whole life, and his knowledge was prodigious. A Century of Brotherhood describes him in a happy phrase, as having "a talent for untidiness." A man after my own heart; perhaps he would have felt at home here with papers and books all over the desk and the floor, besides cluttering the bookshelves.

During Boshoffs year, Bro Pat Tecklenburg was initiated, passed and raised. Bro Kruger was initiated and passed. R Wor DGM Jack Folley, whilst in the district, came to an ordinary meeting.

I did not know Wor Bro Boshoff, but I hear he inspired very deep feelings of respect.

J E VAN ROOYEN 1968-69; 1969 - 70.

At one time James was a farmer, then the Clerk of the Court in the magistrate's office, where we met one another. At some stage he decided to abandon a career which would have led to the magisterial bench. Perhaps he would have been embarrassed, when some of his friends appeared before him after a session in the Barberton Club? No doubt he would have recused himself for a brother mason. Very

wisely, he went into mining, where his efficiency and qualities of leadership soon led him to the top. He was to become a District Governor of the Lions. We enjoyed pulling one another's legs. On one occasion, a brother not understanding our humour, was heard to say: "How those two dislike one another." But banter is a form of affection.

Since joining the lodge he has been a strong force in it. In his first report, he speaks of the sad loss of Jack Folly. There were now 50 members, of whom some were described by him, as "chronic non attenders." Wor Bro. Watkins wished to be relieved temporarily from his duties as treasurer, and James wrote of him as temporarily "unsaddled". Perhaps it was Gymkhana time in Barberton. On reading it again, I see that he meant that a great burden was being taken off Noel. He saw him carrying the saddle. I saw him in it. No doubt he was right. Anyway, I like the picture of the horse staring lugubriously down his long nose in mock sympathy as the disconsolate Noel lay on the ground! E A Todd, a farmer of Biggar - a good name for a farm, it always reminds me of the words in 'Land of Hope and Glory': "wider still and wider ... " - was initiated in the April meeting of '69. In September of that year, Lal and Dudley Diesel proposed the establishment of a building fund. R A Tullues was elected an honorary member. In June 1970 DGM Hinett set up a commission to enquire into the decline in interest in freemasonry. (In May '72 they recommended lectures, library facilities and a lodge of research, plus 18 other suggestions.)

N J P WATKINS 1970-71

This was his second spell. In the July meeting, he remarked on the "sad state of affairs that so many absented themselves." In March, Wor Bro Ling Braithwaite came from Lodge St John in the South to deliver a lecture on the first degree - a happy example of harmony between the sister constitutions. Noel recorded that there were now 46 members and that they had done two workings.

R V BELL 1971-72 & 72-73.

This was a special year for the writer, because in April, I was proposed for membership by Lal and seconded by Noel Watkins. The following August I was initiated. James van Rooyen proposed that the subs be raised from R10 to R20 (no doubt in protest!) In November of 72, Roy Stott and Dennis Dehrmann were balloted for. Roy was initiated the following month. In February 1973 I was passed. In March, a levy of R20 was made to pay for regalia.

W E TECKLENBURG 1973-74

With Bob came the wide spaces of Texas; we all felt freer. You could see the grass rippling under the wind, and hear the lowing of the Brahmans. He and his cousin Jack were neighbours, and had grown up as cattle ranchers. It was going to become a custom to assist Bob at his annual cattle sale, when he sold his pedigree Brahmans and entertained us for the whole day, ending in a braaivleis in the evening. I remember greeting him at one of the auctions. The auctioneer took my nod as a bid, and for a precarious moment, I thought I was going to have to find R3000 and take the cow home as a pet for my wife, Ina! (She wouldn't have believed my story!) Fortunately, someone outbid me. From then on, I disappeared among the beer cans.

Bob's installation was a signal honour, for it coincided with the 75th anniversary. DGM Hinett assisted by James Chapman, came down. At the previous meeting it had been decided to hold a dinner-dance at the Town Hall. Not content with this, the lodge again entertained the ladies at the Impala hotel on the 25th of July. In October and November, the writer and Roy Stott were raised.

In November, a letter was received asking for a contribution towards a new masonic Haven for the aged, to be established near the Willows, Pretoria.

P V TECKLENBURG 1974- 75

At his installation, his father brought distinction to the Tecklenburgs by officiating at the Board of Installed Masters at the ceremony. ADGM Chenik came down from Johannesburg. During his year there were 8 workings.

E A TODD 1975- 76 & 76-77.

Eric is a perfectionist, who, not content with ordinary conventional farming, literally built a factory with his own hands. He is also a man, who with Henley can say: "In the fell clutch of circumstance I have not winced nor cried aloud ..." As they say: you can't get a good man down. In February 76 DGL acknowledged a history, compiled by Errol Duncan. 9 workings took place. Robert Grieve lectured on the 1st degree TB. In his second report, Eric mentioned 9 workings, and said that he'd learnt many lessons, among them, humility.

J P OOSTHUIZEN 1977-78.

During his year, Wor Bro van Rooyen proposed that the subs be raised from R20 to R40. The brethren subsequently brought this down to R35. Bro Roy Stott insisted that the amendment was unconstitutional and asked that his protest be minuted ... So, in deference to our friendship, Roy, I have recorded it once again!

A letter was received from DGL, describing, inter alia, the opening of the new temple in London, with its magnificent new ceiling with the words: "He shall build me an house and I will establish His throne forever ..." "Wor Bro Errol Duncan passed away on 31/10/77 and the lodge stood in silent tribute.

There were 5 workings.

NAVARRE de VILLIERS SNR 1978-79 & 79 - 80.

DGM Les Hinett came down for the installation. In the July minutes written up by Jack Tecklenburg, as always in meticulous detail, (his minutes have been a boon to the writer) he wrote as follows: "The initiation of Mr J R de Villiers was then proceeded with in accordance with ancient custom. The ceremony was unique in the sense that the father was the WM, the eldest son, the IG, and the second son the candidate." It was indeed an emotional moment, and it was my very first working. How humble we feel at such times! At the next meeting I spoke on the meaning of the first degree. The September one was postponed in order to assist our Brother Bob at his annual sale. October saw Bobby Imes, the father-in-law of my son Rene, passed.

Wor Bro Todd took the March meeting, as I was unable to attend due to the passing away of my father Wor Bro Julius van Oudtshoorn de Villiers PDSGD. The lodge stood in tribute. He was in his 89th year after a long life devoted to others; he survived both malaria and the "fell clutch of circumstance". What a father! He died in full possession of his faculties. Three weeks later, my mother - what strength of character and love and joy, she had - followed him, dying of a broken heart. In the words of Longfellow:

*"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."*

and:

*"The cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away."*

In my report following my first year in office, I mentioned that I had urged the founding of an English Chapter of the Rose Croix, as a tribute to all our worthy predecessors.

During the year, we held a fishing competition at the dam of Wor Bro Jack Tecklenburg, and organised by his cousin Wor Bro Bob. Some of us attended the installation of R Wor Bro Ablett. I thanked Wor Bro Jack Tecklenburg and his wife Gloria for their exemplary minutes as he relinquished this office to Wor Bro Noel Watkins. In January 1980 my son Pierre was initiated; his brothers Navarre and Rene taking part. Brothers Francis Evans and Boshoff, were initiated. The WM gave a lecture on the third degree (masonic not forensic!)

D R DEHRMANN 1980-81

Dennis is an example of quiet sincerity, of someone at peace with himself, and happy on his farm at Revolver Creek - a sympathetic brother. His was a busy year. Jacques de Villiers another of my sons, was initiated together with M Ashton, R G Millar, T R Dodds and J H Christenson. Bros Evans and Boshoff were passed and Bro Pierre de Villiers raised to the third degree. In his report, he records the deaths of Noel Watkins, Bill Dimond and A J Tecklenburg. He thanked Snowy Grieve for a lecture on the first degree Tracing Board.

R G STOTT 1981-82

Roy at one time had an armature winding works, and in many ways, he resembles the dynamos which he repaired; for inside there is a steady, determined energy. Thorough, he gets things done. His installation was attended by Wor Bro Frank Turner Assistant DGM.

In August my son Jacques was passed and at the September meeting he graciously allowed me to conduct the ceremony of my son Etienne's initiation. In October, Bro Millar was passed; so too Bro Mark Ashton, in the month following. December was marked by the gift of a hamper by Bro Dan Murray. In the following year, Bro Evans, and Bros Dodds and Christenson were passed, and Bro Boshoff raised. Bro Roy is forthright. He calls a spade a spade, and has no time for sham and evasion. Self effacing, he is always present when there is work to be done. A true stalwart of the Lodge - staunch in his loyalty and determined to give of his best.

A L SPOHR 1982-83

The following workings took place: the initiations of Poultney and Ray Bushell; the passings of Bros Etienne de Villiers and Poultney; the raisings of Bros Mark Ashton, Jacques de Villiers, G R Millar, Trevor Dodds and J E Christenson. Once again, a busy year.

NAVARRE de VILLIERS JNR 1983- 84

Wor Bro Manfred Hermer came down to represent the District. At his first meeting, Navarre conducted the Raising of his brother Etienne, while his father delivered the Exhortation, his brother Rene, the Charge; the Secrets, his brother Jacques; and portion of the Tracing Board, his brother Pierre. The next month he did a second degree working; while in September, Ray Bushell was raised. At that meeting there was a long discussion regarding an extension to the Lodge building. There were quotes of between R28000 and R44000. Eric Todd suggested that they carry on until funds ran out at least with the foundations. Bro Macdonald felt that something had to be done about the image of the lodge. Alas, Mac who was the epitome of a good mason, was eventually to resign because the outside world saw a distorted image, and he had to give way. There was talk of a cupboard for regalia and more fans were agreed on.

In his report, the WM deplored the loss of five members: N de Villiers Snr, Rene and Pierre de Villiers all going to the Cape, and Bushell and Poultney. The building project had proved too ambitious so was

to be restricted. The sum of R4314,36 was raised for this; the result of the raffle of two oxen donated by Bros Bob and Jack Tecklenburg. A combined social was held with Lodge St John in the South at Moodies.

H R McGREGOR 1984 -85.

RWBro Freeman came down for the installation. In August Wor Bro van Rooyen gave a lecture on the Craft. In September, a lengthy discussion took place re extensions to the building. For some time the brethren had felt that an extension to the Refectory would mean that festivities would be better held at the lodge, and for that purpose, a larger, well equipped kitchen and a ladies' toilet would be essential. Estimates for the whole scheme came to R62500. But the kitchen's cost was estimated at R6545 and the store room at R2250; the redecorating to provide for the Rose Croix degree at R4000. Various alternatives were discussed - the whole, or the kitchen and storeroom, including the toilet. Wor Bro Eric Todd suggested the latter, and this was adopted. Eric took it a step further, he supplied the labour and supervised it charging nothing for his services.

In November, Con van Eyssen was passed, and in March, Bro Scott. R500 was bequeathed by the late Bro Errol Duncan and a plaque was made and installed to commemorate his services to the lodge. DGL provided a building loan of R8000 payable over 6 years and secured by a first mortgage bond. In his report, the WM said that the renovations had cost R12808,13. and that there was a balance owing of R7814. A brother who wished to remain anonymous came to the rescue and lent the lodge R8000 interest free.

R S INNES 1985 -86.

Bobby Innes is a devout churchgoer, and much distressed by the antagonism displayed by it. Indeed, the influence of the Church has led to the reluctant resignations of several brethren, including one, whose unselfish hard work in the interests of the Craft, was an inspiration to us all. Accusations are made; and, hampered by admonitions to secrecy, and by a general lack of knowledge, the confronted mason stammers to a stop. Why is there no mention of Jesus Christ? Why have you secrets if there is nothing to hide? Our pastor says that our Lord said that there is no other way to salvation, except through Him. etc etc. Bobby is known for his exemplary kindness. Quietly and without saying anything, he takes on all those tasks which have to be done.

The DGM, Ted Ablett, came to Barberton for the installation. To surprise and please the WM elect, I and my son Rene (Bobby's son-in-law) came up secretly from Cape Town. We entered the lodge just before District and I shall never forget the look on Bobby's face as we walked in.

D R DEHRMANN 1986-87

This was Dennis' second time in office. As always he brings a quiet sincerity to all he does. So his years in office are an inspiration for all those who need a lesson in humility. There were several initiations of brothers who have since disappeared. In view of the decline in the numbers of masons, it would perhaps help if we could find out why brethren join and subsequently leave. Did it not fulfil their expectations? If so, they were clearly inadequately prepared. Obviously no one knows what to expect, and freemasonry is not what many are seeking; nevertheless, it would seem that more probing and more information should be given to prospective candidates. Another question raises itself: are we demonstrating enough brotherhood outside the walls of the Lodge? Have we failed in some way?

FD EVANS 1987 - 88

Francis is a farmer, and as such, has enjoyed the privileges of that way of life, and suffered its anxieties. You never know whether those quiet eyes are scanning the horizon for rain.

In January' 88, former DGM Les Hinett passed away, and the lodge stood in silent tribute. As the

founding organiser of the Lowveld Rose Croix Chapter I had the privilege of working with him. I shall never forget his insistence on perfection. What more can a man do but set a high standard? Emulation leads to perfection. I was touched by his request that his ashes be scattered in the grounds of the Barberton Lodge. What greater tribute could he have paid Barberton?

Francis did one initiation, three seconds and one third. In addition, Bro Kettle was passed and raised on behalf of Lodge Kimberley. In February, the lodge agreed to twin with Lodge Jeppe's Town. The Master congratulated Lal on his twenty third year as treasurer - what an achievement! He was to continue in that office until his death. R1000 was given to DGL for masonic charities and R220 to the Surgical Research Fund.

J J BOSHOFF 1988-89.

The year saw Bros Topper and Kennedy initiated, one passing and one raising. Navarre Jnr explained the First degree Tracing Board. Wor Bro James van Rooyen suggested that in view of inflation alternative investments be investigated by Bros Lal and Navarre Jnr. At the next meeting they advised trust funds. An ox was again donated by Wor Bro Bob to raise funds. In April, Bro Roy brought us down to earth. He found the "hygiene of the Lodge shocking." The ladies were brought in to help. I won't say they were bribed, but they held abraaivleis at the same time. SANTA and the local Geriatric Ward were given R200 each; two children were given school clothes and R1000 was donated to DGL.

JACQUES DE L'ISLE de VILLIERS 1989 - 91.

Wor Bro Asst DGM Fotinakis officiated at the installation. To honour me, I was once again asked to do the inner working. During the year three Bros were initiated, two were passed and two were raised. The donation to DGL came to R1700. SANTA received R150 as also the Geriatric Ward. Bro FJP Scott proved to be a very good charity steward. The WM called on Wor Bro James to present a plaque to Lal for 25 years service as Treasurer. This was the year that Allan Fish was presented with the scroll by myself on behalf of the Barberton Lodge and the Lord Robert's Lodge of Somerset West.

T R DODDS 1990-91.

In November, a devastating storm broke every roof tile in the village. Flying hailstones lashed the town in a fury of gleaming white, smashing everything that dared protest. Dogs scurried head down, yelping, tail between legs. Inhabitants dashed for shelter. But even that was unsafe, because after the roofs disintegrated, it was not long before the ceilings came crashing to the floor. Unbelieving, housewives trembled on all fours beneath the dining room tables. The pious reached for the Bible, the doomed groped for the bottle. Trees became winter skeletons within minutes. The few bedraggled surviving hens, instead of thanking their stars, squawked their indignation.

Only James van Rooyen and four members attended the meeting. The lodge was in total darkness. They opened and closed postponing all business. There is no mention in the minutes as to whether they found the whiskey or whether the bottles had floated away; or indeed, whether they stayed to commiserate at the festive board.

In the next year there were two passings and one raising. Bro E de Villiers donated R50 towards the fans. I see that in the minutes, as recorded by Bro Todd, I pointed out that the Festive area was called the Refectory. (I am afraid it is a word which is amongst the endangered species!) Bro James gave a most informative lecture.

CONRAD VAN EYSEN 1991-92.

RW DGM Freeman officiated at the Installation.

Con has the quiet dignity of an English gentleman. Unfortunately due to a declining interest in masonry,

Barberton Lodge had a quiet year. Workings that would normally have taken place, were postponed. It is a pity because Con is an excellent ritualist. In March, James van Rooyen read a paper on masonry and religion. In April the minutes record a talk by myself which "really gave the brethren food for thought," as the secretary expressed it. Thanks largely to the Charity Steward Roy Stott, R5000 was raised for benevolence.

ETIENNE de VILLIERS 1992-93.

His installation took place under the aegis of Wor Bro D de Beer, Asst DGM. The installing WM was kind enough to allow me to do the Inner Working. This was the fourth time. There were to be two more: such are among the blessings of fatherhood. "A wise son maketh a glad father ... " It was to be a busy year. July, August and September saw the initiations of Bros Bruce Robson, Brian Collins and Andrew Diedericks. A third degree working took place in October when Bro Fosse was raised. Bro Bobby Innes was thanked for visiting Bro Barfoot in a Pretoria hospital; Bro Francis Evans and his wife Carol, for a braaivleis held at their farm Dixie, and Roy for stepping into the breach. In January, Bro Cicione was initiated and in February, Bruce Robson was passed. In March a third degree working was done for Jeppestown Lodge in Johannesburg. After the April meeting, I gave a talk to the ladies, "to set aside their religious qualms," as Etienne expressed it in his report.

JULIUS RENE de VILLIERS 1993-94

Wor Bro Norman Clark represented DGL at the installation. Once again I did the inner working for one of my sons. Bro Brian Collins was passed in July, and Bro B Cicione was initiated in September, to be followed by the passing of Bro Diedericks in October. In the following year there were two more workings : V Cicione to his second and Bruce Robson to his third.

Rene is a great visitor; he believes in the fellowship which ties all masons together. To him brotherhood is the crux of masonry.

MARK ASHTON 1994-95.

Asst DGM Powell came for the installation. Bro Vincenzo Cicione was raised in September, and later that year, his brother Biagio was passed. The ladies evening was held at Bro Todd's restaurant in Nelspruit, and he generously donated half of the takings to the Lodge for charity. In January, Bro H A Todd was passed. The April meeting demonstrated only too clearly what the local inhabitants thought of masonry: none of the charities approached would accept the R400 gift. (Clearly there is work to be done; a campaign to be launched, a plan to be formed.)

JULIUS RENE de VILLIERS 1995-96.

Wor Bro Albert Spencer, Deputy DGM, brought a delegation from Johannesburg. Once again I did the Inner Working. I shall never forget the party after my own installation. Wor Bro Albert was Director of Ceremonies. He has a very convivial idea about toasts: "Will all those who are bachelors drink wine with the Master?" The toast over, up he stands: "Now will all those who wish they were not bachelors, drink wine with the Master?" Again: "Now will all those who are married drink wine with the Master?" That done, he is once again quickly on his feet. "Now, will all those who are married and wish they weren't, drink wine with the master?" And so on; toast after toast. I hope that when he becomes DGM he will talk to the traffic authorities and get them to raise the limit to at least two bottles. Perhaps the wine estates will co-operate and increase the size to a litre and a half! Nothing should stand in the way of so accomplished a Director of Ceremonies. Not even the Master's hangover! But to get back to Rene's year.

In August Biagio Cicione was raised. The ladies dinner was held at Eric's restaurant, Win's, and fifty per cent of the takings was donated to Lodge Charities. R600 was raised. In April, S P Kenworthy was initiated.

KEVIN T BUYSKUS 1996-97-98.

Kevin is another of the 'gold nuggets' we find from time to time in the Anglo Vaal's mining operations in the district. One was James van Rooyen, another was "Mac" Macdonald. This venture in Illicit Gold Buying has helped both our Lodge and our Scottish sister, Lodge Saint John in the South - the girl with the kilt.

Wor Bro the Honourable Mr Justice Cloete, Asst DGM brought his legal dignitas and a delegation from Johannesburg. In the words of WS Gilbert, "... the law is the true embodiment of everything that's excellent, it has no kind of fault or flaw, and I my lords, embody the law." What a stirring thing it is to see that pomp and circumstance, in the entry of the DGM at the assembly hall at Wits University! To quote Burns: "With deep-struck reverential awe ... to nature's God and nature's law, they gave their love."

The latter years have shown an alarming lack of candidates; workings became fewer and fewer. Kevin, in his second term in office, brought his gumption to the fore and organised an evening where five potential candidates were invited with their wives to a discussion on masonry. In order not to detract from the drama of that first glimpse, when the plea for light has been answered, the visitors were not shown the temple. An outline was given and questions were put. The result was that four out of five asked to be made masons and a fifth came later. So we have a full working year ahead of us.

THE FUTURE.

But first a look backward. During the 'Golden Age' of this lodge lectures were given whenever there wasn't a working. The library was well stocked with books. All this, without detriment to 'the Club' aspect. In the second degree we are enjoined to extend our researches from the principles of Moral Truth and Virtue in the first, to the 'hidden mysteries of nature and science'. Let us follow the example of my father who gave a talk on the blood groups. There are a host of subjects, from relativity, computers, history, the bushman paintings in the Barberton hills, to the future of gold and the challenges of our time, to name only a few of a million topics which should hold us enthralled besides those regarded as masonic. We are here to learn, brains are to be used, not left blank or befuddled. With such a programme we shall not find masters complaining about "chronic non attenders".

And now to the future.

Sooner or later, we are going to be faced with the question as to how far our brotherhood extends? Do we accept the hitherto underprivileged? The conservative brethren may dig in their heels and say 'no', whilst threatening resignation; others will see it as inevitable. The old order changeth and gives way to the new.

Our paradigms - the social practices and perceptions - shared over the last centuries, are changing. Our time has been one of masculine self-assertiveness, of a competitive struggle for existence, and the domination inherent in competition. Considerations of self have dominated in the unlimited quest for economic and technical growth in a period of expansion.

But the paradigm is changing. We are beginning to realise that we are all part of the whole - that the web is important not the spiders. If I hurt my neighbour, I hurt my-elf. Life is a net of relationships, and it is those relationships which are important. Put in masonic terms, we are stones in the temple; it is the temple which counts, not the desire of some selfish stone intent on its own glorification. The world in which we lived, very much as parasites - exploiting its resources, its forests, its whales, etc. etc. is being replaced by one in which we live in a delicate balance in the symbiosis of partnership. It is the wellbeing of the earth as a whole that is important.

Brotherly love then ceases to be academic, and becomes a sine qua non . But it is difficult to love a

neighbour whom you don't even know (and perhaps even more difficult, when you do!) so loving translates into refraining from doing anything which will harm not only him, but the whole ecological pattern. I cannot plant a forest of gums in the wetlands of the Kaapsehoop mountains without affecting my brother farming at Lowe's Creek, his cane fields, his wife, his children and a dragon fly hovering above a pool in the Kaap river; or indeed, every species of life from Barberton to Mozambique.

Masonry is a philosophy and a way of life, which fits the new paradigm. Understanding breeds tolerance and respect, instead of condemnation and exploitation. As such, it must not be lost. And, because it teaches a way of life, which if practised, would mean the end of all exploitation, it is vital for the future. We don't own the world; we hold it in trust; and, like the Warrant of the Lodge, we must pass it on unsullied to the next generation. The male assertive characteristic must give way to the female trait of compassion. The Sermon on the Mount must replace the survival of the richest.

Moral regeneration begins with the first degree. The light, which the mason's newly lit lamp, casts, extends from him to his family and on to all those with whom he comes in contact, at work and at leisure. Thus, he applies the virtues of living on the square - courage, integrity and goodwill. He neither envies nor condemns. Courteous, he is slow to anger; earnest and dignified; deaf to slander; and dumb to violent speech.

Which brings us back to the first question. We do not want to take a decision which will tear the lodge asunder. Freemasonry must be perpetuated. At the same time, we have no right to withhold such a teaching from our fellow human beings - a teaching which may act as a yeast, and guarantee the wellbeing of our great, great, grandchildren. So we are on the horns of a dilemma. We are indeed going to need the wisdom of a Solomon and the counsel and influence of District Grand Lodge.

But, we have an additional problem. Barberton, like Johannesburg, was founded on gold. We built on a base metal not realising that the metal would turn to sand. Now, the quicksands of economics are threatening to pull down the walls of the temple. An echo in Wall Street, could, like the trumpets at Jericho, bring the walls down. Barberton is a small village with two Lodges. Population wise, I don't suppose we even rival the smallest suburb of Johannesburg. If the mines go, we shall find candidates even more scarce.

If that happens, then our position here will be very much worse than that in which masonry finds itself across the Globe. I understand that there is a graph of membership against time, which points to masonry declining to zero by the year 2020. Surely the solution lies in adapting our male chauvinism? I know this is going to end this history on a controversial note. Nevertheless, we are speculative masons, and, rather than sit back and do nothing, shouldn't we consider the unthinkable? We all agree beyond any doubting, that freemasonry is a wonderful institution - indeed, one of the true wonders of the world - how then, can we deny it to those who are closest to us?

Yes, I am suggesting a combined order of men and women, save that the festive boards be kept separate. I agree that there are times when a man should be alone, and the camaraderie and banter round the table are very important indeed; but this should not apply to the working in the temple. To those who argue that separate festive boards are impracticable, I suggest that we borrow another lodge's Refectory to accommodate our ladies; or find somewhere else equally suitable.

If Grand Lodge approves, there will be such a surge of interest in the Craft that it will survive for centuries to come. The ladies will ask questions; they will want to know what it means. The criticism that we are an exclusive drinking club will fall away. The presently threatening decline and fall will be replaced by a new renaissance.

“As a pattern for imitation, consider that glorious luminary of Nature, which, rising in the East, regularly diffuses light and lustre to all within its circle ... “