

The quarterly newsletter
of the District Grand
Lodge of the South Island



DEGREES SOUTH

SEPTEMBER 2022

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BOARD OF GENERAL PURPOSES

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IMPORTANT DATES

- Installations
Greymouth—2 September
St John—10 September
Southern Star—8 October
Ashburton—18 October
St Albans—20 October
- Board of General Purposes—
19th November.

Who is on the Board of General Purposes?

The people on the Board are from the various Lodges, and they represent the District, not their individual Lodges.

a. The District Board of General Purposes shall consist of a President (appointed annually by the District Grand Master—John Woolcott), seven ex-officio members and SIX other members of District Grand Lodge, THREE of whom shall be appointed annually by the District Grand Master and the other THREE elected annually by District Grand Lodge.

b. The ex-officio members shall be the holders for the time being of the following offices in District Grand Lodge, namely:

The District Grand Master, Richard Taylor
Deputy District Grand Master, John Soper
Assistant District Grand Master, Frans van Zoggel
District Grand Wardens, Andrew Donahue (JW), Kevin Slee (SW)
District Grand Treasurer, Steve Kelsen
District Grand Secretary, Murray Tasker

SIX other members of District Grand Lodge,

THREE of whom shall be appointed annually by the District Grand Master, namely:

Jason Young
Nigel Paterson
Nigel Howard

THREE elected annually by District Grand Lodge, at Communications.

David Gregson
David Mackay
Andrew Brown



DGM THOUGHTS

Brethren,

The sadness of the passing of her Majesty has been tempered by the universal admiration expressed from every quarter of the Globe. Never before have we witnessed such a coming together of common expressions of grief, loss and approbation, amongst so many millions, for an extraordinary life well lived and an outstanding commitment to duty.

Immediately we have set about revising our toast lists, bearing in mind that a few days after the death of our Monarch we saw the investiture in London of a new Pro Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master and Assistant Grand Master. Consequently I thought the following reflections on the origins of toasting might be of interest at this time

"The King and the Craft" –

The first toast at a festive board is, as of last week, usually stated as "The King and the Craft". On every possible occasion, English Freemasons, when meeting as a body, take pride in asserting their loyalty to the Crown by honouring the loyal toast. Although this toast may be traced back to the "Old Charges", which enjoined all Masons to be "true men to God and true lieges to the King", it does not form part of the Ritual. Doctor Anderson, in the *Book of Constitutions* (1738, page 38) relates that *the King, with Grand Master Inigo Jones and his Grand Wardens (the Earl of Pembroke and Nicholas Stone, the sculptor), attended by many Brethren in due form and many eminent persons, walked to Whitehall Gates for the laying of the foundation stone of the new banqueting hall in 1607 and levelled the footstone "with 3 great knocks, and a purse of broad pieces of gold was laid upon the stone for Masons to drink to "The King and the Craft", the King being James I of England.*

In 1719, at the Festival of Grand Lodge, Dr. John Desagulier was installed as the 3rd Grand Master. After being duly installed, he received the peculiar toasts and healths of Freemasons. These were said to be to: "The King and the Craft" - representing the principle of loyalty; to "The Freemason's Health" - for the Fraternity; and: "The Tyler's Toast" - for relief. Two more toasts were added at the Festivals at a later date: The Grand Master and The Grand Stewards. By the close of the 18th Century the total list averaged around

9.

Of the twelve English sovereigns who have graced the Throne since Grand Lodge came into existence in 1717, six have been Masons; yet the toast has always been given with full Masonic honours. Some say it is a landmark of the Order. When Queen Victoria came to the Throne in 1837, the term "Queen and Craft" had never before been used, and there was no chance of this sovereign being a member of the Craft. But the need to preserve the ancient custom resulted in the period of 63 years - from 1837 to 1900 - the toast was "The Queen and the Craft"; to be followed by another 51 years in the original form of "The King and the Craft"; reverting again in 1952, on the accession of Queen Elizabeth II, to "The Queen and the Craft", until 8th of September last. King Edward VII was a Past Grand Master and had the title of Protector of the Craft; he was succeeded by George V, who was not a Freemason. George VI, who was a very active Mason, came to the throne when Edward VIII, who was also a Freemason, but gave up his Throne for Mrs. Simpson. King Charles III is not a Freemason.

One item that, sadly, seems to be often overlooked is that the Tyler is responsible for ensuring that the dining room is cleared of catering staff when the WM wishes to start these toasts and to see that the room remains tyled until the toasts have finished or until the WM decides to interrupt the toasts so that, for example, coffee can be served or the tables cleared. Under the instructions of the DC, the Tyler should liaise with the catering staff to ensure that they know when not to enter the dining room.

It is increasingly common for Lodges to entertain wives and other non-Masonic guests to dinner. It is worth reminding you that the Board of General Purposes of Grand Lodge does not wish to discourage this practice, but hopes it will remain the exception rather than the rule, and that it will be confined to perhaps a single meeting in each year. The DC should be aware that if non-Masons are present, the health of certain individuals in their Masonic capacity may be drunk but the number of such toasts should be kept to a minimum.

Faternally,

Richard

BOARD REPORTS

At long last it's possible to write a report, without having to state, unfortunately due to Covid we haven't been able to meet in person.

Hopefully those days are now behind us and we can continue to meet live and make decisions in person, rather than by zoom.

Since the last report we have had one Board of General Purposes meeting in August.

We welcomed three new members to The Board of General Purposes, being WBro Tasker. District Grand Secretary, WBro Patterson District Grand Charity Steward and WBro Howard District Grand Mentor

I look forward to working with our new members and the contributions they bring going forward as we regroup after losing experienced long standing members K Borland, D Stenning and K Moen.

At our August meeting although many were already aware of problems, the following was reported

Lodge St John – membership has fallen to a critical level, and they are no longer viable. A committee meeting has been held and it was decided to have their installation this year; then change their meeting times to 2-3 times/year; become a travelling lodge, but based in Timaru; ask for support from other Lodges requesting for country members to join. There has been a suggestion to move to Dunedin.

This brings me to the point of reminding anyone reading this report. If your Lodge is experiencing problems and the situation is worsening, please don't leave it until it's too late, to contact the Board, in the hope we may be able to in some way assist.

You will remember Canterbury 1048 was on its last legs and was rescued and restructured, thanks to the combined efforts of our District Grand Master and a number of other people.

The only outstanding item from previous meetings to be finalised is the restoring our Amberley archives. This was delayed due to Covid, but it is currently being re visited.

WBro Jason young was re-elected as Vice President.

Fraternal regards

John Woolcott

President of The Boards

Report from The South Island District Charitable Trust

The Trust like anyone or organisation with investments have suffered a fall in their returns, which appears to be worldwide at present.

The short answer is that despite this the Trust still

has in excess of one million dollars in accumulated funds.

Our treasurer has advised we must act prudently for the foreseeable future, while watching the ups and downs of the financial markets.

Having said that, we must always be aware that Charity is one of the most important functions of our Masonry existence.

Craig's our investment partners, keep us well informed and advised as to the best way of maximising our investments.

At our August meeting the following charity applications were approved:

735 Southern Star— Nelson Hospice \$3,000

1233 Greymouth— Dixon House \$4,000

1811 Ashburton— Life Education Trust \$500

1811 Ashburton Centennial Scholarship \$1000

1916 Conyers—Champion Centre \$4,500

1916 Conyers - Salvation Army \$1500

2007 Amberley—Nth Canterbury Rural Support Trust \$1000

2597 St Albans— Kilpatrick House \$3,000

Standing grants approved were:

Ashburton Almoners—\$150

Canterbury Almoners— \$150

Midland Almoners—\$150

Dixon House— \$150

TLC— \$7,500

Lawrence Area School - \$440

Lawrence St John - \$440

South-Westland SAR - \$1,080

Hohepa House—\$5,000

In May 2021 a Grants Committee was formed

The purpose of this committee with a small discretionary budget is to enable any urgent requests with to be dealt with expediently, rather than having to wait for our November meeting, where charity applications are received and dealt with.

This week we allocated \$1000 towards The Nelson Mayoral Appeal, to assist those affected by their recent weather event.

Our Charity Steward has submitted a Draft Charity Plan, which is currently being considered and worked on, with more to report after our November Board Meeting

Until next time, I will close with the message that as stated at Installations and Communications Meetings, your donations, will be thankfully received and faithfully applied

John Woolcott

President

South Island English District Masonic Charitable Trust

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Degrees South Deadline:
November 20th for the December Edition.

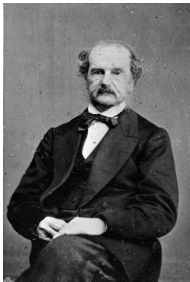
FAMOUS MASONS

Isaac Earl Featherston 1813-1876

Doctor, politician, provincial superintendent.

Isaac Earl Featherston was born at Newcastle upon Tyne, England, on March 21st 1813. He was educated at a private school at Tamworth and at the Edinburgh University where he graduated M.D. in 1836.

He married Bethia Campbell Scott in 1839. Featherston suffered from tuberculosis, and in an effort to restore his health, he and Bethia travelled extensively.



In December 1840 Featherston set sail on the New Zealand Company ship, the *Olympus*, as the Surgeon Superintendent. They docked in Wellington harbour in May 1841.

His first reaction upon seeing Wellington was one of shock. He could not believe that "these mud hovels and wooden huts" represented the City of Wellington. He believed that he and the other migrants had been deceived by the New Zealand Company, particularly in its promise of hundreds of acres of "fine fertile land, which shall produce such astounding crops."

Featherston practised medicine during the 1840s and became involved in the town's various associations.

His main interests were in community building initiatives and as such he took an active part in many public meetings and deputations, such as the founding of the Wellington Savings Bank in 1846.

Featherston became the first editor of the *Wellington Independent* in 1845.

He was described as a man of "unimpeached character, a leader of the settlers."

He sought to secure compensation for the immigrants from the New Zealand Company. When such a scheme was finally worked out, Featherston received much of the credit and was presented with a "service of silver plate" at Barrett's Hotel on June 28th 1852.

1851 saw Featherston as one of the leaders of the Wellington Settler's Constitutional Association and a vocal critic of Governor **George Grey**'s constitutional proposals.

He was elected as the first Superintendent of the Wellington province in 1853.

Featherston had an animosity toward the Wakefield family, particularly **Colonel William Wakefield** who was the primary agent for the New Zealand Company.

Both of these men were Freemasons and both attended the same Lodge. They were from opposite sides of the political arena and it was noted that Featherston blamed the Wakefield family for talking him out of settling in Australia. Such arguments and ill feeling are specifically excluded from being allowed to enter Lodge proceedings so as not to upset the environment of peace and harmony.

These feelings must have been too much for the two gentlemen and in the 1850s they fought a duel, one of only two recorded in New Zealand history.

The weapons chosen were pistols. Featherston fired first and missed. Wakefield fired his pistol into the air, declaring he would never kill a man with seven daughters.

Strangely enough, the "other" historic duel involved another member of the same Lodge.

Featherston's troubles with the Wakefield's did not end with the facing off over pistols. Indeed, when Edward Gibbon Wakefield arrived in Wellington in 1853, he was a serious contender for the leadership. Featherston appeared jealous of Wakefield and had an "inflexible and implacable" attitude toward talk of co-operation.

Edward Gibbon Wakefield withdrew from the political activity in Wellington due to ill health. This gave Featherston some relief, however, it was short-lived. A few years later Wakefield's son, Edward Jerningham Wakefield, became one of Featherston's chief antagonists in the Wellington constitutional crisis.

Featherston held the position of Superintendent for Wellington until 1870. He was also a member of the House of Representatives from 1853-1870 and was Colonial Secretary for a month in 1861 and a Minister without a portfolio in the general government from 1869-1871.

He gained great mana from his work in intervening on behalf of and with Maori during various conflicts and for his diplomacy in negotiating land purchases. He was the first Agent General for New Zealand in London.

Isaac Earl Featherston died at Sussex, England, on June 19th 1876.

In 1847, he became a member, by affiliation, of **New Zealand Pacific Lodge 758 (517) Wellington**.

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