

The DGM/s Corner



DISTRICT GRAND MASTERS REPORT

2024-2025 YEAR

Brethren this being my 2nd communications I still consider it an honour to be sitting in this chair. I do not take the responsibility that comes with it lightly. I thank you all for the trust you put in me and the support you have given in many ways to help make our district what it is.

RW. Bro. G W Rowe; PDGM; PJGD. Geoff it is always a pleasure to receive Grand Lodge into our proceedings. Especially today with you having the honour of being escorted into our annual communications by your grand lodge officers. We thank you and all the grand officers who entered with you and trust your weekend with us will be pleasurable.

RW. Bro. Weir DGM NI. Warren it would not be the same if our two districts did not come together to celebrate our annual communications each year. it is always a pleasure to receive you and your district officers. We welcome you here and trust you are enjoying your time with us. I believe the affiliation our two districts have is strong and needs to remain strong to strengthen both our districts in the face of adversity within some areas of the craft.

As with last year I have much pleasure in welcoming our master masons who have been raised to the sublime degree of MM since our last communication. As MMs you are a member of district grand lodge and are entitled to be here among us as equals. I will now ask that the senior members of lodges present their master masons to the south side of the tessellated pavement.

Bro. MM s, It has been a pleasure to welcome you among us today. When I see the calibre of men coming through the lodges and attending this meeting, I know our future is secure. Your attendance illustrates the importance that you and the members of your lodge have put on attending this our annual

communications. It should now be placed on your calendar as part of your masonic journey. Be sure to integrate into your lodges and be sure to learn from those senior officers that you look up to.

As you should know by now my belief in the principals of freemasonry have no bounds. We are one of the most structured voluntary organisations on this planet which has survived well over 300 years due to the richness of its ceremonies and the lifetime rewards it offers to each member.

The main role of DGM office is to ensure that we are adhering to the proper emulation workings which come out of UGLE.

We all know that Ritual from our sister constitutions has over the years slowly but surely infiltrated our workings which at times is lauded as a landmark. These are not landmarks but have become integrated into our proceedings for whatever reason. It is the responsibility of each lodge to ensure that we do the correct working according to the constitution and should be under the control of the master, director of ceremonies and preceptor of the lodge who should make sure that at lodges of instruction any infractions are corrected.

Again, this year I have driven more than 20,000kms with over 60 visits on masonic business which has involved all 4 constitutions and both Islands. Without the support of my **Assist & Deputy DGMs** covering for me on official visits on many occasions that total would have been much higher. I thank you both for the work and hours you have put in supporting myself and your district. It never goes un-noticed.

Brethren the last 12 months have been favourable for our district with no major issues. Those that have arisen have been dealt with.

Overall, we have had a good increase in numbers within our lodges meaning our district is growing. This has been affected by both new initiates and joining members from sister constitutions. Some lodges however are lagging and appear to have no energy to promote or grow themselves. We need to address this **now**. Tomorrow may be too late. I must congratulate the Greymouth lodge on their first initiation for many years. This is a lodge with very low numbers but a determination to succeed. Well done and we look forward to your next initiation. Brethren we must not let our guard down. We must continue to be actively looking to increase numbers in all lodges. District has the tools to help, but in some cases I think pride gets in the way of asking for that help which is sadly needed. It is imperative that we lose that mentality of we are **ok**.

Brethren if your lodge has either stagnated or is decreasing in numbers **you are not OK**. When you decide you need help, reach out to those district officers who are only too willing to throw their support behind you. They are DG Mentor, Charity Steward and membership officers. Though all district officers will support you if you ask. *Apathy is the death knell to any organisation.*

During my recent visit to UGLE attending the grand investitures of both the craft and RA it was invigorating to see how our rulers operate. Brethren Grand officers younger than many in this room today have a passion for freemasonry which in some cases we seem to be missing. Their dedication to learn and become the best mason they can was outstanding.

One of their sayings is **people do not change with time. People change by choice**. A very true statement.

Brethren there are two items of emulation we must look at. This is how we are conducting ourselves at meetings. There are two official parts to a masonic meeting. The work within the portals and then of course the refectory. Neither is any less important than the other. Both have official protocol attached. First, we must attempt to maintain a professional standard within the lodge room. The business section should have finesse. Brethren should only stand and move around when required to. The Director of ceremonies and

Senior Deacon are usually the only ones that should be moving, and only when required to do so. The DC does run the floor. Anyone else should stand, salute the master and request his permission, no matter who you are. I see too often brethren just moving at will, which gives no respect at all to the master or his lodge.

We must maintain the standard expected in refectory. In some cases, it has been reduced to a social event. Brethren we should always be proud of who we are and what we stand for. There are certain protocols that must be retained according to our constitution. The toasts should never be reduced, only being given in full and we never remain standing between each toast. Each toast is given to respect those current district and grand officers, regardless of whether they are present or not. It is also to respect those who have gone before us and to those who will succeed us. The DC and master should have a copy of the full list present at their respective places in the refectory and should be a part of setting up the tables.

When we have our ladies or non-masons present there are some deletions to the toasts. Grace is always given regardless of where refectory is held and who is present. all present stand which includes non-masons and is the only toast they stand for. The Tyler's toast is never given and there are no fires.

Brethren if we make no attempt to improve ourselves then we cannot expect our candidates to see the need to learn. After a candidates' initiation give him a small charge to learn. do not put pressure on him to learn in a short time but at least get him started. And progress him slowly. He should always have something going to giving him a reason for belonging.

Brethren it has been another very busy year attending installations of all 4 constitutions. This at times has caused some headaches due to conflicting times where I may have needed to be in 2 or 3 places at once. With this I thank W Bro. van Zoggel DDGM for the work he has done in this last year attending meetings of all constitutions when I have not been able to. Frans Your support is crucial to me and to our district, making sure that we are being seen and heard and ensuring that all lodges are adhering to the constitution. Last month Frans took the reins whilst I was out of the country. We were still intact when I returned so well done. I also congratulate you on your grand rank promotion to PSGD.

W. Bro Moroney ADGM. Ray, I know you have had to spend considerable time in Australia this last year with family matters. I hope all is going well. I thank you for the work you have put in over the North and West of the Island conducting installations and supporting me at both our own lodges and our sister constitutions in my absence. Sometimes you are a bit overwhelmed but you pushed on regardless. Ray it has taken time to arrive but congratulations on attaining your grand rank of PAGDC. Wear the rank proudly.

W.Bro. Stenning DG Sect. Dave, again I cannot thank you enough for the work that you have put in during this last year. your dedication to the district and the role has been anything but amazing. I know you keep me well informed of happenings from UGLE, the district as well as our sister constitutions, leaving no stone unturned. Your biggest frustration appears to be getting the correct information from the lodges in a reasonable time frame. Bro's Secretary's, I urge you all to get any documentation District Grand Secretary needs in a timely manner for him to conclude. He should not have to keep reminding you. I know he works tirelessly in this role every day of the week so I request that you make his job as easy as you possibly can.

W. Bro Young President of the Boards. Jason (*in your absence*) this has been anything but a good year for you. The loss of your son has weighed heavy on you, Trish and the family. We feel your pain and will always be there to support you all. With this you have covered your duties in a manner that has been well received under the conditions. I do hope that your sojourn overseas gives you the time to reflect and hopefully come

to terms with what has happened. Wor. Bro. Woolcott immediate past president of the boards did a splendid job for you in your absence. We look forward to catching up on your return.

Wor. Bro. Kelson DG. Treasurer. Steve, you have excelled yourself again this year leaving the district in a very financial position under difficult financial conditions. This enables us to distribute funds to our charitable causes as well as our lodges. I thank you and look forward to another year of your financial guidance.

Wor. Bro. Patterson. D.G. Charity Steward. Nigel This office can be exciting, or it can be dull. You create the former. Your enthusiasm for this roll is beyond measure. The charities that you find for the district to invest in followed by the fundraising you organise for them is invaluable to us. Your endeavours are hugely financial for the charity and promotes us highly in the community. I thank you and look forward to another good year.

I thank all those District officers who have put a lot of energy into their rolls. Unfortunately, it is not feasible to go through them all. Your work does not go un-noticed, and I know the frustrations some of you are having trying to support lodges. Do not be disillusioned.

Brethren as I said earlier this has been another very busy year for me having made many official and un-official visits, including degree working, installations and the various communications. This year in fact just last month I attended the grand investitures in London and was very proud to hear the names of those grand officers read out for our district from both the craft and royal Arch masonry. We all congratulate you.

I thank the district for their assistance with the trip to London. I was well received and looked after by Grand Lodge. There would have been over 1600 masons at both the Craft and Royal Arch investitures on both days who stood and clapped grand lodge in. Quite mind blowing to experience it. Unfortunately, Geoff I could not duplicate that when receiving you today. *May be next year.*

On the 1st June I leave again for a short 6-day trip to Kuala Lumpur to the installation of Bro. Mathir as DGM for Eastern Archipelago UGLE of which we are a part. *For this I will not be asking for Districts assistance.*

Brethren I got to have a small conversation concerning the new capitation fee for new initiates into the craft which includes RA. This is an added cost to new members when joining. Unfortunately, UGLE appears firm in their decision and were not in a mind to discuss it.

DGM OFFICIAL VISITS

EC	28	Installations 11	39
Irish Isnt`s	2	Dunedin	2
Scotland Inst`s	4	Visits 1. Dunedin & Christchurch	5
New Zealand Inst	6	Visits 2 Canterbury.	8
DGLNI Comms	1	Gisborne	1
Inst of DGM Scotland Dunedin & GSupt Scotland CHCH			2
UGLE Grand Investitures over 3 days in London			1
Total official visits for the year 2024-25			58

Outside of these there have been unofficial visits and my attendance at the 6 other lodges chapters and orders I belong.

Brethren I thank you for being here today at communications 2025 here in Blenheim and organised by the Dunedin Lodge 931. The organising of these events has its challenges so well done.

RW.Bro J O Soper
District Grand Master
South Island

Lodge Roundup

Southern Star 735

Southern Star held two meetings this May, both memorable for different reasons.

The first was an emergency meeting earlier in the month to raise Bro. Gaby van den Boom to the Third Degree. Gaby is a real-life stonemason, so when I presented him the working tools, and the ritual stated, *"but as we are all not operative masons,"* I couldn't help but whisper, *"except perhaps to you."*

Well done, Gaby! May you continue to grow and enjoy your Masonic journey!



The second meeting was our regular May meeting, made special by a visit from two brethren of St. Albans Lodge, including W. Bro. Phil Jackson, the District Grand Lodge Learning & Development Officer.

Bro. Phil delivered an engaging talk on visiting practices in Freemasonry, both locally and internationally. He highlighted key protocols, including the importance of checking if a lodge is recognized, carrying proper documentation when visiting overseas, and being familiar with all three degree signs.

The evening was interactive, with visiting experiences shared by brethren, and a live demonstration of proving practices by volunteers. Phil closed by reminding us that visiting is one of the most rewarding parts of being a Freemason.

Dunedin Lodge 931

Time was spent organising the Annual Communications in Blenheim. This event was well received by all who attended. This was a credit to the Dunedin Lodge for producing a great event.

Canterbury 1048

Met on the first Saturday in May, and after the Lodge business transacted, those present, and ladies were treated to a talk by Ken Borland PJGD, Past Assistant Deputy District Grand Master. Ken gave a snapshot of his younger days, family life, and his involvement in the Craft.

It is known that Ken was a very talented at sport and he also told some very interesting stories , regarding his sporting life

After the Lodge was closed , members and partners adjourned for a Thai Meal at Ashburton's Tonis Thai

Greymouth Lodge 1233

Phoenix 1690

A regular meeting held.

Winchester 1737

The held a Domestic evening

Ashburton 1811

Conducted an Emulation Second degree.

Conyers 1916

WBro Frans van Zoggel delivered an engaging presentation on Jacoba van Tongeren, a prominent and effective member of the Dutch Resistance during World War II.

She was the daughter of a Grand Master, and a Community Social Worker, whose courageous efforts in the resistance provided support to 4,500 individuals in Amsterdam who were hidden from the Gestapo.



Soup for supper. These were: tomato & blue cheese, Japanese pork miso, pea & pork, Filipino chicken vermicelli soup and corn soup

Amberley 2007

Domestic evening held.

St Albans 2597

The month of May for St Albans Lodge has been busy in general, with the majority of the brethren involved in the yearly communication meeting in Blenheim.

Apart from attending the communication, we visited Doric Brighton Lodge, where we had the chance to witness a double First Degree. We also attended Canterbury Kilwinning Lodge, where we had the opportunity to participate in a gavel exchange. This gavel exchange has been a long standing tradition among lodges that meet on the third Thursday of the month in Canterbury, so I was honoured to be part of this meaningful tradition.

Also, we visited Lodge Takahi , where we witnessed the Second Degree. Lastly, We will be doing the Third Degree for the brother from Doric Brighton on the 17th of July 2025. So, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you all. Your support will mean a lot to the brethren of St Alban.

No meeting

Lodge of St John 1137

Pacific Lodge of Hokitika 1229

Lazar1689

Canterbury 1048 RAC

District Charity (Nigel Paterson – nigpat@xtra.co.nz)

Well done on another great Communications. Dunedin lodge put on a great weekend and great weather!

Before Communications you would have heard about the fundraising Whisky and Gin tasting night, we put on at the Canterbury Freemason Centre. The proceeds of this night went to One Mother to Another. It was a great night and overall, we raised \$5750. The charity had an amazing night and are still talking about it. Check out some of the photos from the night.

I had the pleasure of attending the opening of their new premises Monday 26th May. There were a couple of reasons they moved. Firstly, due to the growth the charity has gone through they needed more room and secondly the old premises was not up to the current codes and due to duty of care for all their staff and volunteers moving was a necessity.

I've kept in close contact with Cholmondeley and although they are really busy, they are still incredibly thankful for the support we have provided.

Keep your eyes and ears out for an event we will run in October. We are eager to run a medieval dinner and hoping to take it up a level by linking in via technology to simultaneous events in Blenheim and the West Coast and maybe Ashburton. If you are located outside of Christchurch, please let me know if you would be keen to support and help organise the night in your location. This night will raise funds via raffles, auctions and general fundraising and the profits will be split between both our charity partners.



Joy Reid CEO & Co founder in the chair



Membership Officer (Alister MacPherson - alistermacnz@gmail.com)

District Mentor (Nigel Howard – nigelflyer@extra.co.nz)

At our recent Communications meeting I was pleased to meet up with three of our Lodge Mentor's for a general discussion and plans to enhance and support Lodge Mentor's.

Whilst some Lodges are giving the attention that this office deserves, some of our Lodges do not have a Mentor appointed or are playing lip service to the role. At Communications our DGM mandated that every one of our Lodges must have a Mentor appointed.

A common misconception is that Mentoring is for new initiates and whilst that of course is essential, it is equally important for every Brother in every Lodge.

It is a fact that many of our Lodges are struggling to recruit new members, so retaining existing members is even more vital.

The role of a Lodge Mentor should be to have regular meetings with all Lodge members, no matter how junior or senior, to discuss their role in the Lodge, do they aspire for a particular office, or are they happy to be just a regular attendees, do they have favourite charges they wish to practice? For those who do not attend regularly, why is that and what needs to change for them to be more active.

I am working on a single sided form for use by Lodge Mentor's to record essential facts about each Brother in their Lodge to ensure that their needs and aspirations are taken into account. A happy Brother is a happy Lodge.

I welcome feedback from all of our Lodge Mentor's on how you are currently carrying out your role. It is not a name and shame scenario, even if the role is not active in your Lodge. I am here to help and support each one of you.

I am working with our District Membership Officer as the challenge of recruiting new members and retaining existing Brethren is of vital importance to ensure that our Lodges survive and indeed grow.

If we don't do anything different then nothing will change.

Lodge Mentor's please contact me with your thoughts on the role of Lodge Mentor and specifically, what support you would like from myself and District.

THE PUBLICATION OF THE DISTRICT GRAND LODGE OF THE
SOUTH ISLAND

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The views expressed in these pages do not necessarily reflect
those of the District Grand Lodge

Degrees South Deadline:

4th July for the June Edition.