

# District Grand Lodge of India S.C. & Grand Chapter of U.S.R.A.F.I.C

FREEMASONS' HALL, SUKHADWALLA MARG, FORT, MUMBAI 400 001.



## NEWSLETTER

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*The views expressed in this Newsletter are solely that of the Editor.*

## **PREFACE**

With the partially easing impact of the unfortunate pandemic which hit our shores for nearly three years, normalcy is gradually limping back in, and so also is the state of our cherished Order. When COVID-19 spread its lethal tentacles in our comity, Freemasonry was per force constrained to take a back seat, and rightly so, what with the mandatory restrictive dictats and the fear of falling prey to the jaws of the monstrous epidemic.

Masonic bodies reluctantly postponed their meetings during the pandemic and economic and fiscal activities took the brunt of the unfortunate impact. Some Masonic bodies, however, kept their interest flowing by holding virtual meetings, but the attendance there was also restricted due to the aged and the infirm not being tech savvy. In the intermittent period, we witnessed an unprecedented number of Brethren being recalled to the Heavenly realms above, albeit some also due to natural causes. We mourn their not being in our midst today but prey to the Almighty to safeguard their Souls under his Divine Care.

However, the onset of the current calendar year saw, fortunately, a gradual return of Masonic activities and most of the Lodges and Chapters have more or less resumed their regular meetings, but due to the dread of infection, many have chosen to convey their apologies for non-attendance. We sincerely hope and pray that our numbers be now augmented by fresh influx of prospective initiates.

## **EDITORIAL**

To alleviate any apprehension apropos of the issuance of this Newsletter from the District, it need be clarified that it is sequel to a fervent appeal from Brethren of one of our upcountry Lodges at the Half Yearly meeting of the District at Pune on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2022, to introduce a means of communication between the District and the Lodges and Chapters. This gave birth to the idea of a District Newsletter keeping the members Pan-India apprised of our activities.

Lest it be misconstrued as a periodical, please be informed that this epistle is solely to convey the Masonic happenings at various centers, and in the process, Brethren and Companions are encouraged to send in their reports of recent events so as to incorporate the same in this Newsletter. We have now made a trial beginning and hope that the seeds sowed may reap fructification. Contributions from members are most welcome.

Our dear Bro. Sanjay Velankar has also promised to send in his professional snapshots clicked during our Masonic functions, and it is my earnest desire that may his tribe increase.

## **HALF YEARLY COMMUNICATION/CONVOCATION AT PUNE**

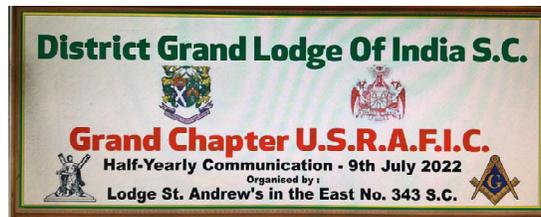
Our Scottish District witnessed with elation an unprecedented convergence of Brethren and Companions from various parts of the Country at Pune on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2022. The local Masonic Temple witnessed a packed audience as Brethren rubbed shoulders in exchanging pleasantries with each other, to the extent that the photographers experienced difficulty in encompassing all in their frame. The occasion was the Half-Yearly Communication and Convocation of the District Grand Lodge of India and the Grand Chapter of U.S.R.A.F.I.C. respectively. The Masonic fellowship was interspersed with true spirit of bon-homie and camaraderie evidently reflective of the Brotherhood preached within our Temples.



District Officers



Our Brethren at Pune were the epitome of perfect Hospitality and organisational skills as they toiled day and night to ensure that the event materialized in concurrence to their high-set goals. The working within the Temple was of the highest standard, thanks to the numerous rehearsals mentored by the local Senior Brethren. The Banquet to ensue was also immaculately planned and left no stone unturned.



The next day evidenced a Tree Plantation Drive within precincts of the Freemasons' Hall and once again the hosts proved their mettle in humility by taking a back seat while the visitors from various cities were encouraged to inter Mango and Coconut plantations in their allotted slots.



The Open House that ensued at the behest of the Rt. Wor. D.G.M. was an instant success as it threw open a plethora of ideas and suggestions, and this attempt of a Newsletter is one of the consequential emergence.



All in all, we bow our heads in gratitude and paying homage to the organisational aptitude of our Hosts from Lodge and Chapter "St. Andrew's in the East", Pune.

### **SUB COMMITTEES**

The constituents of various Sub-Committees of both the Lodges and Chapters (namely Finance, Benevolence, Byelaws & Appeals and Ceremonials) nominated by the Rt. Wor. DGM / MEC Grand Superintendent have been named, and we, at the District level look forward to their functioning cohesively for the betterment of Scottish Freemasonry in India. On our part, we are in the process of forming separate Whatsapp groups for each Sub-Committee for ease of interaction.

### **INOPERATIVE BODIES**

As a sequel to our ongoing efforts to reactivate such Masonic bodies within our jurisdiction, we are pleased to appraise you that Lodge Endeavour at Kolkata now stand rejuvenated and is fully functional with an initial strength of fourteen brethren. It was a pleasure for the DGM, Past DGM and the DG Secretary to attend their initial meeting at Kolkata where I had the prerogative of installing Bro. Biswaroop Bandopdhaya in the Eastern Chair. We look forward to the Lodge being restored to its pristine glory.



In similar vein, Chapter Mother India has been relocated to its new destination at Coimbatore and we await the report of its reactivation.

During the course of our interaction with the Brethren at Pune during the Open House conducted there, we had also received offers for relocating a couple of our inoperative Lodges to Kolhapur and Aurangabad. We are inclined to accept the offer provided adequate number of prospective members are available at those centers with proper infrastructural facilities for the overall smooth functioning of those Lodges.

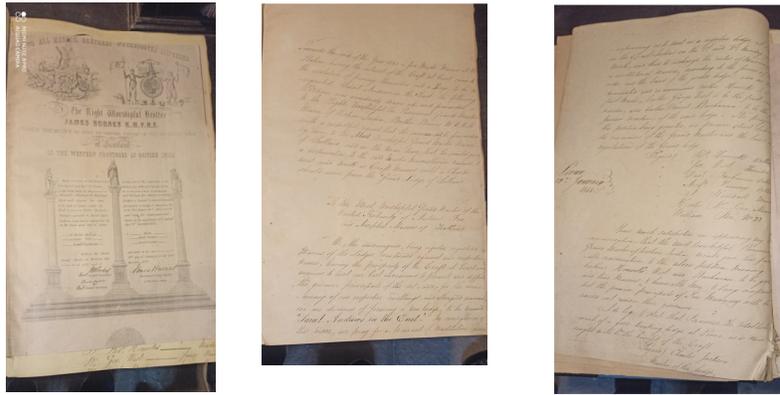
One other offer has been received by us from a Senior Brother for relocating a Lodge at Goa, where one such Lodge under a Sister Constitution is already functioning. Looking to the need for adequate membership strength, Rt. Wor. District Grand Master had called for prospective members desirous of joining the relocated Lodge, and nearly twelve Brethren have expressed their desire to enroll themselves.

God willing, we hope to be successful in our efforts for the general good of Scottish Masonry.

### **OUR RICH HERITAGE**

Freemasonry, and specially Scottish Freemasonry, can justifiably boast of a rich and varied Heritage. During our visit to Pune we came across one such antiquated item which dated as far back as the year 1844. I refer to an antiquated bulky volume of the Bible gifted by none other than the renowned Lord James Burnes. It truly is treasure which is to be preserved with care, reminiscent of our glorious past.





### **MEETING THE GRANDMASTER OF IRELAND**

Most Wor. Bro. Douglas T. Grey – Most Wor. Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Ireland and Rt. Wor. Bro. Philip J. Daley – Rt. Wor. Grand Secretary had paid an impromptu visit to Mumbai. At the specific invitation of the Provincial Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Ireland in India, the Scottish District had on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022, attended a Communication where we were introduced to the Grand Master and the Grand Secretary.

During our interaction, we found both the venerated Brethren to be of an amicable and down to earth nature.

### **GRAND LODGE VISITATION**

It is with great pleasure that we convey the happy tidings of the impending visit of our Most Worshipful Grand Master Mason to India along with the Officers of the Grand Lodge. They have contemplated the visit in February 2023 when Bro. Kersi J. Limathwalla - Rt. Wor. DGM shall be reinstalled at the hands of the visiting dignitaries. All Daughter Lodges and Chapters shall be kept apprised of the impending itinerary of our cherished visitors from Grand Lodge.

### **UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD DAY**

24<sup>th</sup> June every year is celebrated worldwide as the Universal Brotherhood Day and so it was in Mumbai this year too. Some of our Brethren from Sister Constitution have constituted a “Masonic Fraternity of Mumbai” which organized a remarkable charity drive by distributing essentials to a Home of Destitute slum dwellers as also to a Cancer treatment Ward of the juveniles, etc. In the evening they organized a Musical Evening with dinner to ensue.

On 26<sup>th</sup> June 2022, they also organized a Free Cancer Detection Camp for the benefit of Freemasons, their families and Friends. Our Scottish District Office joined in in this benevolent activity and donated a sum of INR 25,000/- for the noble cause.

In keeping with their time tested practice of celebrating Universal Brotherhood day with acts of Charity, Lodge Cataract No. 90 has reportedly organised a small function in a local school at Belgaum named Ankoor School, where they distributed a Television set worth Rs. 55,000/- for the amusement of the Physically challenged children studying there.

We are sure that Lodges at other centers may also have carried out such charitable activities at their local cities. We encourage them to forward their report for us to highlight the same in our Newsletter.

### **AMENDMENT TO THE CONCORDAT**

We have been given to understand that the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) and the Grand Lodge of India have mutually agreed to modify the existing Concordat by deleting a provision not included in UGLE's agreements with other Grand Lodges.

The Concordat dated 24<sup>th</sup> November 1961 and varied by the Agreement executed on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2002 is further varied by the deletion of the second paragraph of Article 2 of the words: **"That the Grand Lodge of India will not, nor will its Grand Master grant any warrant for any Lodge outside the boundaries of the Republic of India"**.

The Amendment to the Concordat was executed on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2022 and has been duly signed and sealed by the Pro Grand Master and Grand Secretary on behalf of UGLE and by the Grand Master and Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of India (GLI).

We further understand from a copy of a letter emanating from Grand Lodge of Scotland (GLS) addressed to the Grand Lodge of India stating that having considered the matter, GLS is likely to amend its Concordat with GLI to reflect the changes agreed to between UGLE and GLI. In this matter they have desired to have a further dialogue at a mutually convenient time.

### **ZOOM MEETINGS**

In deference to the keen interest conveyed by many of our Brethren, it is now envisaged to hold Zoom meetings with our Brethren for a healthy interactive session with the District Grand Lodge. We welcome members to proffer their unstinted support to this venture, though it is also the plan of our Rt. Wor. District Grand Master/MEC Grand Superintendent to physically visit as many Lodges and Chapters as possible.

### **WORKSHOP FOR INITIATES**

Our Rt. Wor. District Grand Master is conducive to the idea of convening a workshop solely for the newly inducted initiates so as to acquaint them with the rich treasure of Masonic heritage and culture within our coveted Order. The idea is to make them aware of what Masonry has to offer and to appreciate the rich Principles, Tenets, Landmarks and Nuances of our beloved Masonic Order.

### **CONCLUSION**

This Newsletter is the beginning of an effort to comply with the demand of some of our Brethren, and we invite periodic News items from any Scottish Body within or jurisdiction which shall be gratefully accepted, published if found appropriate, and thankfully acknowledged.