

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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**Edited By: Bro./MEC Noshir G. Paghdiwalla
District Grand Secretary/Grand Scribe Ezra**



This Newsletter is only to convey the news and events under the jurisdiction of the Scottish District and is not its official periodical. All the contents expressed in this Newsletter are solely that of the Editor.

EDITORIAL

Freemasonry, for obvious reasons, has managed to remain mysterious for hundreds of years. Freemasons, known popularly for their regalia, arcane symbols and secret signs of recognition, are members of the world's oldest fraternal organization. Yet, despite its longevity, Freemasonry has long been shrouded in mystery and to outsiders, the Masonic rites and practices may seem cult-like, clannish and secretive — in fact, even sinister. In reality, however, Freemasonry is a worldwide organization with a long and complex history and its members have included men of stature and renown from practically every field of human endeavour.

Some of this apprehension stems from our deliberate reluctance to speak about the organization to outsiders, but it is also partly the result of many myths that have fostered misconceptions or depicted the order in an unflattering light. Besides being the world's oldest fraternal organization, Freemasonry is also the world's largest, boasting an estimated worldwide membership of some 6 million people, according to a report. Freemasons are dedicated to loftier goals as well, bound together by secret rites and rituals, and ostensibly promote the laudable maxim of "brotherhood of man".

A code of ethics also guides the behaviour of members. This code is derived from several documents such as the "Antient Charges" and "Constitutions." which prescribe a correct moral behaviour for Masons. The origins of Freemasonry are obscure, and the way the outside world perceive us is rife with myth and speculation. In reality, Freemasonry has its origins in the stonemason guilds of medieval Europe. These guilds, especially active during the 14th century, were responsible for constructing some of the finest architecture in Europe, such as the ornate Gothic cathedrals of Notre Dame in Paris and Westminster Abbey in London.

The guilds provided their members not only with wage protection and quality control over the work performed but also important social connections. Members gathered in lodges, which served as the headquarters and focal points where the Masons socialized, partook in meals and gathered to discuss the events and issues of the day.

Freemasonry as we know it, grew out of the early 18th century in England and Scotland and by the late 18th century, at the height of the Enlightenment, Freemasonry carried considerable social cachet. In fact, being a Mason signalled that you were at the forefront of knowledge.

The world of Freemasonry is composed of esoteric signs and symbols that are baffling to most non-Masons. Perhaps the most common are the compasses and square, which are the universally recognizable symbols of the organization. They typically emblazon the lintels above lodge entrances and can be found on the aprons worn by Masons during rituals.

Although there is not a single, universally agreed upon meaning, most Masons would probably contend that these two objects in conjunction are meant to represent how a Mason should conduct himself. The square signifies that a man should act "square" with his fellow man — that is, he should be honest and forthright in all his dealings. The compass is a reminder to engage in moderation, and not to get carried away by life's vices. In general, Masonic symbols — such as the beehive, the acacia tree and the all-seeing eye, to name a few — are meant to invoke ideals, remind members of correct modes of conduct and behaviour, and impart important lessons.

Today, as we see it, Freemasonry is undergoing a decline. The lodges are having a terrible time recruiting men. Consequently, membership in lodges has dropped and the pull to join an exclusive, privileged enclave of men does not carry the attraction it once had. Although there are Masonic lodges in India, many of these now face declining membership and the peril of extinction.

One of the reasons for this decline has been the fast paced lifestyle in Metropolises. This, coupled with the vagaries of travelling long distances, late working hours in the members' chosen avocation and the lack of visibility of the ideals of Masonry to the laymen are important contributory factors for — if I may say so — the downfall of Freemasonry in today's world. But it's also possible that this decline can be explained by the different values espoused by the newer generations, value systems that are often at odds with the previous generations.

The problem of decline, may also be attributed to it being rooted in the current composition of the lodges. Most members are in the Senior citizen category and hold very conservative views. This has no appeal to the younger generation and perhaps it is time for us to have a modernistic perspective and change with the times.

CHERISHED VISIT BY OUR GRAND MASTER MASON

The Brethren of our District eagerly awaited the impending visit to our shores by Bro. William Ramsay McGhee, Most Wor. Grand Master Mason from the 9th to the 14th February 2023. And what a gratifying visit it has been!!! The Brethren were held in awe of his resonating voice in the impeccable conduct of the ceremonies, and were held spellbound by his amicable countenance and pleasing demeanour.

Accompanying him was Bro. George James Robert Donnelly – Proxy District Grand Master, who, ever since he assumed charge of his Office, has taken keen interest in the functioning of our District. Upon landing at Mumbai, to our chagrin we realised that Bro. Donnelly's luggage had not been uploaded at Heathrow. Our apprehension, however, was short-lived as fortunately, the same was flown in vide a subsequent flight and delivered at the Hotel by midnight.



Emerging from the arrival lounge on 9th February, our revered guests were greeted with garlands at the airport by Bro. Kersi Limathwalla – District Grand Master, Bro. Bomi Mehta – Past District Grand Master and Bro. Noshir Godrej Paghdwalla – District Grand Secretary.



The group then proceeded to the Turf Club for a leisurely lunch, where they were joined by Ayesha- the daughter of the District Grand Master, Bro. Kersi Commissariat - The President of the Benevolence Committee and his wife Zarine who is the President of the Scottish Masonic Ladies Committee. Post lunch, the group proceeded to the Trident Hotel overlooking the panoramic scenery of the Arabian Sea at Nariman Point.



Our venerated guests visited the office of the District Grand Lodge of India S.C. in the evening, where the staff were elated at meeting the Grand Master Mason and the Proxy Grand Master Mason in person. Grand Master Mason took a round of the entire Freemasons' Hall building housing four Masonic Temples and three dining halls and even tried his hands at the glorious Pipe-Organ in the main Sandhurst Temple.

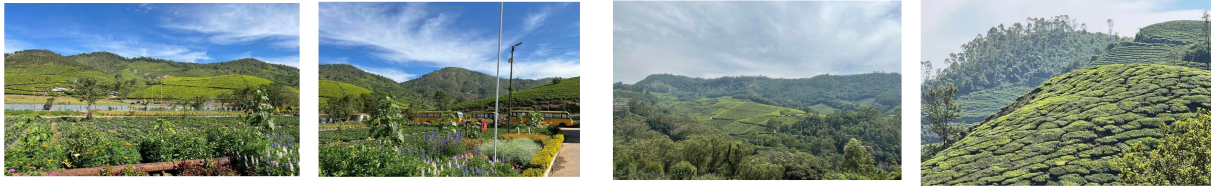


Later in the evening a dinner was hosted by the District Grand Master to a traditional vegetarian 'Thali' dinner. En-route they also got the opportunity to pass through the festivities of the local Kala Ghoda Cultural festival, an annual event in the city on the lines of a gala fete.



After an early morning check-out from the Trident Hotel, the group boarded a domestic flight to Cochin, and on landing, proceeded on a three and a half hours winding uphill drive to the pristine and scenic town of Munnar.





In the evening of 10th February, the visiting dignitaries attended the Installation meeting of Chapter Camellia at Munnar where MEC Noshir Paghdwalla - Grand Scribe Ezra -exemplarily installed all the three Principals of the Chapter. Thereafter, the Companions assembled in the cozy bar room decorated in the true nature of an antiquated bar with ornate embalmed animal heads and memorabilia of sporting events, followed by the festive Board.



The next day, the visitors were treated to an interesting trip to the Tea Museum, where various antiques were on display including a documentary on the history of the town of Munnar and the advent of the Tea estates in the area.



This was followed by a visit to a large conglomerate of various Cottage Industries housed together with a school for the benefit of the peasants, tealeaf pickers and the other village folk.



What was unique about this establishment nomenclated as “Srishti Trust” was that it is founded by the Internationally famed benevolent Tata Group for the differently abled children and adults, who have been given training in various career disciplines so as to make them self sufficient to eke out their living in the later part of their lives. The skills imparted to them are in the making of jams and preservatives, paper manufacturing, Printing, designing paper artefacts, bags and curios, , cooking, printing, bakery products, Paper carry bags, developing expertise in sports, etc. The uniqueness of this venture is that every product is made out of natural elements and no artificial source is used in the processes. Also housed in the complex is an especial school for the mentally retarded and physically handicapped and autistic folks with different levels of instruction proportional to their handicap levels. The training imparted has culminated in the wards achieving glory while participating in National and even International events.

The excursion was wound up by a visit to the KDHP Tea factory where various grades of tea is manufactured and where the adjoining retail outlet sells tea products, spices and healing oils.

After a very brief siesta, we were invited to the Masonic Temple where an impressive Installation ceremony was scheduled with Bro. Pramod Krishna stepping in in the Eastern Chair with the outgoing Master Manish Singh acquitting himself creditably. The icing on the cake was the impromptu rededication ceremony conducted by Bro. Ramsay, ably assisted by Bro. Donnelly as the Director of Ceremonies and the District Grand Secretary Bro. Noshir Paghdwalla acting as the Chaplain. The resonant oratory of our Grand Master with the

precision conducting by Bro. Donnelly and the recitals by the Chaplain left all present in a state of stupefaction and awe.

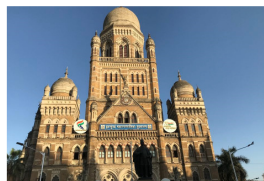


The Banquet to follow was an experience by itself, what with the Hall decorated with massive flower arrangements from the gardens of the Brethren's bungalows and arranged by the expert hands of their wives which regaled over 120 attendees. Early morning of the 12th, we commenced our journey downhill to the warm climes of Cochin by road with a heavy heart at having to leave the pristine surroundings of Munnar on the way to the daily grind at Mumbai.

After checking in at the Internationally renowned Taj International Hotel" in the evening of 12th February, the dinner party organized by the District Grand Lodge at the Far Pavilion Party Hall of the prestigious Bombay Gymkhana was an epitome of Brotherly bon-homie and camaraderie. Brethren [with many clad in ethnic attire] with their ladies enjoyed a gala evening of gaiety, joy, festive refreshments of the liquid kind and a gourmet cuisine. Mementos and gifts were thoughtfully presented to our esteemed visitors and also to all present on behalf of the District Grand Lodge of India.



The very next day on 13th February, a guided tour of the "Dharavi slums" was organized in deference to the desire of our venerated Grand Master. This was followed by a visit to the famed "Mahalaxmi Dhobi Ghat" which was a surprise sort of entertainment to our visitors.



This was followed by a rehearsal meeting for the communication to follow in the evening when both the District as also the Grand Officers were taken through the paces by Most Worshipful Grand Master Mason, with the Proxy Grand Master, ably assisting as the Director of ceremonies, whereat the Commissioned Officers were installed.

The same evening, Grand Master Mason installed the District Grand Master of District Grand Lodge of India S.C. and Commissioned the office bearers of the District at an Especial Installation Communication at the Freemasons' Hall, Mumbai.



The audience of over eighty Brethren with the Deputations from the English, Irish and Indian Constitutions witnessed the ceremonial proceedings carried out with military precision which left them in awe of the commissioning team.



The Banquet to follow was a treat with impeccable choice of drinks and food and brethren of the District were reluctantly retired with feelings of admiration at the energy level of the Commissioning Officers. After the check-out from the Taj International Hotel past midnight, Bro. Kersi Limathwalla - District Grand Master and Bro. Noshir Paghdiwalla bid adieu to our worthy guests and finally they were seen off at the Air Terminal by the latter.

**LODGE IMPERIAL
BROTHERHOOD NO. 1041 S.C.**

Bro. Ravindranath, who succeeded Bro. G. Unnikrishnan, was installed as the R.W.M. of Lodge Imperial Brotherhood No. 1041 S.C., Trivandrum, on Friday 25th November 2023. In his stewardship report, Bro. Unnikrishnan reported that after ten long years, the Lodge initiated a candidate in its ranks as compared to the earlier tradition of affiliations from Sister Constitutions. During the course of the year, the Lodge also held a Ladies Night and gave them a tour of the Temple explaining them the layout and its significance.



CHAPTER INDEPENDENCE AND PERSEVERANCE NO. 71 S.C.



On 20th February 2023, M.E.C. Shreevardhan Sinha was installed in the Chair of Zerubabel in Chapter Independence & Perseverance No. 71 S.C. The meeting was followed by an impressive Banquet planned by the First Principal.



LODGE DR. SIR TEMULJI NARIMAN NO. 1516 S.C.

Lodge Dr. Sir Temulji Nariman held its Annual Installation meeting at Mumbai on Thursday 23rd February 2023, when Bro. Simran Dialani was installed into the Eastern Chair by Bro. Ashok Nayak in a very Impressive manner ably assisted by Bro. Farokh Santoke and Bro Asit Daru.



LODGE SALEM NO. 563 S.C., AHMEDABAD



Bro. Manubhai Oghadlal Shah, the oldest member of Lodge Salem at Ahmedabad, even at the age of 86, has lost none of his love for Masonry. Vide his communications with the District, he keeps us informed of the Masonic activities at his local center. Recently, he apprised us of the successful Annual Installation meeting of the Lodge held on 11.03.2023. Freemasonry in general and Lodge Salem in particular is richer having such stalwarts within its fold who even at an advanced age offer services to Freemasonry with devotion and dedication to the Craft.

LODGE BEAMAN NO. 1069 S.C.



After a protracted lay-off due to the pandemic and its aftermath, Lodge Beaman No. 1069 S.C. held its first regular meeting on Monday, 13th March 2023. The New Temple at Freemasons' Hall was witness to gaiety and bon-homie as both the members and their guests witnessed an impeccable Installation Ceremony when Bro. Neville Batliwalla was installed into the Chair of King Solomon at the hands of Bro. Noshir Paghdiwalla, who at the penultimate minute had to step in due to the indisposition of the Lodge's stalwart Bro. Bomi Mehta.



The meeting was followed by an enjoyable banquet where the Brethren participated wholeheartedly. Bro. Farokh Chinoy relinquished his Stewardship and assumed the reins as the Secretary of the Lodge and Bro. Nauzer

Baxter as the D.O.C. at the meeting.

LODGE RISING SUN NO. 506 S.C.

One among the very many Masonic Institutions that fell a victim of the pandemic's backwash has been Lodge Rising Sun No. 506 S.C., one of the very old Lodges of our District. Declining membership due to various causes and sad recall of its aging members to the realms above has been a major contributory factor for its stagnancy since January 2020. Founded in 1870, this Lodge could not meet for the past few years and I am too happy to announce that with the motivated enrolment of and induction of fresh blood, this my Mother Lodge now stands on the brink of revival.



As an immediate measure, the Lodge's surviving members joined hands with the probable recruits to its rolls and attended the Installation Meeting of Lodge Beaman on 13th March 2023 and even willingly occupied the active offices during the installation.

However, as at date, a lot needs to be done for the revival of the Lodge and much water remains to flow below the bridge before it is made functional. Yet, we stand determined in our resolve to restore the Lodge to its pristine glory.

LODGE ROYAL JUBILEE, SOLAPUR

Lodge Royal Jubilee No. 742, at Solapur functions from a wonderful heritage building with open grounds duly enclosed by walls, giving it an antiquated but imposing look. On the auspicious day of "Gudi Padva" the brethren inaugurated an exclusive administrative office room in its



To add colour to their celebration of this important festival of Hindus, the brethren deemed it proper to rejoice and revel in a religious and unique way by wearing the traditional "Puneri Paghdi" with "Uparne" and the ladies joined in by donning colourful sarees and "Nath", thus creating a harmonious and holy atmosphere. The sacred Gudhi of brotherhood was





religiously launched exclusively by the couples performing the Pooja and followed by a discourse by Shri Jayant Phadke Guruji. What needs to be appreciated is that the entire event was organized by their Ladies' coordinators and nearly 40 family members participated wholeheartedly. We appreciate the camaraderie and bonhomie preponderant amongst the Masons of Solapur. May their tribe increase in our fraternity.

INTER-CONSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIP

Freemasonry is universal, and the tenets, Principles, ideals, teachings, ethics and landmarks are the same across constitutions, though there are minor variations in the rituals. Hence, inter-Constitutional visitations strengthen bonds and enhance the prospects of amity.

At the specific invitation of Lodge Friendship and Harmony No. 27 under the Grand Lodge of India, our District Grand Master had attended its Installation meeting on 4th March 2023. Incidentally, this Lodge was Constituted as Lodge Islam No. 587 S.C. by Most Worshipful the Grand Master of All Scottish Free



Masonry in India, Captain Sir Henry Morland on the 14th day of February A.D. 1876 and A.L. 5880, and consecrated on 6th APRIL 1876 but opted to join the Grand Lodge of India on 14th April 1961.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

For the last few years, it has been our custom to hold the Half Yearly Communication of District Grand Lodge of India S.C. and the Half Yearly Convocation of Grand Chapter of USRAFIC at upcountry centers rather than convene them at Mumbai. This is in deference to the desire expressed by our Brethren at upcountry centers who are keen on interacting with other Brethren from different locations.

In keeping with that established convention, the Half Yearly Communication of District Grand Lodge of India S.C. and the Half Yearly Convocation of Grand Chapter of Grand Chapter of USRAFIC is convened to be held on Saturday, 8th July 2023 at Solapur. Details of both the meetings shall be communicated separately.

All Brethren and Companions of the Scottish District are hereby fore-alerted to block their calendars for these important events and make it convenient to be present and make both the meetings a grand success.

INVITATION FROM LEBANON

We have received an invitation from The District Grand Lodge of Lebanon to attend the Installation of Bro. Maurice E. Feghali as the next District Grand Master in June 2023. For those of our Brethren who are desirous of attending the event, they have lined up a three day enriching journey between the 16th and 18th June 2023 of Masonic discovery with visits to ancient sites in the cradle of Masonic lore.

If any of our Brethren is desirous of visiting Lebanon for the above purpose, you may obtain all the relevant information by visiting www.dgll.org/dgm-installation/.

ANCIENT CRAFTSMEN AT WORK



“Young and New Masons Group”

An Online Survey by Grand Lodge of Scotland

I refer to the coverage given in our earlier issue on the above subject and regarding the envisaged establishment of ‘young & new Masons’ groups by the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

As per the latest epistle received by us, the young members of our Scottish Constitution in India as also new members who have joined within the last five years who are interested can now access the following link - <https://bit.ly/scyoungandnewmasons> and take the time to complete an online survey. This will enable the working group to ascertain what facility you currently have for such groups/associations/clubs in your jurisdictional area. It will also provide Grand Lodge with valuable information on how they can best assist those wanting to start a group.

The Grand Lodge young and new Masons working party has compiled an information pack that will provide detailed reference material on how to form groups/associations/clubs. This is not a ‘one size fits all approach’ however it provides a broad template which will be circulated to the District Grand Lodge in due course. Besides providing this information pack the working party will endeavour to establish contact with vested parties in our jurisdictional area, to ensure that the maximum support is available during this process. If you require any further information on this initiative, please make contact via this email address - youngmasons@grandlodgescotland.org

HUMOUR WITH GRACE

One Sunday, a Brother of good conduct decided, that for once, instead of going to church, he would go hunting. While walking through the jungle, he came upon a tiger. The Brother started running, but it was of no use. The tiger soon caught up with him. Face to face with the beast, the devout Brother cried out, "Oh Lord, if only you had taught this animal the lessons of Freemasonry". At that instant, the tiger halted, placed his paw on his breast and said, "May TGAOTU make me grateful for what I am about to receive."

