



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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Past Depute District Grand Master & District Grand Secretary
Past Depute Grand Superintendent & Grand Scribe Ezra
Hon. Grand Secretary (Scot.)/Hon First Grand Standard Bearer (Scot.)



This Newsletter is only meant to convey the news and events under the jurisdiction of the Scottish District, but is not its official periodical. The views expressed herein are solely that of the Editor, and not that of the District.

EDITORIAL

Let us this day briefly reminisce on the history of Scottish Freemasonry in India, the seed of which was sown in 1838. Prior to that, Freemasonry did exist in India and the earliest recorded initiate under the aegis of the United Grand Lodge of England [UGLE] was Bro. Elias Ashmole in 1646.

UGLE was formed in 1717, the Grand Lodge of Ireland in 1725, the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1736 and the Grand Lodge of India in 1962. After the establishment of UGLE in 1717, a Petition was made from India in 1728 for the formation of a Scottish Province in Calcutta, which culminated in the formation of a Provincial Grand lodge [E.C.] in 1729, and the first Lodge was consecrated in 1730.

Lodge Perseverance No. 546 E.C., which is functional to date as No. 338 S.C., was founded in 1828 at Bombay. The first Indian to see Masonic light was Bro: Umdatul-Umera, the eldest son of the Nawab of Arcott, initiated at Trichinopoly in 1776.

A noteworthy point is that in Western India, no Indian was admitted to Freemasonry till 1843. Mr. Manockjee Cursetjee, a Parsee merchant from Bombay, was refused admission by Lodge Perseverance and not taking defeat easily, he went to Europe and was initiated in France. After his return, his enthusiasm for the Order, coupled with the support he received from Bro. Dr. James Burnes, the then Provincial Grand Master of Western India (S.C.), led to the establishment of Lodge Rising Star of Western India No. 342 S.C. on 15th December 1843.

On 1st January 1838, Dr. Burnes established the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India and such was his popularity that when he visited Calcutta in 1840, it resulted in a revival of Masonry there, with many Freemasons leaving their English Lodges and becoming members of the Scottish Constitution.

On 3rd January 1843, the North East Corner Stone of the J. J. Hospital was laid at Bombay with great pomp and in adherence to Masonic Rites by the Rt. Wor. Provincial Grand Master of Western India, Bro. Dr. James Burnes in the presence of Sir George Arthur, Governor of Bombay.

In June 1844, Scottish Masonry extended to the Deccan region with the formation of Lodge St. Andrews'-in-the-East No. 343 at Poona. Lodge Rising Star had written a letter enquiring if they could initiate a French gentleman and it was decided by a majority that the interests of the Craft would be best served if "Lodge Perseverance" restricted itself to the reception of Europeans and Lodge "Rising Star" to that of native candidates.

31st January 1875 was a red letter day in the annals of Scottish Freemasonry in India, when a large number of Brethren of the Scottish and the English Constitutions, assembled at the Masonic Hall at Gowalia Tank Road, to inaugurate "The Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India", and installed Bro. Sir Henry Morland as its Grand Master with 19 Lodges under its Jurisdiction. 'Aden and the Territories Adjacent Thereto' were also under its jurisdiction. The territories "adjacent" were at one time extensive - from Burma to Aden, including Ceylon. Bro. Sir Henry Morland was designated as the 'Grand Master Mason'.

On 11th November 1875, the laying of the foundation stone of Prince's Dock at Bombay by the Most Worshipful Grand Master of England H. R. H. the Prince of Wales (later titled King Edward VII) according to Masonic rites was witnessed.

In my earlier editorial in the February 2024 issue of this Newsletter, I had given an elaborate recount of the consecration of the present Freemasons' Hall in Bombay on 5th June 1897, and hence, I shall refrain from repeating the same. Suffice to mention, that the huge American Pipe Organ in the Sandhurst Temple was donated to the Hall by the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India at the then princely cost of Rs. 600.

At the end of 1924, the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India had under its control 74 Lodges scattered all over India and Iraq. In 1932, Bro. Dr. Sir Temulji Nariman, was installed as the First Indian Grand Master at the age of 85 years.

In 1947, the Portrait of Bro. Jehangir C. Mistree, who was our popular Grand Secretary for three decades was unveiled in the Library of Freemasons Hall at Edinburgh and he is the first and only Indian whose portrait has been unveiled at Edinburgh.

The Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India was re-nomenclated in November 1948 as 'Grand Lodge of United Scottish Freemasonry of India and Pakistan'. Later, from July 1955 it was called the Grand Lodge of United Scottish Freemasonry of India and Ceylon, when Lodges in Pakistan were formed into a separate District.

At a meeting held in London on 29th October 1959 between the Pro Grand Master of England, the Grand Master of Ireland, and the Immediate Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Scotland acting for the Grand Master Mason, it was decided that an independent Grand Lodge of India be formed, and that to help forward the above objective, it was further decided that one of the terms of the Concordat of 1905 requiring the assent of two-thirds of the Lodges under each of their jurisdiction to be necessary before recognition could be given to a new Grand Lodge, should be waived. To promote this decision, a Steering Committee was formed consisting of members in proportion to the number of Lodges in India under each Constitution, viz.,

English	(180 Lodges)	12 Members
Scottish	(75 Lodges)	5 Members
Irish	(14 Lodges)	1 Member

On 30th August 1961, it was decided that for better supervision of those Scottish Lodges in India and Ceylon which had not opted to join the Grand Lodge of India (Constituted on 24th November 1961), two District Grand Lodges should be erected instead of the Grand Lodge of United Scottish Freemasonry in India and Ceylon, to be known as the District Grand Lodge of Western India and the District Grand Lodge of Eastern India.

The Grand Lodge of Scotland thereafter decided in 1992 that it would be desirable to have only one District in India. As the District Grand Lodge of Western India was functioning smoothly with 26 Lodges under it, the Grand Lodge of Scotland decided to merge the Lodges in Calcutta into the District Grand Lodge of Western India, so that there would be only one District, to be named as the District Grand Lodge of India, having jurisdiction covering the entire country.

The District Grand Lodge presently has t under its jurisdiction 29 Daughter Lodges and over 600 members.

COMMEMORATING OUR VETERAN FREEMASONS OF YORE.

Report in The Times of India

Group 'with secrets' to welcome public to tour its halls in SoBo

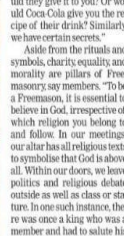
Nikhil John@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Nestled within an inconspicuous heritage edifice in south Mumbai lies the headquarters of an enigmatic fraternity with an opulent 120-year-old history that dates back to Biblical times.

The Freemasons' Hall at Fort, situated opposite Sterling Cinema, is the convening place for members of this ancient brotherhood, and it is to welcome the public for an extensive tour of its hallowed halls and commemorate one of its most distinguished members of founding fathers, oriental scholar and linguist, K.R. Cama, on Aug 10. He was a prominent Freemason and the first Indian to be bestowed with the title of Provincial Grandmaster.

K.R. Cama was a renowned figure among the Bombay Parsi reformers, celebrated for his pioneering efforts in promoting education for girls and advancing oriental studies. The Freemasons boast a roster of

Pics: Sanyal



(1) An inside view of one of the temples (meeting hall); (2) Freemasons' Hall opp Sterling Cinema; (3) Members in their regalia; (4) The dining hall

illustrious members, including luminaries like Sir Jamshejee Jeejeebhoy, Sir Phirozshah Mehta, and Dadabhai Naoroji Tata.

All over the world, there are around 50 lakh Freemasons. In India, there are about 20,000, and in Mumbai, the number is estimated at 4,000.

"This edifice was built for Freemasonry in Mumbai, its foundation stone was laid by Lord Sandhurst, then Governor General of Bombay on 28 June 1867. The 127-year-old building has four temples which are four meeting rooms," said P Venkatraman, a Freemason for 30 odd years.

For years, the Freemasons have piqued curiosity and interest of historians, academics, and public; from rumours of alleged devil worship to purported control over the US dollar. "All those are just myths and rumours. We are essentially a brotherhood, and we believe in making good men better and use stonemason's customs and tools as allegorical guides," said Noshir Godrej Paghliwalla, District Grand Secretary.

The earliest records of Freemasons meeting were in the rooms above Kala Ghoda. They have often been called a secret society with special rituals, initiation ceremonies, symbols, and handshakes. However, Kersi Limathwalla, the District Grandmaster, says, "We are not a secretive organisation, rather an organisation that has secrets. For example, if you went to big corporate companies and asked them for minutes of their meetings, would they give it to you? Or would Coca Cola give you the recipe of their drink? Similarly, we have certain secrets."

Aside from the rituals and symbols, charity, equality and morality are pillars of Freemasonry say members. "To be a Freemason, it is essential to believe in God, irrespective of which religion you belong to and follow. In our meetings, our altar has all religious texts to symbolise that God is above all. Within our doors, we leave politics and religious debate outside as well as class or stature. In one such instance, there was once a king who was a member and had to salute his gardener who held a prominent role in the organisation," said Limathwalla.

Charity is a distinguishing characteristic of masons. "Charity is done by individual lodges, district or grand lodges. However, we believe in the idea that your left hand should not know what is in your right hand, and so we refrain from publicity," said Limathwalla.

Within the precincts of the Freemasons' Hall, Mumbai, the grand Sandhurst Temple adorned with Masonic symbols was fully packed as a vast concourse of individuals from diverse walks of life came together to commemorate the life of a distinguished Freemason. This event, organised by the District Grand Lodge of India S.C. on Saturday 10th August 2024, stood steeped in traditional brotherhood, celebrating the enduring legacy of a man who not only mastered the craft but also embodied the core values of Freemasonry: Integrity, Friendship, Respect, and Service.

The bust of late Bro. K.R. Cama at the Freemasons' Hall, Mumbai



Looking down from the carpeted stairway leading to the Temple at the bustling energy emanating in the foyer, stood the bust of late Rt. Wor. Bro. K. R. Cama, garlanded with roses and lit up with colourful strobe lights, perhaps basking with pride at the attention focused in his memory. The walls, echoing with the rich history of Freemasonry, served as a testament to the many brethren who have left their mark in the annals of Scottish Freemasonry.

After the specially invited non-masonic dignitaries were seated, the day's proceedings commenced with a detailed explanation of the Temple's layout with intermittent clarification of the symbolic illustrations and the allegory behind the nuances. Queries relating to Masonry from the audience were responded to their satisfaction.

Next was an invocation by way of recitation of a prayer followed by the opening ode and thereafter a welcome address by the District Grand Master.

A lecture on the life of Bro. Cama ensued on a virtual connection by the curator of the Masonic Museum in London, followed by a valediction.

As the conclusion of the event, the attendees partook of a delectable banquet, a time-honored tradition of fellowship. Over a shared meal, stories and laughter mingled, celebrating the brotherhood that is so dear to our brethren. The event, while a tribute, was also a reminder of the unity and continuity of the Masonic spirit, what with the presence of some brethren from our sister Constitutions.

Invocation by the Priest



Dignitaries on the dais



In the quiet moments, as the evening drew to a close, there was a collective sense of gratitude for the lessons learned and the wisdom imparted by a true pillar of Freemasonry. His memory, like the eternal altar in the center of the temple, will continue to guide and illuminate the path for all who seek light through Masonry. Let the pillars stand tall, the aprons gleam, and the compass guide us onward. For in memory, we find strength, and in unity, we perpetuate their legacy. Freemasonry endures, and so do its luminaries, past and present.

THE INTRINSIC NUANCES OF THE TRACING BOARD

Posing after the meeting



National Anthem after the closing ceremony



A Masonic tracing board is an educational tool replete with visual aids that display a series of symbols and images used within Freemasonry to convey the teachings and principles of the fraternity and used in lodges during rituals and lectures to help members understand the deeper meanings behind the ceremonies. Moreover, beyond their practical use, tracing boards are also appreciated for their artistic merit. Many tracing boards are beautifully crafted, with intricate details and vivid imagery that capture the essence of Masonic philosophy.

Tracing boards have their roots in the early practices of operative stonemasons, who used drawings or tracings on the floor of a lodge to plan their architectural projects. These tracings later evolved into symbolic representations when Freemasonry transitioned from an operative guild to a speculative fraternity in the 17th and 18th centuries. The boards became a way to encapsulate the moral and spiritual lessons that Masons were expected to learn and internalize.

Unfortunately, to our chagrin, most of the Lodges avoid the explanation of the Tracing Board during the initiation, passing and raising ceremonies. To obviate this shortcoming, Lodge Rising Star of Western India # 342, Lodge Rising Sun # 506 and Lodge Zoroaster # 800 joined hands in a combined meeting to comprehend the rich symbolism and different designs corresponding to the first degree tracing board. Bro. Limathwalla-our District Grand Master-gave a lucid explanation of what lay beyond the contents of the ritual book. Primarily, the Tracing Board of the first degree depicts the basics of Masonic symbolism, including the pillars of the Temple of Solomon (Boaz and Jachin), the chequered floor, the blazing star, the sun, moon, and stars, as well as various working tools like the plumb line, square, and compasses. These symbols are meant to remind the initiate of the importance of moral uprightness, the pursuit of knowledge, and the Masonic journey that lies ahead.

The attendees were appreciative of the Masonic tracing boards being a rare but vital educational tools within Freemasonry, serving both as a means of instruction and a source of inspiration. They encapsulate the rich symbolism of the fraternity and help guide Masons in their journey toward moral and spiritual enlightenment.

NEWS FROM OUR DAUGHTER LODGES & CHAPTERS



Lodge Blackwell # 1406 situated at Tiruchirappalli is one of our active Lodges in Southern India which maintains a close liaison with the District.

Appearing alongside is a snapshot clicked during its past installation meeting, when Bro. Diljit Shah was installed as the Rt. Wor. Master by Wor. Bro. Muthuswamy Sundaresan in an impressive ceremony.

Chapter Dalhousie No. 182 S.C. situated at Colombo in Sri Lanka and beholden to the Grand Chapter U.S.R.A.F.I.C. has always been active in its Masonic duties under the dynamic leadership of M.E.C. Jacques Huyghebaert who is the driving force behind the progressive advancement of the Chapter.

Alongside is a photograph clicked on Saturday, 17th August 2024, when five Brethren of the Mark Master Masons' Lodge attached to that Chapter visited Henry Byrde Lodge of Mark Master Masons' Lodge in Kandy, Sri Lanka.



MEC Jacques Huyghebaert has the unique distinction being a Brother who has been Master of Lodges in 5 different constitutions, i.e. England, Scotland, Ireland, Belgium and the Czech Republic. Jacques is a Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Czech Republic and has been awarded Grand Rank under several Grand Lodges : Hon. Grand Senior Warden (GLNF France) Hon. Grand Junior Warden (GL Ireland) and Hon. Grand Junior Warden, (GL Scotland). Since 1986 Jacques has been a member of Lodge East and West No. 127, New Delhi under the Grand Lodge of India.

Born in 1945 shortly before the end of World War II in the Czech Republic he grew up in Belgium. At the age of 18, he joined the merchant navy, became a deck officer, sailed around the world during a couple of years before obtaining a university degree in Economics and Finance. His 40+ year professional career has brought him to work and live in Europe, Africa, North and South America and Asia and being involved in diverse businesses: namely sea and air transport, automobile industry (Peugeot), computer manufacturing, telecommunications, tourism, etc.

Jacques was initiated into Freemasonry in 1976 while living in Libreville, Gabon, Central Africa. His many assignments worldwide have given him the opportunity to discover and participate in masonic activities of the many countries where he has resided. Jacques is among the pioneers of e-Masonry : he joined the first Masonic Bulletin Boards and CompuServe's Masonry Forum in the early 1990's – a still pre-internet era - and became a member of Internet Lodge No. 9659 EC in 1998 during the first year of its existence.

Jacques was admitted to the Masonic Order of Rose-Croix in 1979 and has since 2003 been a 33rd degree Mason under the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite for Belgium (1817). He is an Honorary member of the Supreme Council of the Czech Republic. Jacques is member of the Royal Order of Scotland (2006) More particularly, in Sri Lanka, Jacques affiliated with Nuwara Eliya Lodge No. 2991 EC, in 2006 and was Master of the Lodge in 2009 and 2015. He is the current Master of Srivaran Kumaranayagam Lodge of Installed Masters No. 9793 EC in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Bro. Jacques Huyghebaert likes to describe himself simply as Earning Master Mason's wages in foreign countries to support himself, family and worthy distressed Brethren.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACCOLADES

Celebrating an achievement is more than just recognizing the outcome; it's about honoring the journey that led to it. Every step taken, every challenge faced, and every moment of perseverance contributing to the success. When it comes to achievement by a Mason in a sphere of activity other than Freemasonry, it generates in us a feeling of pride. It's important to take a moment to appreciate the growth and learning along the way, and to be proud of what is accomplished.

I am pleased to share that Bro. Parth Dawda of Lodge Royal Jubilee # 742 at Solapur has been a recipient of the prestigious "Brands of Solapur" award from Lokmat newspaper, presented by the Police Commissioner IPS M Raj Kumar. This recognition, for his business enterprise 'Maharashtra Opticians' is a significant milestone for a young and upcoming Mason in his professional journey of taking forward his inherited legacy of 72 years. He has also taken on a new role as Secretary of the Gujarati Yuva Forum, further expanding my social contributions and responsibilities.

A well deserved Honour for Bro. Parth Dawda



Accolades serve as a powerful affirmation of one's hard work, talent, and dedication, highlighting excellence and setting a benchmark for others to aspire to. Whether in the form of awards, titles, or simple words of praise, accolades carry significant meaning. They not only validate the recipient's efforts but also inspire others to strive for similar excellence. Receiving accolades can boost confidence, enhance reputation, and open up new opportunities. At their core, accolades are a celebration of success, a symbol of appreciation and a reminder that outstanding effort and achievement do not go unnoticed.

Academician par excellence



It is in this context that we bring to you the news of Maryland State University, USA, conferring an Honorary Ph.D. on our dear Bro. Dr. Mohan Deshpande in recognition of his contributions to Engineering Education and skill development through various academic institutions, and rendering professional service through social organisations over a span of four decades. Bro. Mohan on receiving this coveted honour at Delhi, avers that he is inspired by the University's mission "Reach the unreached" and with due humility reiterates that the prestigious honor is a testament to the collective efforts and support of everyone who has been part of this journey".

MEDIA REPORT ON OUR EVENT

Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly Sunday, August 25, 2024

Dignitaries at the Freemasons event in Mumbai last week
Inset: Er. Dr. Karanjia

AN ONGOING LEGACY...

On August 10, 2024, the Freemasons' Hall at Mumbai resonated with cheerful banter when the District Grand Lodge of India under the Scottish Constitution organised a function to commemorate stalwart Rt. Wor. Bro. Kharshedji Rustomji Cama (popularly known as K.R. Cama). Born in 1831, K.R. Cama's early education was rooted in the Zoroastrian principles of good thoughts, good words and good deeds. He dedicated himself to the cause of education and established numerous institutions, including the prestigious Cama Oriental Institute. K.R. Cama was also a so-

cial reformer. Present on the occasion for honouring the late stalwart were Padma Bhushan Hormazdji Cama, managing director of Mumbai Samachar, and Viraf Mehta, chairman of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat. After a brief introduction to Freemasonry by P. Venkataraman and a healthy interaction with the audience satiating their curiosity on Masonic activities, eminent Zoroastrian scholar Er. Dr. Ramiyar Karanjia recited Zoroastrian prayers.

This was followed by a welcome address by Kersi Limathwalla, head of Scottish Freemasonry in India. He emphasised that regardless of the faith one

belongs to, the ultimate goal is to attain salvation and that is where Freemasonry is in sync with every religion.

Thereafter, a power-point presentation culling out the historical background of the honouree was given by an archivist and researcher of the Masonic museum in London.

In his valedictory address, Noshir Paghdwalla - District Grand Secretary - dwelt on the honouree's true legacy lying in the values he espoused and the example he set for future generations. Finally, guests partook of a delectable banquet, which is part of every Masonic meeting in the main Banquet Hall!

**To know more about Freemasonry contact:
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VALUE OF ANTIQUITY

The value of antiquity lies in its ability to connect us with the past, offering insights into the achievements of those who came before us. Antiquities, whether they are ancient artefacts, architectural marvels, or literary works, hold historical significance that transcends time. These ancient objects and ideas are not just remnants of the past but are also invaluable sources of knowledge.

Moreover, antiquities possess an intrinsic value that often extends beyond their historical importance. They evoke a sense of wonder and curiosity, inviting us to explore and appreciate the mysteries of history. Collectors and enthusiasts treasure them for their rarity, beauty, and the stories they carry, making them prized possessions in museums, galleries, and private collections.

The value of antiquity also lies in its power to remind us of the impermanence of life and the enduring legacy of human achievement. By preserving and respecting these ancient treasures, we honour the contributions of past generations and ensure that their legacy continues to enrich and inform future generations.

Reproduced alongside is a picture of a certificate issued by Vice-Regal Lodge at Shimla dated as far back as 6th May 1935 issued by command of His Majesty, the King Emperor to Bro. Ardeshir Fakirji Boyce, who happens to be one of the fore-fathers of our late Bro. Dinshaw Rusi Pavri.

Although the medal donated along with the certificate on the occasion is not available, the inscription says that it is to be worn in commemoration of their Majesties' Silver Jubilee.

Sincere thanks go out to Wor. Bro. Mehernosh Currawalla who forwarded an image of the Certificate, which undoubtedly has intrinsic historical value. If any of our Brethren has any additional information in the subject, we shall thank him to share it.

A historical document



DISTRICT VISIT TO LODGE AL AMEEN # 1412, BENGALURU

Bengaluru, formerly known as Bangalore, and termed as the "Silicon Valley of India," by virtue of it being the leading hub for the country's IT industry is located in southern India. It houses major technology companies, start-ups, and research institutions. Bengaluru's cosmopolitan nature, pleasant climate, and vibrant culture attract professionals, students, and tourists worldwide.

The city boasts a rich history, blending traditional South Indian heritage with a modern urban lifestyle. Its greenery is symbolised by parks offering lush landscapes amidst the urban sprawl. Ensnared amid the bustling hub of the metropolis and its chaotic traffic congestion, lies our Masonic Temple patronised by the Brethren of the English, Scottish and Indian Constitutions under an admirable display of amity and bonhomie.

On 17th September 2024, the District Grand Master and the District Grand Secretary of the Scottish District visited Lodge Al-Ameen No. 1412 in Bengaluru. This meeting was also attended by Masonic guests from the sister Constitutions and in the course of which, there was a healthy interaction between the visiting District Officials and the local Brethren. In keeping with the trend now followed by the District, besides the normal ritual, the finer nuances and rites of Scottish Freemasonry were not only elaborately explained, but the visiting District officials provided a discourse on the importance of regular Masonic education and its role in the personal development of every Mason. It dwelt on the historical significance of the Craft and its application in modern life and Brethren were encouraged to engage with educational opportunities available within the District.

With the Brethren of Lodge Al Ameen, Bangalore

The District Officers provided their insights and recommendations on areas where the Lodge could improve, such as increasing membership retention efforts and enhancing public visibility of the Lodge's charitable activities. They also commended the Lodge for its commitment to Masonic principles and fraternity and maintaining inter-constitutional amity and advising them to continue in the same direction.



Following a harmonious closing ceremony, the Brethren enjoyed a festive board, strengthening the bonds of fellowship. The official visit to Lodge Al Ameen was a resounding success. During the visit, the Lodge demonstrated its dedication to the principles of Freemasonry and remains an integral part of the District Grand Lodge of India (S.C.). The District looks forward to continued collaboration and future success of the Lodge.

ROYAL ARCH MARINERS' LODGE ATTACHED TO CHAPTER GIBBS NO. 391 – BENGALURU

On 18th September 2024, MEC Kersi J. Limathwalla – Grand Superintendent and MEC Noshir Paghdwalla – Grand Scribe Ezra of the Grand Chapter Grand Chapter of USRAFIC attended a meeting of a Royal Arch Mariners' Lodge attached to Chapter Gibbs at Bangalore.

Pleasant memories with Companions of Chapter Gibbs, Bangalore



It was a fascinating experience to reminisce on the ritual's roots in the biblical story of Noah and the Ark, and the degree focusing on themes of faith, survival, and salvation. The Royal Ark Mariner Lodge is a fascinating and symbolically rich component of Freemasonry, focusing on Noah's story as a foundation for teaching moral lessons related to leadership, and perseverance.



Discussing the finer and intricate nuances of Scottish Freemasonry at the interactive meeting at Bengaluru

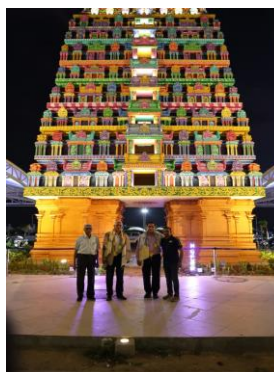
During the meeting, it was stressed that the Ark Mariner degree is one of the oldest degrees still practised today, with deep historical and symbolic significance which was explained by elaborating that the ritual reflects on the ideas of salvation, moral fortitude, and the passage through adversity, using the biblical flood as an allegory for life's trials. The symbolic importance of the rainbow as a key symbol stands out in the degree representing the covenant between God and man, signalling hope, renewal, and a promise of peace after the storm.

In a nutshell, it was reiterated to the attendees that the Royal Ark Mariner degree reminds Masons of their duty to live a life guided by morality and virtue and maintain a strong leadership in adversity. At the same time, it generates trust in a higher power holding a special place in the Masonic tradition, especially for those in the Mark Masonry system, enriching the Masonic experience through its distinct teachings and ritual workings.

LODGE BLACKWELL NO. 1406 - TIRUCHIRAPALLI

Trichy, a city located on the banks of the Cauvery River in the Southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, is officially known as Tiruchirappalli. Trichy has a deep historical background, with evidence of ancient civilizations and known for its rich cultural heritage, historic landmarks, and vibrant economy. History evidences that It was an important hub during the Chola, Pallava, and Nayak periods.

Though smaller in area, Trichy is a major industrial and educational center in Tamil Nadu with numerous colleges and schools, particularly known for engineering and medical courses. Trichy blends its historical significance with modern growth, making it a vibrant and important city in Tamil Nadu.



Greeting us with a traditional welcome on our arrival at Trichy airport on 20th September 2024 during a visit to Lodge Blackwell No. 1406 was Bro. Diljit Shah and Bro. Mahesh Khanna the two Senior Brethren who have strived to keep the torch of Scottish Freemasonry gleaming in the local area. Abnormal delay of our flight led to deferment of our attending our official Lodge meeting to the next day, but was amply compensated by a very healthy informal Masonic tete-a-tete with the Brethren.

Informal discussions after a warm welcome at Trichy



What came as a very healthy surprise during the course of our interaction was the preponderance of an enviable camaraderie and bon homie visible among the local brethren belonging to the Scottish, English and Indian Constitutions.

At dawn of the next day, we found a horde of destitute amassing in the compound of the Masonic Temple. Upon enquiring, it turned out that our local Brethren had been conducting a clinic for the local peasants and rural poor which provided medical relief thrice a week. Prominent among the ailments, inter-alia, was skin infection due to protracted exposure to the sun in the fields.

The act of providing free medical assistance to the poor and downtrodden is typically motivated by a commitment to social justice, compassion, and a desire to reduce health inequities. Our local brethren were, on an ongoing basis, engaged in such efforts to ensure that vulnerable populations, who may lack the financial means, have access to essential healthcare services.

This included offering consultations, treatments, and medication at no cost to those who can't afford them.

Brethren who are Doctors and healthcare workers were found volunteering their time and expertise to treat patients free of charge.

The icing on the cake was that the same destitute beneficiaries were also offered free but sumptuous meals during their visits. Feeding the poor and deprived individuals is an essential humanitarian effort that addresses basic human needs while fostering compassion and social equity. This initiative by our Brethren at Trichy is worthy of emulation.



Living up to the ideals of Freemasonry by distributing wholesome food to the needy at the community Kitchen run by our Brethren at Trichy

FRIENDLY VISIT TO OUR SISTER CONSTITUTION

The members of the deputation of the District Grand Lodge of India (S.C.) had the pleasure of attending The Annual Communication and Convocation of The District Grand Lodge/Chapter of Bombay - English Constitution on - 27th & 28th September 2024 respectively.

The events were hailed as a resounding success, impressing attendees with its impeccable organization, smooth execution, and deeply enriching program. Masons from various lodges across the District gathered for the annual event, together with invitees from all the three Sister Constitutions gracing the meetings which reinforced the axiom of Unity in brotherhood.



From the outset, the convocation stood out for its meticulous planning.

The organizers ensured that every detail was accounted for, from registration to the Festive Board, and what was conspicuous by its preponderance was the punctuality of sessions and the seamless transitions between activities without any time wasted. The convocation wasn't just well-run; it was also incredibly thought-provoking and a testament to the organizers' commitment under the dynamic leadership of RW Bro./MEC Percy J. Driver.

CHARITABLE PROJECTS

Lodge Fulchand Patel jointly with Lodge Sohrab Davar, Lodge Aryan and Lodge Reginald Spence have already installed an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) at Freemasons Hall, Mumbai byway of a project conceptualised by RW Bro Quresh Habibulla.

This life-saving device is meant to benefit our brethren and the surrounding community in case of any individual suffering a cardiac arrest in the vicinity. To acquaint our brethren and staff as well as a few of our neighbouring offices, an in-depth training is organised on 9th October, 2024 and shall be conducted by the Somaiya Heart Foundation which will acquaint all with the vital skills to respond effectively in emergencies.

We encourage brethren across constitutions along with friends to attend and be prepared to assist fellow Brethren and our surrounding community in emergencies.

