

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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EDITORIAL

Welcoming change is an essential mind-set for personal growth, organizational success, and societal advancement. Change brings opportunities for innovation, adaptation, and improvement. Embracing change requires flexibility, open-mindedness, and a willingness to step out of one's comfort zone. Instead of fearing the unknown, we need to view change as a chance to learn, evolve, and thrive. By embracing change, we cultivate resilience, creativity, and a proactive approach to navigating complexities. Ultimately, welcoming change empowers us to embrace new possibilities, overcome challenges, and shape a brighter future.

With the changing times, Grand Lodge of Scotland is introducing various innovative ideas, thanks to the keen interest of the Grand Secretary, whose enthusiasm, commitment and toil knew no bounds towards directing the staff at Grand Lodge into a well-oiled machine. For the elucidation of the Brethren, some of the major changes being effected are with an eye towards making the best use of advancing technological innovations.

Efforts are underway to make optimum use of technology including filing of returns through the electronic media and it has been made amply clear that only such Lodges who have cleared their dues and have received their annual certificates in time can be classified as being in good standing and eligible to hold their regular meetings.

The hitherto existing Grand Committee (also referred to as the Standing Committee) has been dispensed with and in its stead, a Governance and Strategy Board has been constituted. Based upon recommendation by the Governance and Strategy Board, Grand Lodge has now approved a high level strategic vision for the Scottish Constitution.

The vision dwells upon expanding the global presence of Scottish Freemasonry by inspiring its members to enjoy their involvement and attracting new members to strengthen its capabilities and reach. This will be achieved by cultivating a positive culture of inclusivity and meaningful impact in our communities by:

- *Placing membership at the heart of Scottish Freemasonry*
- *Growing Scottish Freemasonry internationally*
- *Creating inspiring communication and engagement*

This high level vision for our Scottish Craft shall form the foundations on which to build and develop a strategic plan and direct its efforts over the next five years.

The Governance and Strategy Board at its meeting held on 26th October 2023 has decided that fees shown in the First Schedule of the Constitution and Laws other than capitation fees be raised by 20%. It has also been decided that a new Grand Office be created, namely the Grand Chancellor, to effectively represent the interests of Grand Lodge overseas.

The 'Make it a Million' appeal was an outstanding success with innovative and creative ideas coupled with enthusiasm, steadfastness and support received from across the globe making it all happen. The project boasts of 44 volunteers undergoing training as Prostate Champions.

To commemorate and celebrate the commitment which has been made by Grand Lodge to support the Armed Forces Covenant, a special event was held in Freemasons' Hall on Friday, 6th October which was attended and enjoyed by just over 100 invited guests.

On 30th November 2024, Bro. Rev. Dr. Joseph Joe Morrow, Most Wor. The Grand Master Mason re-affirmed his assent to the ancient Charges and Regulations and took the *oath de fidei administratione officii* after which the Brethren sang the choral blessing, 'The Lord Bless Thee and Keep Thee'. On being invested with the Chain and Jewel of his Office, the Grand Master Mason was conducted to the Throne of Grand Lodge by the Installing Grand Master and thereafter the Grand Director of Ceremonies proclaimed Brother Dr. Joseph John Morrow, C.V.O., C.B.E., K.C., F.R.S.E., Grand Master Mason in due form.

The Grand Master Mason appointed Brother William H. Gauld as Depute Grand Master and Brother John McKenzie as Substitute Grand Master who were obligated, invested, installed and proclaimed. They, in turn, obligated, invested, installed and proclaimed the Grand Office-bearers for the coming year.

In his address, Most Wor. Grand Master Mason reiterated, "*We all need to take seriously the need to open doors to our Order and to engage with civic society as fully as we can – and as fully as they will allow us to – and we must never stop trying.*

This will mean changing the things that we do and doing things differently. It is said 'If you do what you have always done, then you will get what you have always got'. Or, in other words, "There is no point in climbing a ladder if it is on the wrong wall".

He reiterated that:

- We are growing Scottish Freemasonry and its influence internationally.
- We are creating and inspiring communication and engagement.
- We are all lovers of the Craft; we are builders of something that is better; we are Brothers who cross boundaries.

Grand Lodge of Scotland has also constituted the "District Grand Masters and Superintendents Committee" under the Chairmanship of Brother Kalpesh Shah (District Grand Master - East Africa), and of which, inter alia, our Rt. Wor. District

Grand Master is a part. The first meeting of the Committee was held on 29th October 2023 which was attended by our District Grand Master and the second meeting was held on 21st January 2024 which was attended by District Grand Secretary as a representative of the District.

The objectives of the District Grand Masters and Grand Superintendents Committee is aligned with the principles and goals of the Grand Lodge of Scotland while ensuring the proper functioning and representation of the institution's Lodges in foreign jurisdictions.

Grand Lodge has approved the creation of the office of Grand Chancellor. Although the role of this rank is still to be defined, it will deal with relations with sister Grand Lodges. Along the same lines, a suggestion has been made to create the office of "Grand Mentor". This is being looked at and may be incorporated with the area of Scottish Masonic Heritage and Education which is being considered as part of the Standing Committees.

The 30th edition of the Constitution and Laws of the Grand Lodge of Scotland is underway and a digital version of the same is considered as the way forward. However, a hard copy of the Constitution must be present at every meeting of the Lodges.

The role of Proxy Masters and Wardens and its relevance to the new Grand Lodge Governance structure moving forward was a topic of discussion at the meeting of the District Grand Masters Committee, and various suggestions were discussed at length.

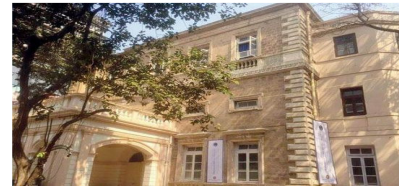
The initiative of the Young and New Masons are slated to be revisited through the PGM's and DGM's Committee.

□ **A PEEP INTO HISTORY OF THE FREEMASONS' HALL, MUMBAI**

Compiled from various sources

Standing tall & erect amidst the hub of the business area of the Commercial Capital of India stands 'The Freemasons Hall - Mumbai' - the magnificent edifice that we visit time and again for our Masonic chores. This superb structure standing proudly is currently owned jointly by the English and the Scottish Constitutions, but also hosts the meetings of the Irish and Indian Constitutions as well, in addition to the various other appendant and advanced Orders.

But how much do we know about this wonderful structure that we visit often?



It was built in Italian style with brick walls and 'Koorla stone' with black mortar and 'Porbunder stone' window dressings in April 1897 on a superficial area of land admeasuring 1081 square yards procured at 'the then rate of Re. 1/- per square yard. The contractor was Mr. Nusserwanji Dinshaw and the Architect was Mr. J. Campbell, F.R.I.B.A. and M.S.A. with the contract time for completion being 1st May 1899. The estimated cost of the entire building including the cost of water supply and drainage was the then princely sum of Rs. 1,10,000/-.

Now, let me take you down memory lane to the period before that. Initially, a military Lodge 'Linden' No. 63 E.C. met in Medows street. In 1842, Lodge Perseverance No. 828 E.C., shifted to the Scottish Constitution where it met at the abode of Chevalier James Burnes. In 1844, Lodge Rising Star of Western India met in a building called Lodge House, behind the old Police Office. Later in 1848, Lodge St. George met in rooms in Grant Building at Colaba and sometimes in the bungalows of several of its members. In 1856, it met at the residence of Bro. Cameron Sillar's 'Castle Dangerous' at Malabar Hill, but the very next year, shifted its meeting place to rented rooms in Apollo House. One of the first Masonic Hall was in the Arsenal, where Lodge Benevolence met after being shifted from Poona.

In the year 1859, Lodge Concord was opened and met in the upper room of a spacious house of one Bro. Ali at Baboola Tank. This is the very place where Lodge Truth was consecrated. The year 1866 witnessed the English District fitting up a building known as "Mazagaon Masonic Hall", where most of the English Lodges met. Correspondingly, in the year 1871, the Scottish Constitution consecrated a new Masonic Hall in a Bungalow with a large ground at Gowalia Tank.

The meeting place of all Lodges in Mumbai then moved to Nawab's bungalow at Nesbit Lane, Byculla and soon opened at 'Huntley Lodge, Clare Road, Byculla, which now is functional as a Nun's home. Thus, in days of yore and prior to 1877, the Lodges and other Masonic bodies used to meet separately.

Now let's revert to the present Masonic building in Mumbai and how it was constructed. After nearly a century of deliberation, discussion, and correspondence, efforts were made by the English & Scottish Freemasons of Bombay to locate all their Masonic bodies under one common roof, but failed for various reasons. Finally, they succeeded in planning to build a home for themselves in the then known Home Street, Fort, where they could hold their meetings in the future. The new Hall

was to be consecrated and dedicated for use by H. E. Lord Sandhurst in his dual capacity of Pro District Grand Master for Bombay, and Grand Master of all Scottish Freemasonry in India.

A small sub-committee of three expert Freemasons from each side was appointed and a happy solution was brought about by these members with great tact and judgement, which resulted in the laying of the foundation stone of the new building on the 5th June 1897. The Hall Committee selected Mr. Darasha R. Chichgur as their Honorary Secretary, and he had acted in that capacity for a period of twenty years, conducting his duties to the entire satisfaction of both Constitutions. Bro. G. Owen Dunn, Bro. N. N. Wadia C.I.E., and Bro. Darasha Chichgar put forth their best exertions to obtain donations, and they succeeded in a great measure in their efforts.

The liberal response to the appeal for donations culminated in a collection to the Building Fund of a then princely sum of Rs.76,952, of which a sum Rs. 7,000 was contributed by the Hall Committee, Rs. 8,850 by Lodges under the English and Scottish Constitutions, Rs. 2,225 by Chapters, Rs. 17,535 by individual members of lodges, Rs. 19,000 by the Petit Family, Rs. 14,936 by the N. N. Framjee Trust Fund, Rs. 6,281 by Mofussil Lodges and their members and Rs. 1,050 by members of the Fraternity for the purpose of furniture and fittings.

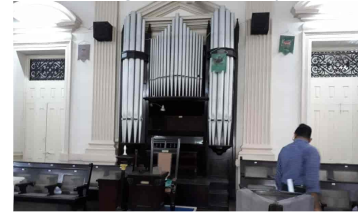
The Framjee Dinshawji Petit Dining Hall



Sandhurst Temple



The Organ in the Main Temple



The center or main part of the building consisting of the Banqueting Hall and Grand Hall, is over 62 feet high from the ground level to the top of the cornice, and the height of parts of the building at the east and west ends is 48 ft. The ceremony of dedicating and consecrating the new Hall was performed by H. E. Lord Sandhurst, and was a great success. The Committee, consisting of Messrs. B. S. Brown, I. M. Shields, Alexander Mackenzie, J. W. Hepworth, C. D. Wise, E. J. Smith, C. D. Furdoonjee, Dinshaw D. Mistry and D. R. Chichgar, had not left a stone unturned to make the occasion successful. The porch was illuminated with two triumphal arches of coloured lights, the building inside being lighted with incandescent gas lamps. There was a wealth of floral decorations all over the building, particularly on the grand staircase, which was lined on either side with pretty flowering plants. Shields of Masonic emblems added to the decorations of the grand staircase, which also bore a transparency of blue cloth displaying the announcement – "Freemasons' Hall, opened 25th March 1899, by his excellency Lord Sandhurst, G.C.I.E.

Though the Lodge room is one of the largest of its kind in Bombay, it was found inadequate to accommodate about five hundred members of the Craft, who were dressed in their regalia, and many of whom displayed Masonic jewels on their breasts. In the history of Freemasonry during the last half century such a large gathering of Freemasons had never before been witnessed. Invitations were issued by the Joint Hall Committee to Freemasons in all parts of India. There was not a Lodge in Presidency which was not represented at the meeting. The various English and Scottish Lodges working in Bombay mustered strong on the occasion to make their presence felt.

Bro. I. M. Shields, Deputy District Grand Master opened the District Grand Lodge, and having transacted the usual business, adjourned the Lodge for a time until H. E. Lord Sandhurst, Grand Master arrived accompanied by General Sir Richard Westmacott and was received at the porch by members of the Joint Hall Committee. The Grand Lodge having resumed work, the Grand Master was received by the brethren with honours befitting his high position. The Grand Master, having opened the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, the ceremonial of the evening was proceeded with.

A large number of Europeans, Parsee and Hindu ladies, who were members of the families of Freemasons, were invited to witness the ceremony. The ceremony was opened by a group of Parsee ladies standing at the main door of the ground-floor of the building, and singing a song composed for the occasion by Mr. Phiroze R. Bottlewalla, a Parsee versifier. The main entrance was then adorned with festoons of marigolds and jasmine, similar festoons being hung over the three entrances to the banqueting hall, and rose water being copiously sprinkled from a silver receptacle. A choir of Parsee girls sang another song in Gujarati.

The ladies then proceeded to the banqueting hall, where a handful of wheat and rice was laid upon the carpet, and upon the corn was placed a silver vessel containing fresh water. A coconut painted with vermilion and yellow was placed on the mouth of the vessel, which was embellished with a garland of jasmine. Sandalwood and frankincense were burnt in a small silver censer, which was placed by the side of the silver vessel, and in a silver tray was arranged receptacles containing vermilion and yellow colours, sugar, salt, corn and pure Lucca oil, which are symbolic of plentifulness and fertility.

A string band, which was placed in the banqueting hall, played a few selections. The ladies were then invited to the main hall upstairs, where a few more songs were sung. Miss Aimai Darasha Chichgar presiding at the piano. As was the fashion amongst the ancient Persians, who presented coins on the Jamshedi Naoroz festival commemorative of the occasion. Mr.

Darasha Chichgar presented all the ladies and gentlemen with brand new silver and copper coins as a remembrance of the auspicious occasion. The ladies were then treated to light refreshment, and the party broke up about 10 o'clock.

As a special mark of their appreciation, the Committee resolved to name one of the Banqueting Halls the "Framjee Dinshawjee Petit Banqueting Hall", and the larger Hall the "Framjee Cowasjee Banqueting Hall".

CONGRATULATIONS

Bro. Yohaann Kersi Limathwalla, initiated in Lodge Zoroaster, son of our District Grand Master Kersi J. Limathwalla, and a Senior Associate in the Disputes practice area at the Mumbai office of J. Sagar Associates, specialising in Banking, Real Estate and others, tied the nuptial knot with Ashrafi, daughter of Thrity and late Sohrab Ginwalla on Sunday 28th January 2024 at a reception at Colaba amidst a vast concourse of invitees. We, from the District, wish the couple a long and contented life of togetherness and marital bliss.



ANNUAL COMMUNICATION OF DISTRICT GRAND LODGE OF INDIA S.C.

Come Saturday, 16th December 2023, when the Freemasons' Hall at Mumbai teemed with a motley gathering of Brethren clad in the colourful regalia of their individual Lodges with District Office-holders donning their attractive Scottish green aprons, sashes, collars and gauntlets lending preponderantly noticeable elegance. Lending further colour to the evening's gathering was the presence of deputations from Sister Constitutions comprising of Brethren from the District

District Grand Master & District Grand Secretary



Heads of the visiting Constitutions



Grand Lodge of Bombay in their Dark Blue regalia, those from the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ireland in India in their lighter blue hue and the Brethren from the Regional Grand Lodge of Western India in their eye-catching colours. Additionally, the presence of the Rt. Wor. District Grand Master of the District Grand Mark Masters' Lodge of Bombay and the Rt. Wor. Past Regional Grand Master of the Regional Grand Lodge of Eastern India was noteworthy of observance.

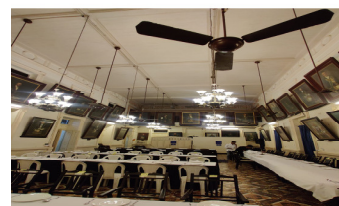
The proceedings at the Communication were conducted in an impeccable manner by all the Officers and while they went about their Masonic duties in the Temple, the Ladies and guests were entertained separately in the Framjee Petit Banqueting Hall by way of party games and entertainment galore. The cherry on the icing was a tour of the Masonic Temple explaining them the finer nuances of Masonic culture.



What ensued was a demonstration by a team of Medical professionals on Cardio-Pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) whereat the audience was also invited to try out their hand on this very life-saving technique.



What followed was a delightful Banquet with the tables lit with candle-lights and the waiters donning Santa caps keeping in consideration the ensuing Yuletide. All present were treated to generous gifts from the coiffeurs of the District.



ANNUAL CONVOCATION OF GRAND CHAPTER U.S.R.A.F.I.C.

The Annual Convocation of Grand Chapter U.S.R.A.F.I.C. was held earlier on the same day at the same venue with a considerable attendance of Companions from daughter Lodges. Also present were deputations from the District Grand

Chapter of Bombay E.C., District Grand Chapter of Ireland in India, Regional Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Western India and the District Grand Mark Masters' Lodge of Bombay.

The proceedings were conducted in due and ancient form with the participation of all.

INSTALLATION MEETING OF LODGE ST. ANDREWS IN THE EAST, PUNE

Lodge St. Andrew in the East No. 343, Pune, is one of the vibrant Lodges in our fold and have always been forthcoming in supporting the District. In fact, the biggest contingent from upcountry Lodges at our Communications and Convocations have always been from our brethren at Pune and they have always been ready to officiate in any position at our request.

The Annual installation of the Lodge took place on Saturday 27th January 2022 when amidst a motley crowd of Brethren including those from sister Lodges in Pune, Lonavala, Belgaum and Solapur as rulers from the English, Irish and Indian Lodges, Bro. Gautam H. was installed into the Eastern Chair by none other than his own illustrious Brother Devesh Hingorani.



The motley gathering at Pune

We are confident that under his helmsmanship, the Lodge shall progress to greater heights and make us proud.

NEWS FROM BELGAUM

In keeping with our tradition of convening the half yearly meetings of the District at upcountry centers so as to enable the local brethren to be acquainted with their brethren throughout the land, the next Half yearly Communication of District Grand Lodge of India S.C. and the Half Yearly Convocation of Grand Chapter of USRAFIC is scheduled to be held at Belgaum.

The local Brethren have already commenced their activities for preparation for the meetings and a due notice confirming the dates shall be forwarded shortly by the District office.



Freemasons' Temple at Belgaum

REVIVIFICATION OF LODGE LIGHT OF IRAN, UDVADA

Whenever I visit Lodge Light of Iran, I am driven by the opportunity of not only attending to my Masonic duty, but also by having the opportunity of visiting and paying homage to the Holiest of Holy Fire temple which houses the Holy fire burning eternally for centuries. Besides, I am also elated at the success of my efforts at revival of that lodge after a prolonged hiatus of inactivity due to lack of premises to hold meetings. This recurrence to normalcy brings within me a resurgence of pleasures that extend beyond the mere reconstruction of physical spaces and rituals. It heralds the rejuvenation of a sacred brotherhood, rekindling the joy of shared traditions and collective purpose.

The pleasure lies in the camaraderie during upcountry Masonic meetings, where like-minded individuals gather to engage in meaningful discussions, embrace shared values, and participate in ancient rituals that carry profound symbolism. The revival fosters a sense of belonging, renewing the bonds that connect Masonic brothers across generations. Moreover, the pleasure emanates from the renewed commitment to the principles of brotherly love, relief, and truth, as members strive to contribute positively and support one another on their individual journeys of self-improvement. In the revival of a Masonic lodge, the pleasures are not only in the restoration of a physical space but, more significantly, in the revitalization of a timeless and ch

Brethren of Lodge Light of Iran No. 1498 S.C. proudly flaunting their Masonic Tee Shirts gifted by R.W.M. Noshir F. Randeria (4th from right)



After all, Masonic bondage refers to the fraternal ties and connections formed within the Masonic brotherhood, and does not imply servitude or restriction but rather underscores the strong and enduring bonds that unite Masonic members. These connections are forged through shared rituals, symbols, and a commitment to upholding the values of brotherly love, relief, and truth. Masonic bondage is emblematic of the profound sense of camaraderie and mutual support that exists among Freemasons, transcending geographical, cultural, and social boundaries. Through their shared experiences and dedication to

self-improvement, Masons foster a unique and enduring sense of unity, reinforcing the notion that they are bound together by a common purpose and a shared quest for moral and spiritual enlightenment.

CEREMONIAL COMMITTEE REJUVENATED

Freemasonry being a fraternal organization with deep historical roots, is renowned not only for its elaborate ceremonials that dates back centuries and serve as a cornerstone of its traditions, but are also rich in rituals and symbolism, designed to impart moral and philosophical lessons to its members. Freemasonry's ceremonials are structured, meaningful events that contribute to the unique experience of being a Freemason.

The rituals, performed with precision and solemnity in the ritual chamber are intended to impart lessons of virtue, integrity, and the pursuit of knowledge in an environment conducive to reflection and introspection. The atmosphere is designed to foster a sense of unity and purpose among the brethren. However, Ceremonials in Freemasonry are often shrouded in an aura of secrecy, not to hide malevolent intentions but to enhance a transformative impact. Freemasonry's ceremonials are a unique and integral aspect of the Masonic experience. Through symbolic rituals and meaningful ceremonies, Freemasonry imparts valuable moral and philosophical lessons to its members. The enduring significance of these ceremonies lies in their ability to foster personal growth, enlightenment, and a profound sense of brotherhood among Freemasons.

With an aim to foster a semblance of uniformity in the ceremonial performance at daughter Lodges, the Standing Committee for Ceremonials of our District under the Chairmanship of Bro. Farokh T. Santoke held preliminary discussions at its virtual meeting held on 4th February 2024, when deliberations were held on some interesting aspects like behaviour within the Temple, sequential procedure, methods adopted while closing of the Lodge, symbolic significance, etc.

On the footsteps of the above meeting of the Ceremonial Committee, it is now contemplated to hold a virtual meeting of all the Brethren of Scottish Lodges throughout the length and breadth of the country on Sunday, 25th February 2024 at 11.00 a.m. for one hour or so, where active participation of Brethren of all Lodges is solicited. This being an interesting meeting with interactive participation, Brethren are requested to register at <https://dgli-sc.com/online/>

The Ceremonial committee intends to restrict its own speaking for not more than 30 minutes, and instead, welcomes the Brethren to freely air their views. However, it is desirable that during deliberations, conjecture and presumptions be avoided since the enduring significance of our ceremonies lies in their ability to foster personal growth, enlightenment, and a profound sense of brotherhood among Freemasons.

PARODIES OF MASONRY

While Freemasonry is often portrayed with reverence and solemnity, there have been instances where it has been parodied in various forms. Here are a few examples of Masonic parodies:

"National Treasure" (2004): While not solely focused on Freemasonry, this adventure film starring Nicolas Cage involves a search for hidden treasure linked to Freemasons and the Knights Templar. It presents a fictionalized and exaggerated portrayal of Masonic symbols, rituals, and history.

"The Flintstones" (TV Series): In an episode titled "The Frinstone Frinstones," Fred and Barney join a secret society called the "Loyal Order of Dinosaurs," which is a playful parody of Freemasonry. The episode humorously depicts the initiation rituals and secrecy associated with fraternal organizations.

"The Simpsons" (TV Series): In various episodes, "The Simpsons" has included references to Freemasonry and parodied its rituals and symbolism. For example, in the episode "Homer the Great," Homer joins a secret society called the "Stonecutters," which is a satirical take on Freemasonry.

"Monty Python's Flying Circus" (TV Series): The comedic sketch show often included satirical takes on various institutions and organizations, including Freemasonry. In one sketch titled "The Freemason's Guide to the Galaxy," Freemasons are humorously portrayed as bumbling and absurd characters.

"The Lodge" (Web Series): "The Lodge" is a comedic web series created by the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon. It humorously depicts the inner workings of a fictional Masonic lodge, poking fun at the quirks and idiosyncrasies of Freemasonry.

"The Man Who Would Be King" (1975): This film, directed by John Huston and based on a story by Rudyard Kipling, involves two British soldiers who become kings of a remote region in Afghanistan. Freemasonry plays a significant role in the story, with the protagonists posing as Freemasons to gain trust and influence.

These examples highlight how Freemasonry has been parodied and depicted in popular culture, often for comedic effect or to explore themes of secrecy, fraternity, and ritual. It's important to recognize that these portrayals are fictional and exaggerated and may not accurately reflect the beliefs and practices of Freemasonry.