



The West Column



We are now well through our programme of annual visits and apart from the quality of ritual and excellent attendance figures (keep it up brethren), it has been very pleasing to note the very high standard of candidates being introduced to the Craft. While the numbers of initiates are not perhaps what they were decades ago, statistics would suggest that the numbers remain fairly static over the last ten years or so. However, the fact that intrants are perhaps fewer simply makes it more important for us to ensure that we do all that we can to retain the new members that we have. This is something that we are giving a great deal of thought to at the moment.

It is also a task in which EVERYONE can make a contribution!

So far as Provincial Grand Lodge are concerned, we have organised a very successful seminar for new members earlier in the session and all candidates initiated within the past two years should now be in possession of a specially published information book. If not, please contact your lodge secretary who has been provided with copies. We are now following that up with the creation of a short life working group chaired by the Provincial Grand Lodge Director of Ceremonies, Brother James Cowan, who is also the current Right Worshipful Master of The Anchor Lodge of Research No. 1814. Brother Jim and the members of his team are currently in the process of interviewing senior office-bearers within each lodge along with all who have been initiated within the past two years in a bid to establish, what has worked well, what has not worked, whether the support received was sufficient, were questions answered, were candidates taken to other lodges, were they encouraged to witness other lodges at work before receiving the next degree, what views have been established on the Craft and most particularly, what can we do to make the whole experience for new members more rewarding and fulfilling.

It is almost certain that if we do not grab the interest and attention of new members within the first year of their membership, they are likely to drift away from the lodge. We are also looking at ways of bringing the Province even closer together and you will hear some of those ideas over the next few weeks. Following up on a very simple suggestion which we have already received, you will note that the weekly advert in the Greenock Telegraph, now carries the line, "for further information on Freemasonry in the Province, please go to www.pglrw.org". Not an earth-shattering suggestion perhaps but it may provide a starting point for a future member who does not have any known masonic connections in which to assist him in starting his journey.

Once we have completed the interviewing process, we will review the responses and this will help us to develop a plan of action to take forward in the new session. I sincerely hope that if you are contacted by Brother Cowan, that you will give him every possible assistance.

That brings me of course, to the matter on hand, what can you as possibly an established and experienced freemason do especially if you have no personal involvement with the candidate. Well remember the story of the widow's mite that every contribution is important however small.

It is quite common for a candidate having passed through his latest degree to be hustled away to the bar by his friends or his proposer and seconder and I would certainly not deny him such enjoyment. However, this can have the effect of shielding him from the other members of the lodge but how many of us take a moment at the end of a meeting to introduce ourselves, speak with the candidate and make him feel welcome?

So make sure that a new candidate is introduced all round, perhaps the Master could stand at the door of the lodge after a meeting with the candidate from the evening's degree and every Brother present personally congratulate him. Make time to speak with him, discuss the degree with him, include him in the work of the lodge, even if it is only to sell raffle tickets or wash cups. Make him feel important and that he is contributing to the life of the lodge.

Simply extending the hand of friendship will be a great start.

Regards,
Jim

Contributions to the West Column

I would as always thank those who have provided contributions to this month's edition and a reminder that photographs of events are also welcome but I have to reserve the right to limit their use as it can affect the email transmission speed. However, please continue to send photographs as I can always include them in later editions. Most importantly, it is assumed that any photographs sent to me have the permission of the subjects for publication. If sending articles with accompanying photographs, could I ask that these are not embedded into a word document but send separately as JPEG files. All contributions should be sent to Jim626Col@aol.com

I am aware that many Lodges have had new initiates or even existing members who may have email addresses but do not receive the West Column. I would be grateful if the Lodge Secretaries could mention the West Column in your respective Lodges and perhaps encourage those who do not yet receive it to drop me a note of their email address and I will add them to the distribution list. The Column goes all over the world but let's make sure that it reaches all possible addresses in the Renfrewshire and Inverclyde area as well! My thanks go to those who have forwarded on new contact details within the last month.

Views expressed by individuals within the West Column do not necessarily represent the views of Provincial Grand Lodge.

**** - PROVINCIAL NEWS - ****

Provincial Website. For up to date information on what's happening in the Province, go to www.pglrw.org

Brethren, if you have anything that you wish added to the Provincial website, contact Brother Jim Donnelly at jimdonnelly@ntlworld.com

Meetings.

Lodge meetings in the Province of Renfrewshire West take place as follows;

Day	Day of month.				
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
Monday	68	68	68	68	68
Monday		626		626	
Tuesday	XII	1121	XII	1121	
Wednesday	Preceptory	989	Royal Arch		
Thursday	217	1425	217		
Friday	1814 *	175	175	175	175

- The Anchor Lodge of Research No. 1814 meets on the 1st Friday of the months of September, October, April and May.

Dates and duties for your diaries:

Provincial Committee – change to date.

Would elective office-bearers of Provincial Grand Lodge please note that the date of the next meeting of Provincial Grand Committee has been changed from the 16th to Thursday 24th March and will take place in the premises of Lodge Firth of Clyde, Gourock No. 626 at 7.30 pm.

Annual Installations and Visitations:

Lodge	Inst. Date	Off/bear	Annual Visit	Commenting
12	17 th November	Alexander Johnstone	1 st March	DPGM
68	11 th December	George J Carson	15 th February	SPGM
175	23 rd October	Alistair Glenney	8 th January	WSPGW
217	27 th November	Paul Docherty	21 st April	WSPGW
626	17 th October	William A McLarty	22 nd February	WJPGW
989	20 th November	Gerald C Robertson	13 th April	SPGM
1121	6 th November	Kenneth K Morrison	26 th January	WJPGW
1425	4 th December	Richard Harrison	11 th February	DPGM
1814	6 th May (2016)			

Renfrewshire 200 Club (RW200Club).

Application forms are also still available within each Lodge. If you have not already “signed up” I hope that you will give your earnest consideration to this excellent method of charity fund-raising which should at the same time, assist in boosting attendance figures throughout the Lodges. The monthly entry fee is £5.00. However, those wishing to participate are not limited to any number of “entries” and if anyone wishes to purchase two or more tickets they may do so. It is hoped that Lodges will also participate by purchasing tickets and perhaps this could be favourably considered by your General or Finance Committees.

Members may either pay cash (cheques should be made out to the Provincial Grand Lodge) or may take out a standing order arrangement. You can also take part on a monthly basis but to take part in the draw your contribution, whether by cash, cheque or standing order must be with the Provincial Grand Treasurer prior to the draw taking place.

Please remember that a minimum of 50% of the income will be going directly to charity. I have not as yet decided on a good cause for this project as I felt that we had to be assured that it would get "off the ground". It is probably that when the time comes to divide up the proceeds, it will be split between a national charity and a local charity or charities. I have a fairly open mind about a national charity and would welcome suggestions from Lodges or individuals. There are, of course, many worthy charities and many of them will resonate with many of you for personal reasons. Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland, Breast Cancer, Cancer Research, Childline, Help for Heroes, the list is endless. If you have a suggestion, please email me at Jim626Col@aol.com

Provincial Grand Treasurer has asked me to draw to your kind attention that we are now starting a new year for the RW200 club and that contributions are now due. If you have not already "signed up" to the club, please consider doing so. Forms are available from Brother Trotter.

New Provincial Lapel Badge.

Brethren, you will be delighted to hear that I am now completely sold out of lapel badges and it is great to see them being worn as I travel around the lodges. Thanks to your generosity approximately £600 has been raised to supplement the charitable efforts of the Province and a big thank you to all who have purchased a badge and are now "wearing the colours"!

Provincial Grand Master's Diary.

As always, I am grateful for the excellent support of the members of Provincial Grand Lodge and in particular to the team of Commissioned Office-bearers. February was less active for a variety of reasons but I was privileged to attend the following meetings:

Thursday 4th – Along with a large number of brethren, I attended the regular communication of Grand Lodge.

Friday 5th – Annual meeting and Installation of elective office-bearers of Provincial Grand Lodge.

Monday 8th – Fellowcraft degree at Lodge Firth of Clyde, Gourrock No. 626.

Tuesday 9th – Fellowcraft degree at Lodge Crawfordsburn No. 1121 conferred by the brethren of Lodge Springburn No. 1198.

Wednesday 10th – Attended a Master Mason's degree at Lodge Sir Michael No. 989 conferred by Lodge Firth of Clyde, Gourrock No. 626.

Monday 15th – Annual Visit of Provincial Grand Lodge to Lodge Doric Kilwinning No. 68.

Tuesday 16th – Attended the annual meeting and installation of elective office-bearers of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Kilwinning accompanied by DPGM Brother John Keith and SPGM Brother Robert Shields.

Monday 22nd – Annual visit of Provincial Grand Lodge to Lodge Firth of Clyde, Gourrock No. 626.

Tuesday 23rd – Attended Master Mason's degree at Lodge Crawfordsburn No. 1121.

Friday 26th – Attended a Fellowcraft degree at Lodge Greenock St. John's No. 175.

Saturday 27th – Attended the annual Charity Burns Supper of Lodge Greenock Kilwinning No. XII.



With the Provincial Grand Master of Kilwinning, Brother T Wilson Aitken
at the annual meeting of the Province on Tuesday 16th February.

Fees:

Test Fees:

Please be reminded that it is important that Test Fees are kept up to date. Most Lodges now offer the facility of paying by direct debit which is an excellent way of ensuring that you are always clear in your Lodge. In particular, it is also important to make sure that if you are an affiliate member of another Lodge, you must be clear in ALL Lodges in which you are a member to ensure that you may continue to visit other Lodges. Brethren who are not up to date in all Lodges have visiting rights withdrawn as well as the privileges which would normally be afforded to them in their Mother Lodges.

Capitation:

Brethren should be aware that the Capitation Fee has now been increased to £30 per active member as per the recent membership return. This is the first increase in three years and it is hoped that, if approved, this rate will be fixed for a three-year period. It may be appropriate for some Lodges to now consider whether their TEST FEES continue to be at an appropriate level.

Other Fees:

You should be aware by now that the notice of motion before Grand Lodge to amend the fees described in the First Schedule of the Constitution and Laws of the Grand Lodge of Scotland was defeated and accordingly there are no changes to those fees for the next twelve months at least.

Annual Meeting:

Friday 5th February was the date of our annual meeting and installation of elective office-bearers and in spite of this being mid-term in the Commission, it was a delight to see the Temple at Lodge Greenock St. John's No. 175 full to capacity for the meeting. There was a fine deputation from sister Provinces headed by Brother James C Peddie, the Provincial Grand Master of the Province of Glasgow.



The installation of office-bearers was carried out in an excellent manner by Brother Robin McIntyre, Provincial Grand Secretary following which there were presentations to Brother John Williamson Black, to mark his service to Provincial Grand Lodge as the retiring Senior Provincial Grand Warden. In addition to a jewel presented by the Provincial Grand Lodge, Brother Black was also presented with the regalia as a Past Provincial Grand Senior Warden by the Right Worshipful Master of his Lodge, Doric Kilwinning No. 68, Brother William Lawson.



It was also a delight to make an additional presentation to Brother Archie Hoey PM217, to mark his service on behalf of Provincial Grand Lodge as a Steward on the Board of Grand Stewards. Following 22 year's service, Brother Hoey was recently invested as President of the Board of Grand Stewards and to mark his service, Brother Hoey was presented with a decanter, Quaich and little something to put in it courtesy of Immediate Past Provincial Grand Master, Brother James W Miller.



Following the ceremonial part of the evening, the brethren retired to an informal supper during which a further presentation was made to Mrs Elizabeth MacDonald, as the Province's Citizen of the Year for 2015, for her work with Hammy's out of school care group. Mrs MacDonald was presented with her award along with a cheque to assist with her work in the group. In accepting the award, Mrs MacDonald spoke eloquently of her work on behalf of the group. A letter will be sent to the lodges at the end of the session inviting nominations for the 2016 award so it is not too early to get your thinking caps on!



Provincial Grand Master's Charity Appeal.



Not Broxi Bears but TLC bears - part of the first delivery to IRH.

If you would like to know more about the TLC project go to <http://www.tlcappeal.org/>

Marcus Humphrey House:

There are a number of events being held to mark the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Marcus Humphrey House, which is, of course, within the Province of Renfrewshire West.

Firstly there will be a zip line challenge being jointly organised by the Provinces of Lanarkshire Middle Ward, Ayrshire, Glasgow, Renfrewshire East and Renfrewshire West.



Charity Zip line Challenge in aid of Prostate Cancer Scotland.

We will be promoting this event over the next few weeks, which is being jointly organised by a number of the neighbouring Provinces, including Renfrewshire West in order to raise funds for the chosen charity of Grand Lodge, Prostate Cancer Scotland.

This is a Scottish charity set up to provide information, advice and help on prostate health and diseases of the prostate. Nearly 1 in 2 men in Scotland will be affected by prostate disease at some stage in their lives and 1 in 11 are likely to develop prostate cancer. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in Scotland. To bring this into perspective, of the nearly 500 brethren now on the direct distribution list for this edition of the West Column, around 40, will suffer from prostate cancer and I urge you to give your earnest consideration to supporting this charitable effort.

Participants:

I am pleased to be able to confirm that following my request for “volunteers” to take part in this event, I received names from Lodges XII, 175, 217, 626, 1121 and 1425. At first the Province was only allocated 5 spaces but after an impassioned plea to the chief organiser, this has been increased to ten spaces. My thanks go to all who submitted their names and those not selected will be placed on a reserve list in case more spaces become available but the lucky ones taking part are;

From Lodge Greenock Kilwinning No. XII; Brothers Bob Bain, Tam Hamilton and Allan Glen;
From Lodge Greenock St. John's No. 175; Brothers Jim Campbell and Tom Harkins;
From Lodge Cumberland Kilwinning No. 217; Brother Fraser Hamilton;
From Lodge Firth of Clyde, Gourrock No. 626 and Provincial Grand Lodge; the Provincial Grand Master!
From Lodge Crawfordsburn No. 1121; Brother John Laird;
From Lodge Inverkip Ardgowan No. 1425; Brothers Scott Kerr and Robert Harron.

Following registration (cost £50 which covers the running costs of the event), each participant will be asked to raise a further £200 which, if achieved, will realise the target total of between £30,000 - £35,000. All participants are now in possession of the relevant sponsor forms.

The event will take place on Saturday 14th May with participants assembling on the south side of the Clyde near the BBC offices, where they will be harnessed up before making their way on foot across the bridge to the Finnieston crane. There they will be hoisted up to a height of around 150 feet in a basket before being attached to the wire and launched back across the river. Simple!

Brethren it is hoped that ALL of the lodges and individual brethren will embrace this effort and whether your lodge has a brother taking part or not, that you will all lend your very best support to the challenge.

Provincial Grand Masters' Degree.

On Saturday, 11th June, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Renfrewshire East is hosting a Provincial Grand Masters' Degree which will take place at 1.00 pm within the Temple of Lodge Prince of Wales, No. 426, Queen Street, Renfrew. Following the degree when the various parts of the ritual will be carried out by a number of reigning Provincial Grand Masters, there will be a celebratory lunch costing £15.00. If anyone is interested in going, please let me know as soon as possible as it is expected that there will be considerable demand for seats and these will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. It is expected that this event will be attended by representatives from Grand Lodge.

New Members:

See leader article.

Provincial Ball.

Tickets have now been on sale for some time and it is with regret but also with some delight, that I have to advise that there are no more tickets available with around 300 now expected to attend what I am advised will be the biggest event of its kind within Inverclyde. Every attempt has been made to accommodate the extra demand for tickets and my apologies to anyone who has not been able to obtain a ticket. I would now be grateful if those responsible for selling tickets within the various lodges, could forward to me at the earliest a list of names of those attending as I suspect that considerable work will be required in organising tables. Donations for the raffle would be very gratefully received as would any major prizes for the auction.

Grand Lodge.

Brethren as you will perhaps already be aware, the notice of motion at the regular communication of Grand Lodge on the 4th February was defeated and there will therefore be no adjustment to fees in the coming year.

The next informal meeting of Provincial Grand Masters which takes place twice-yearly and is often the most productive of all the meetings will take place in Perth on Saturday 9th April. This is an opportunity to raise matters of interest or concern and if there is anything that you feel is appropriate to place on the agenda, please let me know.

LODGE NEWS REPORTS, NOTES and MEETINGS DURING MARCH.

Lodge Greenock Kilwinning No. XII

Tuesday 1st – Passing and Annual Visit by Provincial Grand Lodge of Renfrewshire West (7.15 pm).
Tuesday 15th - Raising

Monthly Draw (from Brother David Stevenson, Treasurer).

As we enter another year the monthly draw is available again to all of you - and family.

£1 per number per month with no limits !!

All participants will be entered into the draw and it is my intention to draw the winning number on the 1st Tuesday of each month.

PRIZES - I am hoping for £12 per month with the exception of June and December when the prize will be £50 each month. Please support the Lodge with this draw. Cash, cheques or through internet banking are all acceptable.

Lodge Doric Kilwinning No. 68

Monday 7th – Business Meeting (Members only).

Monday 14th – Raising

Monday 21st – Entering

Monday 28th – To be confirmed.

Social Scene

A warm welcome is extended to all brethren and friends to join the Lodge in their regular Saturday evening dances from 8.30 pm until midnight.

Tickets are available for our Spring Draw £1 each. 1st Prize is a 40" smart tv, 2nd prize an iPad Air (whatever that is), 3rd Prize is a whole lot of Argos Vouchers, and there are hunners of other prizes.

Lodge Greenock St John's No. 175.

Friday 11th – Passing

Friday 25th - Entering

Lodge Cumberland Kilwinning No. 217

Thursday 3rd – Passing

Thursday 17th – Raising

Sunday 3rd April – The joint annual Divine Service with Lodge Doric Kilwinning No. 68 will take place at St. Andrew's Church, Port Glasgow with brethren to assemble at 6.15 pm for 6.30 pm.

Thursday 12th May – The Lodge will be conferring a Fellowcraft degree at Lodge Barns O'Clyde, Clydebank and a warm welcome is extended to all qualified brethren to join with the brethren of Lodge Cumberland Kilwinning No. 217 on this visit.

Comet Festival 25th June – Donations for the Bottle Stall which is run by the Lodge at the Comet Festival will be very gratefully received. This is a major source of income for the Lodge to assist in paying our various bills and it is important that we have a successful day.

Important Notice - Due to urgent building repairs required to the Lodge's premises at King Street, Port Glasgow, meetings, with immediate effect, will take place at the Masonic Temple of Lodge Doric Kilwinning No. 68.

Lodge Montgomerie Kilwinning, Skelmorlie No. 624

Wednesday 9th – Passing (Exemplification) and Installation of office-bearers.

Lodge Firth of Clyde No. 626

Monday 14th – Passing conferred by Lodge Prince of Wales (Renfrew) No. 426

Monday 28th – Entering

On Tuesday 22nd March, the Lodge will be conferring a Master Mason's degree at Lodge Prince of Wales, and a warm welcome is extended to any qualified brethren to join the lodge.

Lodge Sir Michael No. 989

Wednesday 9th – Raising.

Please note that only a very limited number of the new and very smart Lodge ties are available from Brother Bob Winning who also has a few Lodge diaries left at a cost of £5 each. Brother Scott McLaughlin is also able to order Lodge glasses which can be engraved with a Brother's name and/or Lodge and the square and compasses.

A very belated but happy birthday is extended to Brother Lauchie Webster of the Lodge on reaching the grand old age of 98 on 6th February. Brother Lauchie joined the Lodge in 1952.

Lodge Crawfordsburn No. 1121

Tuesday 8th – Entering

Tuesday 15th – Fellowcraft degree conferred by Lodge Greenock St. John's No. 175.

Lodge Inverkip Ardgowan No. 1425.

Thursday 10th – Mark Degree

The Anchor Lodge of Research No. 1814

Friday 1st April – The lodge commences its new season of meetings with a lecture delivered by Brother T Wilson Aitken, Provincial Grand Master of Kilwinning entitled, Lodge Mother Kilwinning No. 0.

Friday 6th May – Annual Meeting and Installation of Office-bearers. This meeting includes the annual visit by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Renfrewshire West.

Other Orders

Greenock Royal Arch Chapter No. XVII

Greenock Royal Arch Chapter No. XVII meets in the Masonic Temple, John Street, Gourock on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

Most Excellent First Principal, Andrew G Pigott and office-bearers of the Chapter extend a warm invitation to all, especially any Companions who may not have been to the Chapter for some time. Remember, the hardest thing can be walking through that door again. For anyone contemplating returning to the Chapter, you can be assured of a warm welcome.

2016

16th March - Royal Arch Degree

20th April – MA & EM

18th May – Royal Arch Degree

Ranfurley Royal Arch Chapter No. 289

Thursday 3rd – RA Degree

Preceptory of Ardgowan

The Preceptory of Ardgowan extends a warm welcome to any Frater who has been unable to attend over the past few years through other personal commitments and looks forward to seeing them at any of our Statutory Musters in the future.

A pocket sized Syllabus has been compiled to assist those not currently on e-mail and a general aide memoire for all. Current Statutory Musters and Executive Committees forecast for 2015 are as follows;

Please ensure that the Secretary has your current contact details including e-mail and mobile number. All musters are held within the Masonic Temple, West Stewart Street, Greenock.

Venerable Preceptor Fr. Kevin Pollock welcomes all knights and gives a warm invitation to attend.

Take that first step and join with us.

Further Information: Contact Secretary/Registrar Fr. A. Johnstone- 0790-971-8096.

St. George's Conclave No. 79 -

2016

15th March – Lecture on Origins of Conclave Freemasonry (By Grant McLeod).

The Wee Corner

The spot for all the stories that don't fit anywhere else!

CHARITY NEWS

STAMP APPEAL.

Please remember that Brother Bill Crumlish of Lodge Firth of Clyde, Gourrock No. 626 is collecting used stamps in aid of Ardgowan Hospice so please don't throw them away. Put them in an envelope and hand them on to Bill or to any member of 626 who will be pleased to pass them on. This costs nothing, simply a moment of your time and can mean so much to a very worthwhile cause. I'm sure than we all know of someone who has benefited from the care received at Ardgowan Hospice over the years so please help!

Brother Crumlish has asked me to advise that if donating stamps it is very helpful if approximately 0.25" border is left around the stamp.

ANNIVERSARY LAPEL BADGES.

Lapel Badges for 25, 40, and 50 years service are available at a cost of £5.50 each. A special "gem" set badge for 60 years is also available at £10. **All prices are excluding postage.** For every badge sold, £2 will be donated to the Grand Lodge Benevolent Fund. All cheques should be made out to "David Stevenson"



Badges, may be purchased individually by qualified Brethren, or in bulk by Lodges who may wish to make presentations to deserving Brethren, for meritorious service. All enquiries and orders to treasurerno12@aol.com
Please make cheques payable to "David Stevenson".

Anniversary Badges.

Brethren, Brother David Stevenson, who kindly took on the task of co-ordinating the supply of anniversary badges from Brother Henry Tibbles has asked me to include a brief request to the effect that he would appreciate if Lodges could ascertain what the demand is likely to be for supplies of such badges during the coming year. It would be helpful if Lodge secretaries could co-ordinate any likely requests for such badges and advise Brother David of demand. His email address appears at the advert for the badges.



In the October 2014 edition of the West Column, I published a 'Grumpy Old Masters ' Badge, provided by Brother Brian Hopkins PM626. Brother David Stevenson, has advised me that following enquiries from a number of brethren, he has been able to source these at a cost of £5.50 each excluding postage. Brother David's details are provided above.

--00000--

From Brother Davey Hair.

An interesting fact for the West column. When I was in Austin visiting a lodge they had a short presentation about the following.

Buzz Aldrin (the first person to walk on the moon) was a Texas freemason and took with him a plaque which he placed on the Sea of Tranquility claiming the moon for the Texas Masonic association.

After he came back they formed a new lodge called the Tranquility Lodge which meets 4 times per year in the major cities in Texas and does good work for charities etc. An interesting aside was that depending on the relative positions of the earth and the moon, the masonic plaque is at its highest and lowest (its highest relative to the earth and its lowest on the moon as the Sea of Tranquility is apparently the lowest point on the moon).

Regards, Davey Hair

From Brother George Nixon PM1121

Hello Jim.....This little story may be found worthy of publication in the next West Column....."I find myself in an unusual situation in that I don't really know where I stand in regards to coming clean with my local constabulary and my Masonic responsibilities. I believe dastardly things have been known to have happened which I had not previously admitted to and for which I am mixed between being ashamed and yet at the same time being somewhat proud. Everyone does a certain amount of investigation into their family name but don't often reveal anything out of the ordinary. Well brethren my revelation comes in the form of my family name of Nixon. For those of you having a better knowledge of all things Scottish than myself, I should tell you that between the 14th and 17th century there did exist a motley crew of murderers, rustlers, thieves and a seriously wild group of warlords called The Border Reivers. They were forever fighting against the English and it took intervention from royal authority to at last stamp it out.

My fame however to the Nixon participation was only part of it as one of my aunts, another Nixon, married and her husband's surname then changed to that of her husband, namely Scott. As well as this, my own mother's maiden name was Johnston. By now you will be wondering why I bother mentioning the latter two facts and so I'll tell you that amongst the 7 family names known to have formed the said "Reivers", were the Nixon's, the Scott's and yes, the Johnston's so I sordid background seems to have been well and truly embroiled in skulldugery and a coloured past. Now that it has come out in the wash I can look forward but still feel a pride in what went on in dark days."

Kindest regards

George Nixon 1121

(Note from Provincial Grand Master – Mrs Provincial Grand Master's maiden name – Johnston – now I know where she gets her fighting tendencies from)!

Melrose Abbey:

Following on a little from Brother George Nixon's "Tales of the Border Reivers", I happened to take a few days off with my better half and ended up down in the Borders during which time I visited Melrose Abbey which, although a ruin, is still well worth a visit and, of course, it is the burial place of the heart of King Robert (the Bruce).



While there (and with the upcoming Mark Degrees in mind), I happened to be in the Abbey's museum where there are several examples of mason's "marks" which might be of some interest.





The following contribution has been gratefully received from Brother David Sheard, Secretary of Lodge Inverkip Ardgowan No. 1425.

Das Vergissmeinnicht (The Forget-Me-Not)

The story behind the Beloved Emblem of the Craft in Germany

As early as 1934, soon after Adolf Hitler's rise to power, it became apparent that Freemasonry was in danger. In the same year, the German Grand Lodge of the Sun in Bayreuth, one of the pre-war German Grand Lodges, realised the imminent problems facing them and elected to wear a little, blue flower, Das Vergissmeinnicht, in lieu of the traditional Square and Compass, as a mark of identity for Masons. It was felt that the new symbol would not attract attention from the Nazis, who were in the process of confiscating and appropriating Masonic Lodges and property. Masonry had gone underground and it was necessary that the Brethren have some readily recognisable means of identification.

Throughout the entire Nazi era, a little, blue flower in a lapel marked a Brother. In the Concentration Camps and in the cities, a little, blue Forget-Me-Not distinguished the lapels of those who refused to allow the Light of Freemasonry to be extinguished.

In 1947, when the Grand Lodge of the Sun was re-opened in Bayreuth by Past Grand Master Bayer, a little, blue pin, in the shape of a Forget-Me-Not, was proposed and accepted as the official emblem of the first annual convention of those who survived the bitter years of semi-darkness, bringing the Light of Masonry, once again, into the Temples.

At the first Annual Convention of the United Grand Lodges of Germany AF and AM, in 1948, the pin was adopted as an official Masonic emblem, honouring those valiant Brethren who carried their work on under adverse conditions. At the Grand Masters' Conference in the United States of America, Dr. Theodore Vogel, the Grand Master newly formed Vereinigte Großlogen von Deutschland, (VGLvD) AF and AM, presented one of the pins to each of the representatives of the Grand Jurisdictions with which the VGLvD, AF and AM, enjoyed fraternal relations.

Thus did a simple flower blossom forth into a meaningful emblem of the fraternity and become, perhaps, the most widely worn pin among Freemasons in Germany. In most of our lodges, the Forget-Me-Not is presented to new Master Masons, at which time its history is briefly explained.

Stunning.

For no other reason that I thought it was a stunning photograph (although I reflected on the fact that while her dad was spending a couple of days in Peebles, taking photographs of Melrose Abbey, daughter Nicola was circling Rio in a helicopter taking photos of the surrounding area). The photo below is, of course, of the Christ the Redeemer statue overlooking the city.



From Brother Alexander Galbraith,

INSURANCE

"Lodges seeking to make savings in their running costs may like to consider a new Insurance Company offering exclusive insurance coverage to all Masonic bodies in the UK.

'The Masonic Mutual Limited' was established in 2014 with four founder Masonic Members and its membership has grown steadily since. It offers specialist cover for Masonic buildings, contents and liabilities through a real alternative to conventional insurance.

Mutuality is an unfamiliar concept to some, but is in fact a fast growing sector of financial services. An increasing number of groups are choosing to manage their risk in this way, including livery companies, doctors, farmers, newsagents and universities.

All Masonic bodies throughout the UK are eligible for Membership and can therefore benefit from the cover provided by The Masonic Mutual for their buildings, contents and liabilities.

A mutual is a company owned by and operated for the benefit of its members. The Masonic Mutual is run by a Board of Directors elected by the Membership, all of whom are Freemasons themselves and by taking out cover with the Mutual you become a member. This means the Mutual is run for you. There is a sense of community with being a member of a mutual, just as there is with being a Freemason.

The Chairman of The Masonic Mutual Limited, Brother Robin Furber is a long time personal friend and his lifetime expertise in the insurance industry cannot be questioned.

Lodge Greenock St. John's No. 175 has already made substantial savings in their insurance cover by joining the Mutual.

For further information and quotes please contact Jeff Moore Tel: 01580 752052. Mobile 07825 077220. Email Jeff.Moore@rmml.com

Alex Galbraith, Past Substitute Grand Master.
Past Provincial Grand Master."

Masonic Education.

I am continuing to publish a list of suggested reading which many of you appear to have found useful. It would be my intention to continue to keep this list as a standard feature and if anyone finds a website or article which could supplement the list, please let me know and I will be more than happy to add the details.

Reading Material

- The Ashlar
- The Grand Lodge of Scotland Year Book (order through your Lodge Secretary).
- Robert Burns - The Freemason edited by John Weir from Grand Lodge of Scotland
- The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century, 1590-1710 by David Stevenson
- The First Freemasons by David Stevenson
- The Craft by John Hamill
- The Genesis of Freemasonry by Knoop and Jones
- The Scottish Mason and the Mason Word by Knoop and Jones
- The Temple and the Lodge by Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh
- A Pilgrim's Path by John J. Robinson
- The History of Freemasonry by Robert Freke Gould
- The History of Freemasonry by Albert G. Mackey
- The Secrets of Freemasonry by Robert Lomas
- Workman Unashamed by Christopher Haffner
- Famous Scottish Freemasons published by Grand Lodge of Scotland
- The Freemason at Work by Harry Carr
- A Masonic Miscellany by George Power

New Material.

Right Worshipful Master Brother George Carson advises for those with a Kindle Fire HD you can download for free: The Symbolism of Freemasonry by Albert G MacKey in the 1800's. and comments that it is a very interesting insight into the use of symbols and allegories and how they may have developed from ancient cultures into what we have in "modern" Freemasonry. A little bit heavy in parts but as a free download for the information and ideas it is excellent.

Websites

- <http://www.hawthornefortitude200.com/twtmag.html>
- <http://www.lodge76.wanadoo.co.uk/>
- <http://freemason.pastperfect-online.com/37812cgi/mweb.exe?request=random>
- <http://www.americanmason.org/TheNorthernLight.aspx>
- <http://scottishrite.org/srjournal/>
- <http://www.esmason.com/news.html>
- <http://www.freemason.org/newsEvents/index.htm>
- <http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/>
- "Pietre Stones".
- Cinosam
- www.rurallodge.com
- Sadly, the last site is now no longer updated but there are a few back copies still on the site which are worth reading and I think that the lectures and material available at <http://www.lodge76.wanadoo.co.uk/> are particularly good.

The Ashlar:

Of particular interest to all freemasons in the Ashlar edited and produced locally, it is one of the most informative publications that you could read and is available either through your Lodge or through Brother Alex Galbraith, Immediate Past Provincial Grand Master, for the relatively modest sum of £4.00. Often with articles written by brethren known to us locally, it comes highly recommended.

I am also pleased to advertise the following publications which can be ordered through the Masonic Publishing Company, 30, Loanbank Quadrant, Glasgow G51 3HZ. Email at info@theashlar.com

Profits from the sale of any books goes towards Masonic benevolence.

Books - Price List.

Title	Price £	Postage and Packing			
		UK	Europe	World 1	World 2
Robert Burns, Cronies etc (Hardback 1.5 Kg.)	24.50	6.00	13.00	21.00	22.50
The Star of Robert Burns (Hardback 1.0 Kg.)	19.95	6.00	9.50	15.50	16.50
A Winter with Robert Burns (Hardback (0.3 Kg).	12.50	3.50	5.50	7.50	8.00
Robert Burns Print	29.95	Free	5.50	7.50	8.00
Illustrated Guide to Rosslyn Chapel (Hardback (0.3 Kg).	12.50	3.50	5.50	7.50	8.00
Nicolo and Antonio Zena. (Hardback (0.6 Kg).	22.50	3.50	6.50	10.00	11.00
MacBride Ritual. (Hardback (0.25 Kg).	18.00	3.50	5.50	7.50	8.00
A.S. MacBride Speculative Freemasonry. (Hardback (1.0 Kg).	20.00	6.00	9.50	15.50	16.50
The Church of the Knights Templar in London. (Hardback (0.25 Kg).	12.50	3.50	5.50	7.50	8.00
Also available in soft cover (0.25Kg).	8.00				
The Bruce - Robert King of Scots. (Hardback (0.6 Kg).	12.00	3.50	6.50	10.00	11.00
The Great War, 1914 - 1918 Victoria Cross Freemasons. (Hardback (1.6 Kg).	35.00	6.00	13.00	21.00	22.50

Circle Publications.

I would take the opportunity to recommend to you that you take a few moments to click on the following link to see what is available through this excellent website. www.circlepublications.com

There is a vast range of interesting material available and in particular a booklet called "The Lodge Master", which explains his duties, powers and responsibilities and is an excellent read for every member of the Lodge.

Also available, are copies of the "Burns Print", signed by his wife in 1813 (the only one so signed), which makes an excellent gift for a friend, a speaker or a raffle prize.

Lodge Websites.

Brethren, sadly my plea to Lodges to ensure that their websites are up to date appears to have fallen on deaf ears as many of the website contain information which is out of date. There is nothing more off-putting and I am of the opinion that if a Brother accesses such an out of date site, he is unlikely to return to it.

I would appeal to you to ensure that your material is up to date and if possible place a "Last Updated" post on it.

If you are not able to update your meetings in particular, I would suggest that it is better to delete this section and just have your website as a static basic information only site, with contact details.

Some useful site addresses.

The Grand Lodge of Scotland - <http://www.grandlodgescotland.com/>

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Renfrewshire West - <http://www.pglrw.org/>

Lodge Greenock Kilwinning No. XII – www.lgk12.com

Lodge Doric Kilwinning No. 68 - <http://www.lodgedorickilwinning68.org.uk/>

Lodge Greenock St John's No 175 - <http://www.greenock-st-johns-175.masonic-lodge.org.uk/>

Lodge Cumberland Kilwinning No. 217 - <http://lck217.org.uk>

Lodge Firth of Clyde No. 626 - <http://www.firhofclyde.org>

Lodge Sir Michael No. 989 – www.lodgesirmichael989.co.uk

Lodge Crawfordsburn No. 1121 – www.lodgecrawfurdsburn.org.uk

Lodge Inverkip Ardgowan No. 1425 - link deleted.

Stirling Royal Arch Websites

<http://www.lodge76.wanadoo.co.uk/> - Lectures site

<http://www.lodge76.co.uk/> - Main site

<http://www.greyfriars51.fsnet.co.uk/> - Preceptory site

Grand Lodge Guidelines for the creation of Lodge Websites

if anyone is considering the development of a lodge website please bear in mind that the Grand Lodge of Scotland have issued guidelines for the creation of such sites and I would be happy to provide a copy.

Provincial Grand Lodge of Renfrewshire West Calendar of Events and Meetings – March 2016

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1 st XII – Passing and AVPGL (7.15 pm)	2 nd Preceptory of Ardgowan.	3 rd 217 – Passing RAC 289 – Royal Arch Degree	4 th	5 th	6 th
7 th 68 – Business Meeting	8 th 1121 - Entering	9 th 624 – Passing (E) and Installation of O/B. 989 - Raising	10 th 1425 – Mark Degree	11 th 175 – Passing and Ballot.	12 th	13 th
14 th 68 – Raising 626 – Passing conferred by Lodge Prince of Wales No.426	15 th XII – Raising SGC No. 79 – Lecture	16 th RAC XVII – Royal Arch Degree	17 th 217 - Raising	18 th	19 th	20 th
21 st 68 - Entering	22 nd 1121 – Passing conferred by Lodge Greenock St. John's No. 175	23 rd	24 th Provincial Grand Committee	25 th 175 - Entering	26 th	27 th
28 th 68 – To be confirmed 626 - Entering	29 th	30 th	31 st	1 st 1814 - Lecture	2 nd	3 rd 68/217 – Joint Divine Service

(E) denotes an Exemplification

Information is correct at time of issue but may be subject to change. For up to date details of meetings and news and information please log on to the Provincial Grand Lodge of Renfrewshire West website at www.pglrw.org