



# Ashton News

JUNE 2001  
Vol.7 No.2

NEWSLETTER of ASHTON LODGE No 218 of the UNITED GRAND LODGE OF QUEENSLAND

## Memories of past Lodge meetings

This is an account of the early history of one of our members Ted Ross who lived in the former British colony of Rhodesia, now called Zimbabwe. Ted was initiated into the Craft during the unsettled and dangerous times before the breakup of the Union of South Africa.

At the time that I joined Freemasonry, on the 17th February 1971, I was living in a small village in the centre of Africa on the Zambezi River called Victoria Falls.

The population at that time was about 180 whites.

It shared a border with Zambia, Botswana and South West Africa.

As the village did not have a Masonic Lodge I joined Sir Ernest Oppenheimer Lodge Number 7639 in our nearest town, a coal mining town called Wankie, which was 70 miles to the south of us.

As a matter of interest Harry Oppenheimer, his father,

was the Principal owner of the gold mines of Johannesburg and the diamond mines of Kimberley and also the coalmines of Wankie

There was at that time 15 freemasons who lived in the village who I may add were from lodges from all around the world.

One I remember was from Lord Kitcheners lodge in Egypt.

Having what we thought were enough members, we applied to Scotland to form a lodge in our immediate area, but they informed us that we had insufficient numbers.

In desperation we applied to the Grand Lodge of England, who gave us the same answer.

We would travel together once a month to attend lodge.

As terrorist warfare increased it became difficult and we would go in convoy.

As every male over the age of 18 had a military commitment

of some description it meant that we were armed with fully automatic weapons which were issued to us either by the army or the Police.

I had a Belgium 762 FN rifle, which was issued to me by the police.

A Sterling Machine gun was issued to me by the Department of Civil Aviation, my employer, for my protection when traveling to and from the airport, which was 15 miles from the village.

(It was explained to me that it would be easier to fire a machine gun through an open window than a rifle.)

Wherever anyone travelled, even in his own home, when going from room to room, a person was required to carry his rifle with him.

Whilst attending regular meetings, the Tyler actually guarded the Lodge with his rifle and was responsible for minding everybody's weapons.

This may sound dramatic but it was a fact that every house in the village had an underground bomb shelter, as rockets from Zambia and mortars from terrorists outside the village who originated from Botswana, often attacked us.

Victoria Falls was surrounded by a minefield half a mile wide and was situated between two security fences with only three exits guarded day and night by special police reservists to which I belonged.

As I progressed in office I had to attend Lodge at least twice a month and due to the hazardous situation I often had to stay over night.

The Wankie brethren were most hospitable and opened their houses and their hearts to me, which eventually allowed me to be installed as Worshipful Master on the 14th June 1977.

I remember one particular night when we were going to lodge and were stopped by a security patrol.

When they saw the little cases and the dinner suits, they were curious enough to ask what band or orchestra we played in!

Although the Ancient Charges forbid the admission or initiation of women into the Order of Free and Accepted Masons, there are known instances where as the result of accident or sometimes design the rule has been broken and women have been duly initiated.

The most prominent instance is that of the Hon. Elizabeth St. Leger, or, as she afterwards

# A WOMAN FREEMASON

By Bro. Dudley Wright, UGLE "The Builder", August 1920

became, on marriage, the Hon. Mrs. Aldworth, who is referred to sometimes, though erroneously, as the "only woman who ever obtained the honour of initiation into the sublime mysteries of Freemasonry."

The Hon. Elizabeth St. Leger was a daughter of

the first Viscount Doneraile, a resident of Cork. Her father was a very zealous Freemason and, as was the custom in his time – the early part of the eighteenth century – held an occasional lodge in his own house, when he was assisted by members of his own family and any brethren in the immediate neighbourhood and visitors to Doneraile House.

This lodge was duly warranted and held the number 150 on the Register of the Grand Lodge of Ireland.

The story runs that one evening previous to the initiation of a gentleman named Coppinger, Miss St. Leger hid herself in the room adjoining the one used as a lodge-room.

This room was at that time undergoing some alterations and Miss St. Leger is said to have removed a brick from the partition with her scissors and through the aperture thus created witnessed the ceremony of initiation.

What she saw appears to have disturbed her so thoroughly that she at once determined upon making her escape, but failed to elude the vigilance of the Tyler, who, armed with a sword stood barring her exit.

Her shrieks alarmed the members of the

lodge, who came rushing to the spot, when they learned that she had witnessed the whole of the ceremony which had just been enacted.

After a considerable discussion and yielding to the entreaties of her brother it was decided to admit her into the Order and she was duly initiated, and, in course of time, became the Master of the lodge.

According to Milliken, the Irish Masonic historian, she was initiated in Lodge No. 95, which still meets at Cork, but there is no record extant of her reception into the Order.

It is, however, on record that she was a subscriber to the Irish Book of Constitutions, which appeared in 1744 and that she frequently attended, wearing her Masonic regalia, entertainments that were given under Masonic auspices for the benefit of the poor and distressed.

She afterwards married Mr. Richard Aldworth of Newmarket and when she died she was accorded the honour of a Masonic burial.

She was cousin to General Antony St. Leger, of Park Hill, near Doncaster, who, in 1776, instituted the celebrated Doncaster St. Leger races and stakes.

## LAST NIGHT Rudyard Kipling

Last night I knelt where Hiram knelt,  
And took an obligation,  
Today I'm closer to my God,  
And I'm a Master Mason.  
Tho' heretofore my fellow man,  
Seemed each one like the other;  
Today I search one apart –  
I'm looking for my brother!

And as I feel his friendly grip,  
It fills my heart with pride,  
I know that while I'm on the square,  
That he is on my side.  
His footsteps on my errand go,  
If I should such require;  
His prayers will plead on my behalf,  
If I should so desire.

My words are safe with within his breast,  
As though within my own,  
His hand forever at my back,  
To guide me safely home.  
Good council whispers in my ear,  
And warns of any danger;  
By square and compass, "Brother" now,  
Who once would call me "Stranger".

I might have lived a normal life,  
And risen to distinctions,  
Without my Brother's helping hand,  
And fellowship of Masons.  
But God, who sees how hard it is,  
To resist our life's temptations;  
Knows why I knelt where Hiram knelt,  
And took that obligation!

## Weird, but True?

Here's a story of a Scottish Canadian. It's the story of a man who loved his Lodge, and who (I think) also loved his wallet.

**Miles McGuigan** was a member of the 81st Regiment of Loyal Lincoln Volunteers and a member of Merrickville Lodge, No. 55, in St. Lawrence District in Ontario, Canada.

When he died, it was his last wish that his body be dissected, and then placed in the Merrickville Lodge for future work in the Third Degree.

His wishes were carried out, and his bones remained in the Merrickville Lodge until the Lodge Room and building were gutted by fire in 1959.

## 90th Installation Ceremony night

Time is fast approaching when this Lodge will be celebrating its centenary year.

In the last 89 years, 83 brethren have been installed into this exalted office. (Only six of these Masters have occupied the Chair twice).

This year, the honour has fallen on one of our affiliated brothers, John Gray.

John, originally from Sydney and Goulburn, NSW, has been very active in Masonic activities.

He was initiated into Lodge West Epping in August 1981 and became First Principal of Northern Suburbs Royal Arch Chapter, and for two years occupied the Chair as Most Puissant Sovereign of a Constantine

Conclave.

John and his wife Diana then moved to Golburn where he immediately became involved with the Masonic fraternity in that fair city.

He joined Duke of Edinburgh Lodge and advanced to the chair of Senior warden.

He also became Excellent First Principal of another Royal Arch Chapter, which had the same name as his Craft Lodge, Duke of Edinburgh.

A couple of years ago, John and Diana decided that it would be nice if they could live near their children who had married and made the move to Brisbane.

He affiliated with Ashton and immediately became involved in the Lodge workings.

Last year, the position of Senior Warden became vacant, and whilst not really experienced with our ritual, John was elected into the Chair.

Although most of his experience was with the New South Wales ritual, he has worked hard throughout the year to master the Scottish workings.

The festive banquet this year will be arranged by members of H.I.K.E., a voluntary organisation which raises money to assist in the rehabilitation of hearing impaired children.

## Wearing the Bonnet

The Balmoral Bonnet and the Glengarry Bonnet is equally correct.

Tartan Balmorals, like tartan ties, should never be worn with the kilt.

The Balmoral is a very ancient headgear.

It may be black, blue or fawn, with or without a diced band, and may have loose flowing ribbon behind or a knotted bow.

The Glengarry is generally dark blue or black and may or may not have a diced band.

It is invariably worn with loose flowing ribbons and many people prefer it because of its jaunty appearance. Do not wear eagle feathers in your bonnet. The use of feathers is strictly limited to those whose right to wear them has been established by the Lord Lyon of Scotland.

## Letter from Ian Pieper

On the 10th of May 2001, I went down to Glasgow to visit at The Gael 609. I was given the most thorough testing that I've yet had and, after satisfying the examiner, was given a warm welcome. They are one of the few Lodges that that retain their tartan and it is Royal Stewart - a very welcome sight.

My Ashton apron has drawn a bit of comment. When I visited Mother Kilwinning 0, the delegation from Finland were lining up to take my photo or to be in a photo with me.

The Gael had been going to cancel the degree work for the night. They were short by more than half of the officers as well as the candidate. But they decided to give it a shot for the sake of the visitors. They gave it more than a shot. The work for the night was a third and with no practice and no warning, they were still the best degree team that I've witnessed in Scotland.

The Harmony in the South was a lot of fun with a commendable version of Waltzing Matilda on the pipes (the Lodge has six-pipers). Despite not wanting to make it a late night, I didn't start the trek back to Edinburgh until after midnight.

# Notorious men in Freemasonry

By kind permission of Paul M Bessel, Executive Secretary of the Masonic Leadership Centre at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial Website.

Matthew McBlain Thompson was born in Scotland, and was a member of two Scottish Lodges and a Past Master of one of them.

He also affiliated with King Solomon Lodge, No. 22, in Montpelier, Idaho, USA, when he settled there in 1881.

He later demitted from this lodge.

He returned to Scotland, but in 1898 he came back to the United States, where he created the "American Masonic Federation."

He promoted the sale of all sorts of "Masonic" degrees by mail, and through paid solicitors or salesmen; they were sent out to organize lodges and grant degrees throughout the United States. (reduced rates were given for large groups and many joined his special Craft.)

In 1915 one of his salesmen was arrested in St. Louis, Missouri. The postal inspector there decided that it was time to break up the gang.

He assigned inspector M. G. Price to the case; he spent two years gathering evidence in the United States and also far off in foreign lands.

Judge Wade of the US District Court for Iowa, a non-Mason, presided, and none of the jurors was a Mason.

Matthew McBlain Thompson and two others were found guilty of using the US Mails to defraud the public, and were sentenced to serve penitentiary terms of two years and to pay a fine \$5000.00 each.

In those days this was a lot of money.



In 1847 An American visiting England introduced himself as a Major Gen. George Cooke, LL.D., Chan-

cellor of the University of Ripley.

He joined Prince of Wales Lodge, No. 259.

He became a devoted supporter of the Masonic Charities, and actually became vice-president of the Girls' School, and a life Governor of the Boys' School and a member of the Benevolent Institution.

The Grand Master conferred on him the rank of Past Grand Warden, and appointed Cooke his personal representative to the Grand Lodge of New York.

A fund was started to place his bust in Freemasons' Hall.

Yes, he certainly seems to be the type of man who would become the ultimate Mason, generous, devoted, benevolent, humane and philanthropic, an indisputable humanitarian. Undeniably the type of man the Craft needs.

But after he had returned to the United States it was discovered that Cooke was a medical quack.

He was immediately stripped of all his Masonic honours, and all the money that he had contributed to Masonic Charities was returned to him.

## Publishing a \$3m Bible

Work has started on an illuminated, hand-written Bible to be completed in six years, at an estimated cost of \$3 million.

It was commissioned by Benedictine monks at St John's University in Minnesota, USA.

At his workshop in Wales, British calligrapher Donald Jackson is overseeing a small team of calligraphers who are working with him on the project.

They are writing on vellum, using goose-quill pens and antique Chinese stick ink made of refined soot mixed with gum.

A calligraphic script specially designed for the work will be printed from a computer and then copied by hand, with illustrations and decorated letters added later.

The completed work will comprise seven volumes and will have over 1,150 pages, each measuring about 60cm high by 40cm wide.

The Bible chosen for this monumental task, the first of its kind in 500 years, is the English *New revised Standard Version*.

However, the order of the Bible books has been changed, and the first volume will start with the Gospels.

Later, 100 copies of a collector's edition are planned, to sell for between \$60,000 and

### Hello and welcome to the Psychiatric Hotline

If you are obsessive - compulsive.....please press 1 repeatedly.

If you are co-dependent..... please ask someone to press 2 for you.

If you have multiple personalities.....please press 3,4,5,& 6.

If you are a paranoid delusional, we know who you are and what you want.....just stay on the line until we can trace the call.