

Ashton News

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Lodge mourns loss of esteemed Brother

Thirty-nine years of Masonic service to the Lodge and community has drawn to an end, with the passing of Wor Bro Stewart Henry (Tom) Blackwell (*PGSwdB*), after a losing battle with cancer on the second of April 2005.

From the moment he was initiated into Freemasonry in 1966, Tom practiced its principles to the full.

He became very active in the affairs of the Lodge by progressing through every office to the chair of Master in 1977.

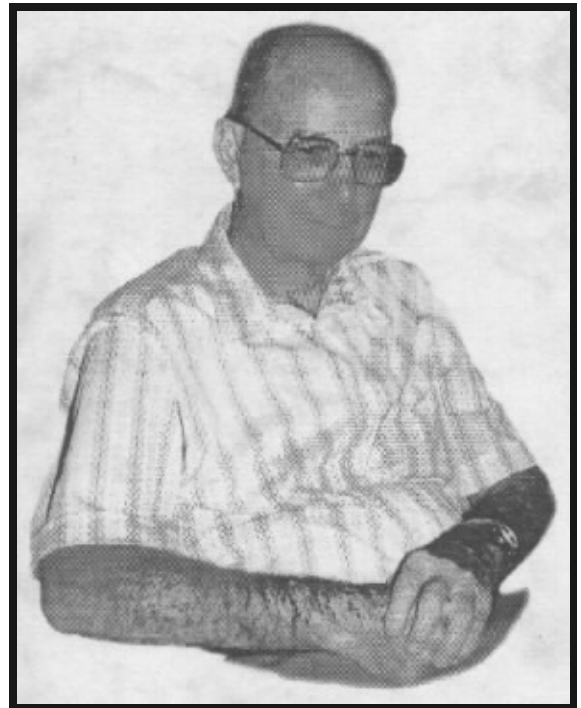
In his later years, Tom accepted the office of Chaplain, a position he held until the year 2000.

Being a Lodge Mentor, he made himself available to advise and guide any Initiate or Fellow in the intricacies of the Craft.

With his wife Margaret, they became very interested in Masonic Charity, by becoming involved in the South Brisbane Masonic Ball Committee, the forerunner of the present day Masonic Debutante Ball.

Over the years he represented his Lodge as a Director of the South Brisbane Masonic Hall Co-operative, as well as participating in the operation of the Annual Fete held at the Freemasons Home Sandgate.

He worked very hard during the year by collecting bric-a-brac and then selling the items on the day of the Fete.



Being elected Auditor, Tom made sure that the financial ledger of the Lodge presented a true and proper record of its accounts.

His knowledge of the Scottish Ritual was remarkable enough to make him respected by his peers.

There are quite a few Past Masters in the Lodge who can attest to Tom's ability to remember Ashton ritual.

When late minute problems arose regarding the presentation of any Charge or filling of any Chair, it was Tom who they called upon to "fill the gap". Not once did he let them down. □

Life is tough -- but it could be tougher when you're stupid!

Recently, when I went to McDonald's I saw on the menu that you could have an order of 6, 9 or 12 Chicken McNuggets. I asked for a half dozen nuggets. "We don't have half dozen nuggets," said the teenager at the counter. "You don't?" I replied. "We only have six, nine, or twelve," was the reply. "So I can't order a half dozen nuggets, but I can order six?" "That's right." So I shook my head and ordered six McNuggets.

I was checking out at the local K-Mart with just a few items and the lady behind me put her things on the belt close to mine. I picked up one of those "dividers" that they keep by the cash register and placed it between our things so they wouldn't get mixed. After the girl had scanned all of my items, she picked up the "divider," looking it all over for the bar code so she could scan it. Not finding the bar code she said to me, "Do you know how much this is?" I said to her "I've changed my mind, I don't think I'll buy that today." She said "OK," and I paid her for the things and left. She had no clue to what had just happened.

I recently saw a distraught young lady weeping beside her car. "Do you need some help?" I asked. She replied, "I knew I should have replaced the battery to this remote door unlocker. Now I can't get into my car. Do you think they (pointing to a distant convenience store) would have a battery to fit this?" "Hmmm, I dunno. Do you have an alarm, too?" I asked. "No, just this remote thingy," she answered. As I took the key and manually unlocked the door, I replied, "Why don't you drive over there and check about the batteries. It's a long walk."

Several years ago, we had an Intern who was none too swift. One day she was typing and turned to a secretary and said, "I'm almost out of typing paper. What do I do?" "Just use copier machine paper," the secretary told her. With

that, the intern took her last remaining blank piece of paper, put it on the photocopier and proceeded to make five "blank" copies.

I was in a car dealership a while ago, when a large motor home was towed into the garage. The front of the vehicle was in dire need of repair and the whole thing generally looked like an extra in "Twister." I asked the manager what had happened. He told me that the driver had set the "Cruise Control" and then went in the back to make a tuna sandwich.

My neighbour works in the operations department in the central office of a large bank. Employees in the field call him when they have problems with their computers. One night he got a call from a woman in one of the branch banks who had this question: "I've got smoke coming from the back of my terminal. Do you guys have a fire downtown?"

Police in Radnor, Pa., interrogated a suspect by placing a metal colander on his head and connecting it with wires to a photocopy machine. The message "He's lying" was placed in the copier, and police pressed the copy button each time they thought the suspect wasn't telling the truth. Believing the "lie detector" was working, the suspect confessed.

A lady at work was seen putting a credit card into her floppy drive and pulling it out very quickly. When I inquired as to what she was doing, she said she was shopping on the Internet and they kept asking for a credit card number, so she was using the ATM "thingy."

A mother calls 000 very worried asking the dispatcher if she needs to take her kid to the emergency room, the kid was eating ants, the dispatcher tells her to give the kid some Benadryl and should be fine, the mother says, I just gave him some ant killer.....Dispatcher: Rush him in to Emergency! □

" The Final Toast "

An Address by R. Ex. Companion Andrew Allan, Past Grand Superintendent of
Royal Arch Masons, Prince Edward District Canada

The presentation we know of in Lodge as the The Tyler's Toast is actually the last line of each verse of a six verse poem called 'The Final Toast' which comes to us from the middle of the nineteenth century.

The full poem is as follows:

*Are your glasses charged in the West and
South, the Worshipful Master cries;
They're charged in the West, They're charged in
the South, are the Wardens' prompt replies*

*Then to our final toast tonight your glasses
fairly drain
"Happy to meet - Sorry to part - Happy to
meet again, again
Oh! Happy to meet again!"*

*The Masons' social brotherhood around the
festive board,
Reveals a wealth more precious far than
selfish miser's hoard
They freely share the priceless stores that
generous hearts contain
"Happy to meet, sorry to part' happy to
meet again!"*

*We work like masons free and true, and
when our task is done,
A merry song and cheering glass are not
unduly won;
And only at our farewell pledge is pleasure
touched with pain
"Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to
meet again!"*

*Amidst our mirth we drink "To all poor
Masons o'er all the world" -
On every shore our flag of love is gloriously
unfurled*

*We prize each brother, fair or dark, who
bears no moral stain*

*"Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet
again!"*

*The Mason feels the noble truth the Scottish
peasant told*

*That rank is but the guinea's stamp, the man
himself 's the gold*

*With us the rich and poor unite and equal
rights maintain*

*"Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet
again!"*

*Dear Brethren of the mystic tie, the night is
waning fast*

*Our duty's done - our feast is o'er - this
song must be our last:-*

*"Good night". "Good night - once more,
once more repeat the farewell strain -*

*"Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet
again!"*

These verses have, from time to time, been attributed to either Rudyard Kipling or to Robert Burns, both of them dedicated masons.

Perhaps it is because I am Scottish that I always felt (wrongly it seems) that the verses were by the Scottish bard.

Probably because of the reference to "the Scottish peasant" and the direct quote from Burns' poem "A man's a man for a' that" in the fifth verse.

There is also a reference to "brethren of the mystic tie" contained in the sixth verse which is another quote from Burns, this time from his "Farewell to the Brethren of St. James' Lodge, Tarbolton".

Burns' Masonic references are many but one of my favorites is a stanza, which was added to his poem "No churchman am I".

This stanza was added for presentation in a

Masonic Lodge and goes:-

*Then fill up a bumper and make it o'erflow,
And honours masonic prepare for to throw;
May ev'ry true Brother of the Compass and
Square*

*Have a big-belly'd bottle when harass'd with
care.*

What a marvelous sentiment!

Rudyard Kipling's Masonic references are many, but probably nowadays the best known is contained in the movie "The Man Who Would Be King" which was based on a story by Kipling.

However 'The Final Toast' doesn't seem to me to be typical of Kiplings' verses.

But those who attributed it to him did get one thing right, because 'The Final Toast' came to us from India where Kipling spent many years.

In a paper presented to Quatuor Coronati Lodge No.2076 in 1978, Bro. Will Read advises us that the verses were actually written by Bro. David Lester Richardson who was born in London in January 1801.

He served in India with the army and was at one time Aide-de-Camp to the Governor General, Lord William Bentinck.

Bro. Richardson was initiated into Freemasonry in the Lodge of Industry and Perseverance (what a wonderful name) No.126 in Calcutta but it appears he never held any office.

However one does not need to hold office to make a significant contribution to the Craft, and Bro. Richardson's contribution is priceless.

So to all of you, my Companions, it is time to say, Happy we have met, I'm sorry we must part, but happily we shall meet again.

Until then may The Great Jehovah walk with us and be our constant Companion.

May He bless us and all who belong to our Gentle Craft, now and for evermore. □

Then let us pray that come it may
(As come it will for a' that)

That Sense and Worth o'er a' the earth
Shall bear the gree an' a' that!

For a' that, an a' that,

It's coming yet for a' that,

That man to man the world o'er

Shall brithers be for a' that.

-- Bro Robert Burns

GRAND LODGE HONOURS FOR TWO MEMBERS

AT the June Communications of Grand Lodge, two Ashton members were accorded Past Grand rank by the M Wor Grand Master, Bro John Menzies.

The Past Masters of Ashton lodged a submission to Grand Lodge asking that recognition be given to two of their Brethren for their Masonic and public activities.

V Wor Bro Bert Phin has been elevated to the office of Past Grand Junior Warden, thereby according him the title of **Rt Wor Brother Phin**. As Almoner of the Lodge since his affiliation, Bert has been very active in keeping in touch with members and their families who are in need of assistance, as well as visiting Brethren whose illness keeps them from attending meetings. He is also serving a second term as an officer of the United Grand Lodge of Queensland. Not bad for a person in his early nineties!

The second recipient was **Wor Bro Harry Crane**, who just happens to be the editor/publisher of "Ashton News". (*When one has to write about oneself, there is a certain amount of embarrassment*). However, he was bestowed the rank of Past Grand Deputy Director of Ceremonies, and now carries the title of **V Wor Bro Harry Crane**. The Brethren put forward this nomination in recognition of the time spent over the past eleven years in producing the Lodge's Newsletter, "Ashton News" and for the ritual work done within the Lodge Room.

Congratulations are extended to Tuscan Lodge's Secretary **Rt Wor Bro Bob Christie** on becoming a Past Grand Junior Warden. Bob, over many years has been a great supporter of Ashton, and is a tireless worker for his Lodge.

The Learning and Delivery of Ritual

From the date of my entry into the Craft I have had a great respect for a voluntary institution such as ours, which can call forth the amazing aggregate of effort which is put into learning the many lengthy and in some cases quite involved charges in the ritual.

With more experience in the Craft I came to understand the appeal and demand it makes on its members.

Above everything else, I have a real admiration for the Brethren who have mastered the ritual at a period in their lives when they might justifiably have considered all such learning was behind them.

I know well what it has cost some of them in time and sheer hard work. We can all think of Brethren who have come back to such effort many years after they might normally and quite reasonably have regarded such activities as finished with.

Some have done literally nothing of the nature of memorizing since their school days or early youth.

As one who has never been away from that sort of thing since early childhood, I think I can appreciate what it has cost those Brethren.

Once a person's mind has become set and attuned to his way of life, it is far from easy to switch to something new, and those who do come back to the memorizing and delivery of ritual are worthy of high praise.

Before a Brother can deliver ritual in Lodge he has first of all to learn it.

This, of course, is axiomatic, but this is what most of us find hardest to do. Some fortunate people are gifted with photographic memories and one or two readings of a charge suffice to

enable it to be repeated with little trouble.

Others have to work harder to memorise, but have very retentive memories and are able to recall material committed to memory many years previously. Very often, but not always, these are the ones who have to strive hardest to learn. The Main point with which I am concerned here is that anyone of normal

intellectual ability can memorise if he sets his mind to it, and I would suggest that it is a useful personal discipline.

There is no easy road for most of us, but only determined effort will bring the desired result.

However, the following suggestions have proved of assistance and I offer them for what they are worth

(1) **Concentrate:** Some people have the ability to concentrate on a task despite all sorts of extraneous

noises and other distractions. Most of us cannot put our minds to real effort if there is a conversation or music in a room. Others find a background of minor noise no great deterrent to learning.

It appears that the majority of people, especially when beginning a study, need peace and quiet.

Each will soon discover his own needs in that respect. It is necessary to keep the matter in hand in the focus of one's consciousness.

Any other thoughts which endeavor to thrust themselves forward must be forced to the outer margin and the mind kept firmly on the task one is endeavoring to perform.

This matter of concentration is personal to each of us and some have less difficulty than do others.

(2) **Read:** Read the whole of a charge

The author V.W. Bro. A. R. Chambers is a Past Grand Lecturer of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand and he was also the Editor of the Transactions of Masters and Past Masters Lodge (No.30) Christchurch, New Zealand. He had been a very good ritualist and a great Masonic scholar.

through and through. Do not attempt to dispense with the book too soon. This appears to be a common source of trouble and difficulty.

It is no aid to the memory to strain it by trying to recall material not sufficiently known, but rather like going into a big football match inadequately trained. (I shall return to this point of frequent reference to the book for another reason.)

Repeated readings will enable you to get a picture of the whole charge in your mind and develop a sense of sequence and continuity which is very important. What at first seems involved and difficult will miraculously resolve itself into something familiar and smooth-running.

(3) **Learn carefully and exactly:** Too often we hear a Brother spoil his work by a lack of exactness which can, even to a slight degree, alter the meaning intended. Care and concentration in the early stages will lead to good results.

(4) **Memorising:** Although a whole charge should be read and re-read at the beginning, most of us will divide it into sections when memorising.

In spite of this, go back to the beginning regularly to insure that continuity and exactness are being maintained. It must be emphasized that this continual returning to the beginning and reading the whole charge is important.

When you have done this and are reaching the limit of what you know from memory, then use your book and go on to the end of the charge.

This keeps the overall picture in your mind, and will help materially in learning the remainder of the charge. It is most inadvisable to attempt to learn in isolated blocks.

(5) **Reference Tutorial:** When you are trying to say a passage from memory and find yourself stuck, do not hesitate to refer to the ritual at once. In this way the probable perpetuation of error due to an attempt at guessing is avoided.

Again let me stress the need for exactness of learning which will be maintained by this use of the book.

(6) **Take time:** It is most unwise in fact, it is not an economical procedure to attempt to learn a long charge in one sitting.

It is a proven fact that when we are at rest

our sub-conscious minds are still at work and should be given an opportunity to consolidate what has been learned.

The fatigue factor must be considered also. It is best to start work on a piece of memorising far enough ahead to allow adequate rest periods and complete changes of occupation.

The importance of this procedure cannot be over stressed. It is a fact that material learned over a period is actually learned more easily and is retained more thoroughly.

It is also true that frequent revision is part of the learning process and should not be neglected.

(7) **Delivery:** Having mastered the text of a charge, the next point we have to consider is its delivery in Lodge. There are two major things to consider here-- the manner of the speaker when delivering the charge, and the effect of his hearers.

It will probably be best to discuss this from the "delivery angle", because there is no doubt that if ritual is well spoken, the candidate and others present will give it full attention.

The suggestions I wish to make will, I believe, assist in achieving this object. They are in no particular order but their value has been amply demonstrated in Lodge and elsewhere.

POSTURE. Stand easily, naturally and comfortable, Do not slouch but avoid making yourself into a ramrod. Have your feet in a position dictated by ease, with the body balanced on them evenly.

SPEECH. Good or bad speech in normal human beings is largely a matter of habit and, in one's early days, of imitation.

Correctness can be cultivated without speech becoming overformal, artificial or elocutionary.

I do not propose to discuss the correction of errors of speech and such matters. There are any amount of books from which assistance can be obtained and teachers who can put one right.

However it may be well to draw attention to common mutilation of vowel sounds.

Development of nasality and of a twang. Unless there is some physical defect, most of such faults are corrected by thought and opening the mouth.

DIFFICULTIES WITH PARTICULAR WORDS. Many Brethren for varying reasons

have difficulty with particular words. They may not be aware of their difficulty and can often be quite surprised when their errors are pointed out to them. With these words a good deal of drill and practice after correct demonstration will usually effect a cure.

The words should be broken up into syllables and closely examined, the difficult part being marked in some way-- by being printed larger or in a different color.

The whole word should be carefully and deliberately pronounced. As confidence comes speed up until the word is being spoken naturally and correctly.

Again, briefly, examine the word, syllabify it, open the mouth, use the tongue and lips.

This gives good articulation. It is a good idea to make a list of the words which give you difficulty and require your special attention.

Make yourself thoroughly familiar with them, concentration on their pronunciation and enunciation.

In making this suggestion, I should say that my aid is the achievement of clear, careful and accurate delivery of ordinary speech -- not exaggerated, not slovenly, not elocutionary.

BREATH CONTROL. Breath control is important in order that the charge can be well phrased. Do this according to sense by insuring that words are grouped in keeping with the intention of the whole passage. This can be done without making phrases too long.

Do not pause before unimportant words. Pause to give balance and rhythm to what you are saying.

Pause for emphasis, but be sure you are emphasizing the right word or group of words. Pause to let an idea sink in.

VOICE. Normally when a charge is being given, the voice should be kept around about ordinary conversational pitch, that is, at about the middle of the range.

This insures a good medium tone which can be listened to without strain and also makes possible upward or downward modulation as required by the immediate passage being spoken-- its emotional content, etc.

Keep the voice on a fairly even keel, and use pitch only to assist you to "put over" the desired effect.

STRESS. Many Brethren appear to find difficulty with stress when delivering charges. The following rules are safe to follow:

(1) Do not make a practice of stressing a lot of words. If you "speak in exclamations", so to speak, effectiveness is lost -- nothing will stand out.

(2) Be sure to stress only important words or phrases.

(3) Be sure to stress the correct word or phrase. A meaning can be completely altered through wrong stress.

(4) The correct syllable to stress is ascertained from common usage. Any good dictionary indicates this.

Remember that stress within a word is often altered according to the meaning.

EMPHASIS Stress is only one way of obtaining emphasis. As it is the easiest, it is probably the commonest.

Other methods which will be found of value in the delivery of Ritual are:

CHANGE OF PACE. This can be very effective. We all know how a sudden speeding up or a change to a slow measured speech can bring back flagging attention.

CHANGE OF PITCH. This also, when appropriately used in a charge, is valuable.

CHANGE OF VOLUME. For a short period will often give the desired effect.

CONCLUSION

To sum up what I have tried to put before you, I would suggest that attention to the following matters will be beneficial to all ritual work:

- (a) **Know your Ritual.**
- (b) **Be exact.**
- (c) **Open the mouth.**
- (d) **Don't hurry.**
- (e) **Be natural.**

If these points are borne in mind by anyone desirous of improving his delivery of ritual, I know the results cannot be other than beneficial.

The Craft and its ritual are worthy of the best we can give and I offer these suggestions in the hope that they may be helpful to those Brethren who wish to improve in this direction.

I have to a degree been concerned, perhaps unduly, with the mechanical aspects of ritual.

I have not at any time forgotten, however, the "the word killeth, the spirit maketh alive"; but I do affirm that attention to the learning and delivery of our ritual will result in its spirit being impressed on our candidates in the most telling manner. □

How to Identify a Stroke

I wish I knew this several years ago when a friend was having a stroke at a clubhouse function and I didn't recognise it; just that something was wrong and did get a resident doctor in the hall and made other people aware.

Unfortunately her husband listened to her and didn't get her to the hospital for a couple hours.

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify.

Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster.

The stroke victim may suffer brain damage when people nearby fail to recognise the symptoms of a stroke.

Now doctors say a bystander can recognise a stroke by asking these three simple questions:

***Ask the individual to smile.**

***Ask him or her to raise both arms.**

***Ask the person to speak a simple sentence.**

If he or she has trouble with any of these tasks, call 000 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

After discovering that a group of non-medical volunteers could identify facial weakness, arm weakness and speech problems, researchers urged the general public to learn the three questions.

They presented their conclusions at the American Stroke Association's annual meeting recently.

Widespread use of this test could result in prompt diagnosis and treatment of the stroke and prevent brain damage. □

"On the Square"

By an unknown poet

It matters not whate'er your lot
Or what your task may be
One duty there remains for you,
One duty stands for me.

Be you a doctor skilled and wise,
Or do your work for wage,
A labourer upon the street,
An artist on the stage;

One glory still awaits for you.
One honour that is fair,
To have men say as you pass by:
"That fellow's on the square."

Ah, here's a phrase that stands for much,
Tis good old English, too;
It means that men have confidence
In everything you do.

It means that what you have you've earned,
And that you've done your best
And when you go to sleep at night
Untroubled you may rest.

It means that conscience is your guide,
And honour is your care;
There is no greater praise than this:
"That fellow's on the square."

And when I die I would not wish
A lengthy epitaph;
I do not want a headstone large,
Carved with fulsome chaff.

Pick out no single deed of mine,
If such a deed there be,
To 'grave upon my monument,
For those who come to see.

Just this one phrase of all I choose,
To show my life was fair:
"Here sleepeth now a fellow who
Was always on the square."