

# Ashton News

NEWSLETTER OF ASHTON LODGE No 218 OF THE UNITED GRAND LODGE OF QUEENSLAND

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## Decision made on closure of Vulture Street Temple

**It was announced at the Annual General Meeting of the South Brisbane Hall Co-operative Society held on Thursday, 10th August 2003, that the Masonic Centre will close its doors on 31st December, 2003.**

A determination from the purchaser Mr David Graham to the South Brisbane Hall Co-operative on the future of 14 share-holding Lodges has been finalised.

Mr Graham has made his decision to commence converting the site into an exclusive apartment block early in 2004.

He also assured the Co-operative that he has no intention of selling on the site to another developer and fully intends to take up occupancy himself when completed.

The problem concerning the change of Constitution so that the Co-operative will manage the proceeds of the sale is still in "uncharted waters" and the amended proposal put forward by the Hall Committee is yet to be approved by the Office of Fair Trading.

The Hall Committee has also committed itself to seeking out the availability of alternative meeting places for the lodges who have nowhere to meet in the new year, and report back by the end of this month.

Master of the Lodge Jim Robertson, has offered to take up the last vacancy on the South Brisbane Hall Board, and it is in this position that he hopes to generate enough interest from the other Lodges who meet at Vulture Street to unite and have a

combined meeting and festive board to bid farewell to a building which has meant so much to many Masons over the last 77 years.

Whilst there is at present no answer as to where Ashton Lodge will meet, it is hoped that with the assistance of the new Co-operative Committee, new accommodation will be found

### *A Message from the Wor Master*

As another year in the calendar of Lodge Ashton draws to a close, I would like to share some reflections on the year past, and some thoughts for the coming 12 months.

All in all I think that is safe to say that we have had a good year, The Lodge has experienced an increase in membership through initiations and affiliations.

Lodge Ashton's tradition of visiting remains intact and, especially pleasing, was the support given at Official Visits.

Our work remains at a high standard and the keenness of Brethren to participate speaks for itself. Especially noticeable was the enthusiasm and dedication of the junior officers towards their duties in the Lodge; a sure sign that the future of the Lodge is in safe hands.

For the coming year, I would hope that the number of Official Visits can be increased, as there are a number of Lodges in a far less fortunate position than Ashton.

*(continued back page)*

# " The Dew of Hermon "

**By Wor Bro Harry Crane PGStdBr**

**The prayer given by the Chaplain at the opening of Ashton Lodge is rather unique and not heard in most Masonic Lodges within the United Grand Lodge of Queensland's jurisdiction.**

It is taken from Psalms 133:1 and mentioned in the bible as "a Song of degrees of David".

It was written for the people to recite and repeat as they moved towards the Temple in Jerusalem for worship.

As they left their lowly life behind, they focussed for a time on the God who had chosen them from all the nations in the world to celebrate a festival ordained by God

In the Old Testament, Hermon is hardly mentioned except as the northern boundary of Palestine.

Poetical allusions occur in the Psalms implying that the happiness of brotherly love is compared to the "dew of Hermon, which descendeth upon mount Zion".

In which connection it may be noted that in no other locality of Palestine is the dew so heavy and abundant as in the vicinity of this mountain group.

These mountains form the eastern prolongation of the Anti-Lebanon range, reaching to the height of about 2.8 kms (9,200 feet) above the Mediterranean.

It marks the north boundary of Palestine, and is seen from a great distance.

It is called "the Hermonites" because it has more than one summit.

The Sidonians called it Sirion, and the Amorites Shenir. It is also called Baal-Hermon and Zion.

From the plain along the coast, from the Jordan valley, from the heights of Moab and Gilead, from the plateau of Bashan, the pale, blue, snow-capped cone forms the one feature in the northern horizon.

Some scholars think it probable that Hermon is the "high mountain" near Caesarea Philippi which

was the scene of the Transfiguration where Jesus, after spending a night in solemn meditation and prayer in the lonely mountain, called to him his disciples, and from among them chose twelve, who were to be henceforth trained to be his apostles.

After this solemn consecration of the twelve, he descended from the mountain peak to a more level spot and there he sat down and delivered the "sermon on the mount" to the assembled multitude.

It was afterwards called the "Mount of Beatitudes."

Israel has possessed Mt Hermon's southern and western slopes since the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

They are used for winter skiing and as observation points for the Israeli military.

Aaron, the elder brother of Moses, and his sons were appointed by God to be the High Priest and ministers of God for the children of Israel.

God directed that an "oil of holy ointment" be made consisting of measured amounts of myrrh, sweet cinnamon, sweet calamus, cassia and olive oil.

This "holy anointing oil" was to be poured upon Aaron and his sons as a blessing or consecration prior to their entry as priests into the tabernacle, containing all the holy vessels and the Ark of the Covenant.

This reference therefore alludes to the sacredness of such unity.

Mount Zion or Mount Hermon was known to have copious amounts of humidity, even in the driest weather, which formed on the tents so profusely that it appeared as though it had rained the whole night.

This precious dew or water provided continuous life giving growth to the plants and animals of the otherwise arid region; hence the allusion to life forevermore. □

## *Psalms 133:1*

A Song of degrees of David.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

# Robert Burns' farewell to Masons

By Wor Bro Robert Morris who wrote this article in 1852, and downloaded from the website of St John's Lodge No 9 Seattle, Washington, USA.

**It was in the latter part of the gloomy 1786, that Robert Burns, the poet and the Mason, gathered up his thoughts, he had but little else to gather up, preparatory to leaving Scotland forever. Forever!**

Terrible word to the expatriated! Terrible to the poor exile who turns toward his country as the Jews turned themselves three times a day praying with their faces toward Jerusalem.

Terrible in the highest degree to such a man as Burns, who to the most exalted patriotism added the keenest appreciation of home joys and social pleasures.

Disappointment had set its mark upon Robert Burns.

The indulgence of passions that raged within him as the pent-up fires rage beneath the sealed crater of the volcano, had brought to him its legitimate consequences in the upbraidings of conscience, the forfeiture of friendship, and, worst of all, the loss of self-respect.

The restraints of Freemasonry had been neglected, while its social joys were most keenly relished; In other words, our tenets had been faithfully sustained, while our cardinal virtues were neglected.

The use of the Compasses had never blessed his hands. The fine genius, the unequalled gifts that enabled Robert Burns to conceive and execute "The Cotter's Saturday Night" could not confine him into the ordinary channels of prudence, and even then he was a doomed man.

Heavy debts had accumulated upon him, such as in that barren, unenterprising country there was but little chance of his ever being able to cancel. He had been summoned to find security for the maintenance of two children, whom he was forbidden to legitimate by a lawful marriage, and as he disdained to ask, or tried in vain to find pecuniary assistance in this his hour of need, there was no other alternative remaining for him but a Scottish jail or a flight from Scotland.

He had chosen the latter. After much trouble

the situation of assistant overseer on an estate in Jamaica had been secured for him by one of his few remaining friends. In his own bitter language,

"He saw misfortune's cauld nor'wast  
Lang mustering up a bitter blast;  
A jillet brak his heart at last  
Ill may she be!  
So, took a birth afore the mast  
An owre the sea."

He had said farewell to all the friends, they were not many, and to the scenes very many and very dear to their poet's heart. This he did while skulking from covert to covert under all the terrors of a Scottish jail.

His chest was on the road to Greenock. He had composed the last song he should ever measure in Caledonia. It is fraught with solemn thoughts and words, as the reader will see

"The gloomy night is gathering fast,  
Loud roars the wild inconstant blast,  
Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,  
I see it driving o'er the plain;  
The hunter now has left the moor,  
The scattered coveys meet secure,  
While here I wander, prest with care,  
Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

The autumn mourns her ripening corn,  
By early winter's ravage torn;  
Across her placid azure sky,  
She sees the scowling tempest fly:  
Chill runs my blood to hear it rave,  
I think upon the stormy wave,  
Where many a danger I must dare,  
Far from the bonny banks of Ayr.

Tis not the surging billows' roar, '  
Tis not that fatal deadly shore;  
Tho' death in every shape appear,  
The wretched have no more to fear:  
But round my heart the ties are bound,  
That heart transpierced with many a wound;  
These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,  
To leave the bonny banks of Ayr.

Farewell old Coila's hills and dales,  
Her heathy moors and winding vales,  
The scene where wretched fancy roves,  
Pursuing past, unhappy loves!  
Farewell my friends, farewell my foes,  
My peace with these, my love with those;  
The bursting tears my heart declare;  
Farewell the bonnie banks of Ayr."

And now, all other remembered subjects having been marked by the tears of the poet, the poet himself being on the road to the port of Greenock to the ship that should witness his last glance at his native land, his heart turned lovingly, involuntarily, towards Masonry.

For Robert Burns was a Freemason, prepared first in heart. In none of the vast folios where stands the vast catalogue of our brethren, ancient or modern, is there a character shaped more truly by Masonic skill than his.

Nowhere one, who in the expressive language of the Ancient Constitutions would "afford succor to the distressed, divide bread with the industrious poor, and put the misguided traveler into the way," more cheerfully than Burns.

He understood right well "that whoever from love of knowledge, interest, or curiosity desires to be a Mason, is to know that as his foundation and great owner stone, he is firmly to believe in the eternal God, and to pay that worship which is due to him as the great Architect and Governor of the Universe;" and Robert Burns governed himself accordingly.

There is many a record in the Lodge books of Scotland that gives prominence to his Masonic virtues; and in the higher Lodge, the Grand Lodge of heaven, we have reason to hope the Grand Secretary's books also bear his name.

None lament the weaknesses in his character more than his brethren, but be those defects in number and in extent what they may, his brethren protest in the name of their common humanity, against the inhuman judgments that have been pronounced against him.

If the royal dignity, the divine partiality, the unlimited wisdom of a Solomon, First Grand Master of Speculative Masonry, could not preserve that prince of peace from the errors of the passions, who shall dare too cruelly to judge the son of an Ayrshire cotter, nurtured in penury and debarred the most ordinary relaxations of his age. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Lovingly then turned the heart of Brother Burns towards Freemasonry.

The happy hours, the honest friends, the instructive lessons, the lofty desires! let the brother who reads this sketch endeavor to place himself in the condition of the poor exile, self-expatriated and almost friendless, and he will understand the keenness of his pangs! There came up a vision of his last Masonic night. The presence of the Grand Master and his noble Deputy; of a gallant array of gentlemen, the chiefest in all the land; and himself with them first among the equals of those who "meet upon the level" to "part upon the square" – there was the cue – it was enough – sitting down by the roadside, he pencilled upon the back of an old letter his Masonic farewell.

How many a remembrance of Grand Lodges and Subordinate Lodges and social meetings among Masons, is attached to these well-known lines:

"Adieu! a heart-warm fond adieu!  
Dear Brothers of the mystic tie!  
Ye favored, ye enlightened few,  
Companions of my social joy!  
Though I to foreign lands must hie  
Pursuing fortune's sliddry ba',  
With melting heart and brimful eye  
I'll mind you still though far awa'.

Oft have I met your social band  
And spent the cheerful festive night;  
Oft honored with supreme command  
Presided o'er the sons of light;  
And by that hieroglyphic bright,  
Which none but craftsmen ever saw!  
Strong memory on my heart shall write,  
These happy scenes though far awa'!

May freedom, harmony, and love  
Unite you in the grand design  
Beneath the Omniscient eye above,  
The glorious Architect divine!  
That you may keep the unerring line  
Still rising by the plummet's law  
Till order bright completely shine --  
Shall be my prayer when far awa'!

And you farewell! whose merits claim  
Justly that highest badge to wear!  
Heaven bless your honored, noble name,  
To Masonry and Scotia dear!  
A last request permit me here,  
When yearly ye assemble a',  
One round, I ask it with a tear,  
To him, the bard, that's far awa'!"

It pleased God at this crisis to turn the destination of Robert Burns and to spare to Scotland and the world, this affectionate heart. By a train of

circumstances, almost miraculous, certainly unprecedented, he was brought unexpectedly to the notice of the literary circles of Edinburgh. Fame and profit then flowed nightly unto him. His pen was put into constant requisition, his company everywhere sought after, and his talents met with their due appreciation.

The Masonic order added its judgment to that of an approving nation. The Most Worshipful Grand Master, with every member of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, visiting a Lodge in which Burns happened to be present, graciously gave as a toast, "Caledonia, and Caledonia's bard, Brother Burns!" – which rang through the whole assembly with multiplied honours and repeated acclamations. But he is gone.

On the 21st of July, 1796, Robert Burns died. More than ten thousand persons accompanied his remains to the grave. "It was an impressive and mournful sight," writes a spectator, "to see men of all ranks and persuasions, and opinions, mingling as 'brothers, and stepping side by side down the streets of Dumfries, with the remains of him who had sung of their loves and joys, and domestic endearments, with a truth and tenderness which none perhaps have since equalled."

He is gone, and here in a distant land, a humble admirer of his genius, addresses his memory in the following lines:

The sun is uprising on Scotia's far hills  
Day's labor is opening, the Grand Master wills,  
But Lodge-lights are gleaming in cheerfulness yet,  
Afar in the west where we Masons have met,  
There's song for the tuneful, kind words for the kind,  
There's cheer for the social, and light for the blind;  
But when we uprising, prepare us to go,  
With one heart and feeling, we'll sing thy Adieu.

A melting farewell, to the favored and bright –  
A sorrowful thought, for the sun set in night –  
A round to the bard whom misfortunes befell, –  
A prayer that thy spirit with Masons may dwell  
When freedom and harmony bless our design,  
We'll think of thee, Brother, who loved every line:  
And when gloomy clouds shall our Temple surround  
Thy brave heart shall cheer us where virtues were found.

Across the broad ocean two hands shall unite,  
Columbia, Scotia, the symbol is bright!  
The world one Grand lodge, and the heaven above,  
Shall witness the triumph of Faith, Hope and Love  
And thou sweetest Bard, when our gems we enshrine,  
Thou jewel the brightest, most precious, shalt shine,  
Shall gleam from the East, to the far distant West,  
While morning shall call us, or evening shall rest. □

## And now. . . a word from your editor

The job of editing a newsletter sometimes is tough business.

If you print jokes people say you're being silly. If you don't, readers say you're dull and "too serious".

If only original stories are used, they accuse you of lack of variety and "sameness". If articles are "lifted" out of other publications, they say that you are too lazy to write.

If copy is used as it comes to you, you lack education and editorial skill. If you try to "clean it up a little", you're spoiling a "good story".

If you think some stories are more important than others, you're too critical. If you don't, you're asleep.

If you brag about how good you think the newsletter is, people say you're being smug. If you don't "blow your own horn", people wonder why you are not proud of your product.

If you try something different, people wish you'd stick to the old and familiar. If you stick to the tried and true, they wish you'd try something new.

If you misspell one name, the person more than likely complains. If you spell 99,999 names right, no one complains.

If anybody thinks he knows how to do your job better, he tells you about it. If he doesn't, he tells you anyway.

And, like as not, someone will say "you stole this editorial from another publication".

**Your right — I did!**



Laying the Cornerstone c1790



# History of the Kelpie

By Olive Hargrave, Yarrawonga, Victoria

**I**n about 1869, John Rutherford, a highly respected pastoral pioneer and Yarrawonga identity, was sent a pair of top breeding dogs by his brother who lived at Dunrobin, Sutherlandshire, in Scotland.

The working ability of the Scottish dogs with sheep was excellent. But they were poorly equipped to handle the harsh conditions of the colony, So John Rutherford, who lived at Yarrawonga Station and was a fine judge of animals, set about improving the breed.

From the Scottish dogs, Rutherford bred Moss, a smooth-haired, prick-eared black dog with a splash of white on his neck. Moss is regarded as the grand-sire of the kelpie breed.

In 1869, another grazier, George Robertson of Warrock Station near Casterton in Victoria, imported another pair of breeding dogs from Scotland.

From his breeding programme, he produced a bitch which was later to be called Gleeson's Kelpie after Jack Gleeson of Murray Downs Station, Victoria, who acquired her in exchange for his horse.

Jack Gleeson named the bitch Kelpie after the mythical Scottish spirit that was supposed to frequent fiords and rivers on stormy nights, and make itself apparent to those about to drown. Usually appearing in the form of a horse, the spirit itself was sometimes regarded as harmful.

Messrs Elliot and Allen of Geralda Station imported yet another pair of dogs from Scotland in 1870.

Mr Elliot was a brother-in-law of George Robertson of Warrock Station.

The dogs were named Brutus and Jenny, and their matings produced Caesar, Laddie and Nero.

A mating of Caesar to Gleeson's Kelpie produced a bitch called King's Kelpie.

It is now generally considered that it was from these matings that the cross was established from which all good kelpies evolved.

Laddie was mated with King's Kelpie and produced Sally.

Moss was mated with Sally and a pup from the litter, jet black, prick-eared, smooth-coated dog like its father, was given to a station hand named Jack Davis.

He named his pup Barb after Barb, the hardy black racehorse of African descent that won the Melbourne Cup in 1866.

One of the pups from a mating of Moss and King's Kelpie was Clyde.

When Clyde was mated with one of Walter King's bitches named Gary, the litter produced

what many consider to be the best working dog of all time, a dog named Coil.

In the Sydney sheepdog trials of 1898, Coil was worked by Jack Quin and in the preliminary trial scored full points from a possible 100.

That evening, he was run over by a cab and suffered a broken leg.

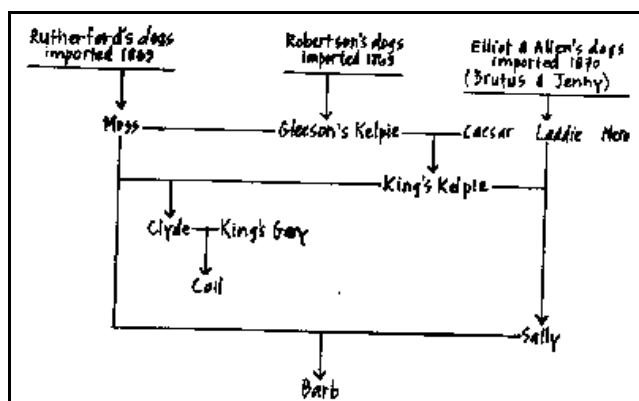
The next day, Coil went into the finals with a broken leg hanging loose and, again, was awarded a perfect score.

This feat has never been equaled

The world's first sheepdog trials are believed to have been held at Forbes, New South Wales, in about 1871 or 1872.

The winner was a bitch named Kelpie, daughter of another bitch imported from Scotland.

Yarrawonga has every reason to be proud of its heritage as the birthplace of the kelpie breed, through Moss, one of its most famous sons – the first link in the breeding link chain of Australian working kelpies and barbs. □



# Grand Lodge recognise 50 years membership

**At the August meeting, the Assistant Grand Superintendent of Workings V Wor Bro Barry Fry was present, on behalf of the United Grand Lodge of Queensland to present a 50 year Jewel to one of our esteemed members, Bro Ken Bishop.**

In pinning the jewel to Ken's lapel, V Wor Bro Fry made mention of the input over that period of time Ken had given to Ashton.

Although not taking a progressive office, Ken was Chaplain of the Lodge for some years and was very supportive of the incumbent Masters on visits to other Lodges.

It is only because of progressing age and all the restrictions that this brings with it which has made regular attendance to meetings a little uncertain.

In his reply to a toast made in the festive board, Ken recalled his introduction into Ashton Lodge in 1953 by two of the Lodge's most celebrated members Rt Wor Bro James Shirra snr, and Rt Wor Bro James Shirra jnr.(father and son).

## THE ISLAND OF KOS

**Picture this: the birthplace of Hippocrates, an island of tropical beauty, endless beaches and a two thousand years history.**

As the Rt Eminent District Grand Prior of Queensland and Papua New Guinea, (which in size, is considered to be the largest Priory in the world) Ashton member Len Norman is off to attend the Sixth International Synod of Great Pories to be held on the Island of Kos in the Agean Sea.

This gathering of prominent members of the Knights Templar, follows on from the International Synod held in Scotland three years ago.

After the conclusion of the Synod, Len will spend time investigating the origins of the Order in Cyprus and Greece, visiting some of the ancient sites populated by the Knights Templars, which has a history dating back to c 1191 AD.

Both brethren were foundation officers of the lodge.

Ken reminisced his meeting with James snr, who, as the saying goes, put him through the third degree before consenting to be his proposer.

He also made the point that he would possibly be the last direct link to any of the original founders of the Lodge.

All brethren present charged their glasses and drank to the continued good health of Bro Bishop and concluded by saluting him with a McDuff (Scottish Honours). □

## Passing over of Alec Kingston

The Lodge was saddened to hear of the death of Alec Kingston on July 31, at the Mater Private Hospital aged 92 years, and extend their sincere condolences to his wife Jean and sons Allan and Owen.

Alec was introduced into Ashton by his son Allan, our present Director of Ceremonies, in February 1978, after his retirement from the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade, at the age of 68 years.

Alec immediately became involved in the Lodge and occupied the chairs of Deacon before taking over the office of Tyler, a position he held for ten years.

Alec was also an accomplished cabinet maker, and during his years with the Lodge was able to keep some of the furnishings of the Lodge in pristine condition.

Although suffering from failing eyesight and hearing, Alec was adamant that he attend his Lodge and could be seen at most meetings seated next to the Secretary's table endeavouring to follow the evening's proceedings. He certainly enjoyed the fellowship afforded at the Festive Board!

On his 90th birthday, Alec was accorded life membership of the Lodge.

# A Masonic Funeral Service

Reported below is an extract from the Minutes of a Special Meeting held by Caboolture Lodge Queensland, in 1921 to honour a request from a member, Wor Bro Stenhouse to conduct part of his burial ceremony within the Lodge Room. Although the recording of the event is rather scant, it conveys to the reader the sense of commitment that the deceased must have had for his Lodge.

## The Lodge was opened in Due and Ancient Form by the Rt Wor Master Depute at 3.30 pm on the 5th of February 1921 in the First Degree and thence opened in the Second and Third Degrees.

The body of our dear departed brother had been placed in his coffin by loving brethren in Brisbane and railed to Caboolture that it might receive the last sad Rights of this Lodge – this having been his wish

The body had been met by numerous brethren and conveyed into the Lodge Room and the Ceremony proceeded with.

The Rt Wor Master Depute (Wor Bro G P W Wriede) addressed the Members as did also Wor Bro Thompson Immediate Past Master, and Brother Kipping, concerning the good qualities of

Wor Bro Stenhouse and the beautiful lessons to be learned.

The body was then removed to the cemetery and duly interred, Wor Bro Frost reading the ceremony at the grave side.

The Brethren present dropped their sprigs into the open grave in accordance with ancient custom and returned to Lodge, which was then resumed in the Third Degree, and closed in the Third, Second and First Degrees in Peace and Harmony.

-- Confirmed George P W Wriede, Rt Wor Master Depute. 9th February 1921. □

## A big welcome to two Affiliates

A big welcome is extended to our two new members who were affiliated into the Lodge at the August meeting.

**Bro Keith Redman** is well known in Masonic circles in Brisbane as an accomplished musician.

He offers his services to many lodges in the metropolitan area, and Ashton is more than pleased to have him as our very own resident organist.

Keith was initiated into the Craft in the early 50's and was active in Lodge activities until the 70's when he joined the Royal Australian Navy as a bandsman, playing the tuba.

After 17 years of service, Keith again became a civilian and took up his interest in Freemasonry, and is now an active member of five Craft Lodges.

**Bro Colin Batten** was a member of Newmarket Lodge in Melbourne Victoria, until it handed in its Charter.

After moving to Brisbane, he was an unattached Brother for some years until invited to attend an Ashton meeting and after a couple of visits Colin was so impressed with the workings and friendliness of the members, decided to seek admission.

### Message from Wor Master

I would also like Ashton to play a leading role in arranging a farewell meeting of all the Lodges meeting here, prior to vacating these premises

I would envisage a combined meeting of all the Lodges currently meeting here.

I would also like to have your thought on the possibility of visiting a Lodge in northern NSW to give a demonstration of a Scottish Workings.

As we will be leaving these premises, probably at the end of the year, I intend, with your approval, to appoint a panel, say three of four brethren to ensure that our move from here is as smooth as possible.

In conclusion, I would like to express my thanks for the honour of serving the Lodge as Master for the past twelve months. The support that you have given me and the dedication of the "well being" of our Lodge, has made my current term of office a most rewarding and fulfilling experience indeed, and I eagerly look forward to the coming year.

  
Tim Robertson