

FREEMASONRY TODAY



Some of the Officers of Benjamin Franklin Lodge

International News

New Grand Master of Ireland

George Dunlop has been installed as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Ireland. The installation and investiture was conducted in one of the most impressive Temples in the Grand Lodge premises in Dublin.

The Grand Master's Procession was announced, and the retiring Grand Master Eric Waller was processed to the Throne. Some thirteen foreign delegations were announced, headed by The Marquess of Northampton, Pro Grand Master of the United Grand lodge of England and Sir Archibald Orr Ewing, Grand Master Mason of Scotland. The delegations were saluted and Lord Northampton conveyed best wishes and thanks on their behalf.

Following the opening of Grand Lodge a procession was formed and George Dunlop was presented for installation. He was obligated by the Grand Master, conducted to the dais, and the Grand Master invested and installed him in the Throne.

The new Grand Master, in his address, said that the standards of morality for which the Order stands were still of prime importance in this changing world. He paid tribute to the outstanding work of his predecessor Eric Waller, and reaffirmed his intention of continuing in the progressive path mapped out by him.

At the banquet afterwards Eric Waller proposed a toast to the new Grand Master. In his reply George Dunlop said that during the past twenty-five years, Irish Freemasonry had been fortunate to have had Michael Walker as Past Grand Secretary. He and Eric Waller were masons of supreme stature who continued to be greatly cherished and admired at home and abroad.

National Association of Masonic Scouters Formed in California

There have long been connections between Scouting and Freemasonry, and the two organisations have often overlapped in England. Now the idea seems to be catching on the other side of the Atlantic. David Karp from California and his friend Wayne Sirmon, a brother Freemason from Alabama, attended a National Scout Jamboree in Virginia and took part in a Special Communication hosted by the Fredicksburg Lodge, No. 4, which was George Washington's lodge.

During the Jamboree, Scouters who were Freemasons met in a first-degree lodge, and some

of them discussed the possibility of a masonic Scouters association. David Karp was already a member of the National Jewish Committee on Scouting, and so he knew about such relationship associations.

Many other friendly and fraternal societies had booths at the Jamboree, but not the Freemasons. The two Brethren decided that, if such an association were to be formed, they would be able to exhibit at future Jamborees.

David Karp, a member of Home Lodge, No. 721, in Van Nuys, California, is the Lodge's representative for New Cub Scout Pack No. 357 of Granada Hills, California and works to link Jewish and Scouting bodies.

Masonic Scholarships in Massachusetts

For students in Massachusetts, pursuing a chosen course of study leading to a sound qualification is proving an ever more expensive task.

For most students, receiving financial assistance means the difference between personal disillusionment or gaining a college education. The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts has grasped the opportunity to help students by instigating a Grand Lodge Scholarship programme, which has grown since it was started in 1995 with five scholarships of \$5,000 each. Last year, eighty students received scholarships of \$5,000, and sixteen students received awards of £1,000.

Grand Master Jeffrey B. Hodgson told the students at the Awards Scholarship Dinner held at Grand Lodge, how George Washington and other founding fathers of the nation had become Freemasons long before their rise to greatness.

Robert Hartley, Scholarship Committee Chairman, told them, 'We need you now, so you too can join our pursuit of educating young people of America like yourselves.' The first degree ritual, he told them, speaks 'of that state of perfection at which we hope to arrive by a virtuous education, our own endeavours, and the blessing of God'. The Grand Lodge Vision Statement provides in part, he said, that Freemasonry will 'contribute to the improvement of the individual member, his family life, his community, and his world.'

Acknowledgment to the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts and The Trowel

Israel: Third Annual Masonic Holy Land Tour

At the beginning of this year the newlyelected Grand Master of Israel, Itzhak Zeno, took office. The Grand Master has great plans for the future of Israeli Freemasonry, and has appointed Chaim Gehl, the immediate Past Grand Master as his Advisor to the Grand Master.

A delegation from England is due to meet the new Grand Master in November at the Grand Lodge in Tel Aviv. The group of British Freemasons, their wives and friends will be on the third annual Masonic Pilgrimage to Israel led by Yasha Beresiner. The 9-day tour will leave England mid November. They will meet the Grand Master on their arrival to the Holy land and will visit the Grand Lodge Museum and attend four masonic meetings, to be held in Acco at a lodge working in Arabic, Haifa at a lodge working in Spanish, Tiberias at a lodge working in Hebrew and Jerusalem at an English-speaking Lodge.

They will also visit Caesarea, the old Herodian port with the Crusader city wall and the amazing Bahá'í World Centre. Plans include a look at the Knights Templar Hall, recently excavated to show the intact walls of the chambers used by the members of the Order many centuries ago.

Details of the tour can be found on www.intercol.co.uk/tours.

Breaking Ground in Wisconsin

Last year the Grand Master of Wisconsin, Rodney A. Paulsen, approved the creation of a new Madison-area lodge. Surprisingly, rather than working in Wisconsin's tradition, the new lodge is to work the Emulation ritual.

Benjamin Franklin Lodge, No. 83, represents an experiment in Wisconsin Freemasonry. It cultivates a small, traditional lodge experience where fellowship, and not financial concerns, governs its work. Its predecessor, Concordia Lodge, was chartered in Madison in 1857 and was a German speaking lodge that used a French ritual.

This earlier lodge surrendered its charter in 1882 and last year a group of Madison area masons began meeting as the Leather Apron Club, significantly named after a secret society of which Franklin had been a member. The focus of their meetings was masonic education. Later that same year, the members decided to resurrect the charter of Concordia Lodge, which was renamed Benjamin Franklin in honour of the Leather Apron Club's symbolic patron.

Benjamin Franklin Lodge sees its future in terms of Freemasonry's past. Membership is limited to ensure that Brethren become acquainted with each other. Masonic tradition and respect for the fraternity is strictly observed. Stated meetings are formal and attendance is mandatory. The Lodge meets in a private club, much as the earliest masonic lodges met in taverns or coffee houses. Its few working tools are contained in a simple box altar for easy transport and storage.

As with the Leather Apron Club, meetings focus on masonic education, discussion, and fellowship.

Cambodian Experience Humbling

Andrew McLeod, Past Master of the Sir Walter Scott Lodge meeting in Thames, New Zealand, has just returned with his wife Jenny from a 2-year Volunteer Service Abroad assignment in Cambodia.

The country's educational foundation was shattered under the Pol Pot regime, and has been slow to recover. Andrew is a former high school teacher, and was engaged in Cambodia working as Education Administration Advisor looking at staff training and other aspects.

He says that the government has now made education a top priority and several initiatives are under way to improve resources, teacher training and information technology.

'In our time there,' he said, 'we saw improvements in the town, like upgrading the local market and new roads and footpaths. But there is still a lot to be done to improve the lot of the rural Cambodians, most of whom do not have electricity or clean water.'

He and his wife have bought a house for a family in need and he later returned to help them install a toilet. 'We couldn't leave the money with them; they are so poor, and the money might be spent on something else. I'm not looking at myself as a hero but someone who is trying to help. We're so lucky to live here in New Zealand.'