

The Square and Compasses.

A newsletter for the Grand Lodge of South Africa. No. 106 November 2020



Right Worshipful Brother John Smith OSM MSA.

Lest We Forget

Although the outbreak of World War I was triggered by the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in 1914, historians agree that a complex interplay of political, economic and social factors that had developed since the 1870s were the main cause of the war. Initially there was widespread expectation of a rapid and comprehensive victory and few people knew what a war on a general scale might entail. As it became apparent that the war would last longer than it was originally anticipated, the Governments of all the belligerent countries increased their controls over their resources and populations, which led to shortages of basic commodities and the rationing of food. As more and more men were conscripted as soldiers, women had to take on the roles of farmers, miners, clerical and industrial workers.

Albert Joubaire, a French soldier, wrote in his diary after one battle: *What a bloodbath, what horrid images, what a slaughter. Hell cannot be this dreadful.* Many Freemasons were conscripted as soldiers in the war and the *Masonic Times* of Wisconsin reported that during July 1918 a meeting of the Grand Masters of the Grand Lodges of Germany, Austria, Hungary, Turkey, Bulgaria and Finland was held in Berlin to propose a peace initiative to the members of the Grand Lodges in the countries which were fighting against them. If this meeting did take place, then it is doubtful whether it had any effect on the war as none of the leaders of the main countries involved therein were Freemasons.

It is estimated that approximately 8.5 million soldiers and 7 million civilians died during the course of World War I. On 11 November 1918 the war finally came to an end. Malnutrition had however left both children and adults vulnerable to infectious diseases like tuberculosis, influenza and pneumonia and the war was hardly over when the World was confronted by a virulent strain of influenza called the “Spanish Flu”. By the end of 1919 approximately 21 million people had died from this disease.

Notwithstanding the devastation of the countryside by the war, wild poppies grew on the battlefields of northern France and Flanders and a Canadian military doctor, John McCrae, wrote the now well-known poem: *In Flanders Fields*. The first national day of remembrance, initially called Armistice Day, was held on 11 November 1919 to commemorate all the persons who had lost their lives in World War I. The renowned humanitarian, Moina Michael, was so inspired by McCrae’s poem that she decided to wear a red poppy in honour of the soldiers who had died in the war. This then became a tradition and it was Rudyard Kipling, the renowned poet and a Freemason, who coined the phrase *Lest we forget*, which means “For fear that we forget”.

South Africans were also affected by World War I. In 1917 more than 600 black South African soldiers died when the troopship, the SS Mendi, sank. More than 11 000 other South African soldiers also died in this war. South African soldiers, many who were Freemasons, also paid the ultimate price in World War II and in numerous armed conflicts thereafter, in Africa and in overseas countries. We still commemorate the memory of these men and women on Remembrance Day in November at the Cenotaphs in towns and cities.

We also commemorate the memory of all the South African uniformed members who have given their lives since 2003 in the service of peace under the auspices of the United Nations, the African Union and other bilateral deployments on the African continent. We do this on the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers in May at the Wall of Remembrance, which was recently constructed at the De Brug Mobilisation Centre near Bloemfontein and on which the following words are inscribed: *For their deeds they will always be remembered for they served the nation with pride and dignity.*

The red poppy is worn as a symbol in remembrance of those who gave their lives in the struggle to secure and protect our freedom and in the hope for a peaceful future. Let us never forget them.

**RW Bro John Smith OSM MSA
Acting Grand Master**

S & C CELEBRATES 100 ISSUES

Excerpts from Issue 71

S&C's 8 year Journey - Continued!



2017 saw the United Grand Lodge of England celebrating their 300 years anniversary. In this picture our Grand Master, MW Bro Dave Duncan OSM, is being introduced to the Duke of Kent.

In another historical first, the Sovereign Grand Commander of the AASR, MP Bro Boet du Plessis, awarded the Grand Master, MW Bro Dave Duncan OSM, an Honorary 33rd degree. This took place in November 2017 and really highlighted the very progressive steps being taken by MP Bro du Plessis in his efforts to promote the AASR.



A Freemason's role in Home Away from Home

Bro Darren Bergman's home is in Pretoria but, being a Politician, he spends a large portion of his time in Cape Town and, as a result, belongs to de Goede Hoop. He is the Shadow Minister of International Relations and Cooperation. As such, in the early phases of the Covid 19 lockdown, he was fielding calls from desperate parents wanting to know what could be done and who they could phone to try to bring their children home as they were stuck at various foreign locations.



The easiest, and maybe the wisest, decision would have been for him to refer them to the DIRCO emergency consular line and email address and to type out a few press releases attacking government for the mass confusion. He decided, however, that he would rather try to contribute positively to addressing the Covid 19 crisis by assisting his country and our people.

As airports closed and airlines stopped functioning, the challenge got more and more difficult. People were getting stuck abroad and, unless they had a supportive family, they often had no money or resources to assist them in any way. The President then announced a hard lock down. This closed airports but still allowed for the return of citizens across the globe. Minister Mbalula then announced that all ports and borders would be completely closed by 28th March 2020. This meant that all South Africans abroad that had not returned before

then, would be locked out of South Africa until the lockdown allowed entry points to be reopened again.

Darren and his small team created a database of those needing help and via whatsapp interacted with them and with a variety of international resources. They enlisted support from local psychologists, interacted and worked with foreign Freemasons, negotiated with foreign governments and implemented various diverse strategies to provide meaningful support. The situation was a nightmare with young children sleeping on the stone floors at closed airports abroad, teachers who had taken lucrative contracts in Asia being told on arrival that the contract was cancelled and many other equally horrendous stories. In many cases, desperation was quickly setting in and counselling was in great demand.

Their non political project was called Home Away from Home and it spanned the globe with volunteers from Switzerland, United States, Canada, Mexico, France, United Kingdom, Kuwait, Malaysia, China and South Africa. They had a huge positive impact on addressing the problem and we really are proud to acknowledge that Darren Bergman is our Brother.

Royal Arch AGM a great Success

The Grand Chapter of the Royal Arch AGM had the same type of challenges as so many of our meetings at present. It would have to be conducted via Zoom and, just in case that wasn't challenging enough, the First Grand Principal, MEC Johan Britz, was in the process of recovering from a back operation.

Nonetheless the meeting went ahead and was a great success. There were visitors from a variety of foreign Grand Chapters, MEC Britz gave an excellent and well received report as well as announcing that MEC Avron Jacobson MSA had been appointed as the Deputy First Grand Principle and the overall spirit bodes very well for the year that lies ahead.



*MEC Peter Gurr
Victoria, Australia*



*MEC Johan Britz
South Africa*



*MEC Colin Mander
Queensland, Australia*



*EC Pambo Louis Gabriel
Gabon*

Wor Bro Neil MacKechnie's 50 Year Award

Wor Bro Neil MacKechnie (Hiram) was due to receive his 50 year jewel in March of this year. As he is wheelchair bound and now lives in Robertson, 2 hours away from Cape Town, a trip was planned to his home to make the award – and then came Covid-19.

Anyway, having decided that we were now in a position to make the visit, on Sunday 22nd November, Grand Master Elect, RW Bro John Smith OSM MSA and Past Grand Master MW Bro Geoff Edwards OSM, were joined by the Master and Brethren from Hiram, organised by RW Bro Ron Smith, and we all visited Robertson for the ceremony. As always, many memories were shared and a really special time was had by all blessed to be present.



Bushy's record attempt is "back on track"

We updated you on Wor Bro Bushy MacKelvie's plans to set a new world record for the greatest distance covered on a motorbike in 24 hours. Bushy's previous record was broken by an American rider some 3 years ago and Bushy wants it back. He made an attempt a few weeks ago but various factors worked against him and he and his team had to call that attempt off.

Anyway, all the red tape has now been sorted out and Bushy's next attempt will take place in Wartburg (KZN) starting at 6 pm on Saturday 19th December.

Best of luck Bushy – we are rooting for you!

Covid Feeding Scheme continues

In our September 2020 Newsletter we introduced you to the immediate Past Grand Master's initiative in which we planned to feed 1 000 children for 100 days. MW Bro Dave Duncan OSM has also played a leading role, together with the Provincial Grand Masters, in ensuring that the project is effectively implemented.

We have recently distributed a 2nd batch of food around the various Divisions and thought it would be a good idea to share some feedback with you. These are just three examples of the progress being made.

Senzokuhle Orphanage in La Mercy, KwaZulu Natal is being run by Elda Ndlovu. She is 80-years old now and started her home some 26 years ago in 1994 and by 1999 there were 67 street children living with her. She is reliant on donations to feed and clothe the 20 odd children now in her care, ranging from 2 to 18 years old. In September Wor Bro Jeremy



Rundle delivered a batch of clothing and fortified porridge and in November Wor Bro Henry Selzer delivered another batch as the first lot had now run out.

In Northern Division, on Friday 13th November we delivered 150kg of porridge to the Louis Botha Children's home in Pretoria. It was established in 1918 to provide housing and care to children orphaned by the "Great Flu Epidemic" and nowadays houses over 100 children, many of whom have been placed there by the courts as a result of being traumatized by abusive behaviour or neglect.

Arising from a similar challenge due to Covid, the Grand Lodge of South Africa decided to initiate a program aimed at feeding 1,000 children for 100 days. Our Lodges were tasked with identifying orphanages and other informal homes where children are cared for and where there are insufficient resources to adequately ensure their proper nourishment and Louis Botha Children's Home was among the beneficiaries.

Freemasonry has worked for hundreds of years to solve and ease problems in their local communities with the aim of making the world a better place for all mankind. Today in South Africa we have many problems, but none can be more heart wrenching than seeing starving children. The knock-on effects and related health issues become a major problem in society over time and we are privileged to be able to assist in tackling it.

In Southern Division RW Bro Tommy Hardiman and his team included the Steinthal Kinderhuis as one of the homes to be supported. The Home is just outside of Tulbagh and caters for some 150 children ranging from 2 – 18 years. It started as a Mission many years ago and the Masons have been involved for a number of years now. Tommy and Wor Bro Jacques Maritz visited them to deliver over half a ton of porridge mix and were extremely enthusiastically received.



Installation of new Grand Master

In a first ever for South African Freemasonry, we will watch the installation of the Grand Master, MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA, in a streamed Zoom video. At the end of the event the Grand Master will interact with just a few of our international Masonic friends. The date and time will be Saturday 12th December at 4 pm and the link is below:



[Grand Master's Installation Ceremony](#)

Almoner's Corner

We were deeply saddened at the recent passing of Wor Bro Jacobus Kosie Snyman (Johan van Riebeeck). He had been a GLSA member for some 35 years and was a GLSA Past Grand Steward and a Royal Arch Grand Master of Ceremony. He was a genuinely caring brother who will be sorely missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife and family during their grief.



Covid really is starting to impact on the members of our Grand Lodge. MW Bro Dave Duncan OSM (Friendship) was hospitalised for 5 days and is now recovering at home, RW Bro Alan van der Vyver had a milder dose, Wor Bro Schalk Erasmus (de Morgenster) and Wor Bro Braam van Zyl (Johan van Riebeeck) are both currently in hospital. This virus is serious, Brethren, please minimise the risks.

RW Bro Johan Brits (Libertas) who is also our Royal Arch First Grand Principal had a recent operation on his back. After fighting off some infection, he now appears to be making a steady recovery.

Bro Nikitas Rigos (Prins Frederik) had his gall bladder removed and is well on the road to recovery.

Wor Bro Greg Spires' (Golden City) has had his wife, Sophia, challenged by various health issues has had further health issues, including a serious spider bite. She is receiving the appropriate medical attention.

Wor Bro Steynberg de Kock (Libertas) underwent an angiogram and reports are that he is doing okay.

A number of our Brethren have lost loved ones really close to them. Our thoughts and prayers are with VW Bro Rex Ingle who lost his sister, as well as Bro Leonard Hersch (de Goede Hoop) who lost his brother. Please know that you and any other of our members who have lost family members are in our prayers.

Wor Bro Thor Pedersen (de Goede Trouw) has been receiving chemotherapy for a growth on his eyelid but is still pretty active with it. Go carefully Thor, these challenges aren't to be toyed with.

RW Bro Tommy Hardiman (Westerford) had his baby daughter in hospital for a few days but she's looking as though she's made a full recovery.

May all our Brethren and their families who are being challenged at present find the strength to fight back to normality and please know that we are thinking of you and that you are in our prayers.

I must pay tribute to Wor Bro Andre Germishuys (de Goede Hoop) who is also the Grand Almoner. Andre has had his fair of health challenges over the past few months, but it never stops him from filling his role with total commitment. You really are an inspiration, Andre!

If anything is known about a Brother in distress, please share it with your Divisional Almoner.

Southern Wor Bro Cobis Wilson	083 2844684
Northern Wor Bro Reuven Coenen	071 6120577
Central Wor Bro Johnny Cambanis	083 9865397
Eastern Wor Bro Johan v d Merwe	083 3010219
E Cape Wor Bro Ian Hetherington	082 9545297

Practical Masonic Behaviour!

This is one of my favourite examples of true Masonic behaviour. Every Sunday, for a significant number of months now, Bro Gary Hendricks (Simon van der Stel) has been making a large pot of nutritious food and providing a free Sunday lunch to some of the harder hit members of his local community. As time has evolved he has been assisted by members of his family and friends and has received a few small financial contributions and some food donations from his Brethren. Due to the impact of Covid, Gary is out of work right now but tells me that there are people with far bigger problems than he has and that he just wants to help them.



From a practical point of view, Gary always welcomes such items as large bags of rice or some fresh vegetables or even cash contributions with which they can purchase suitable meat products. If you can assist, please call him at **079 186 4749**.

I love the picture below. It was Gary's grandson's birthday and he persuaded Granny and Gran'pa to include cupcakes for all of his friends.



Southern Division's Olympic Success

Over the past few years the Masonic Olympics have become a standard feature in the Cape Masonic calendar. It is an Inter-Constitutional contest covering a range of different events. Having come 1st in both the darts and the pool events, the GLSA Southern Division team is "feeling strong".

