



The Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of Scotland

William Ramsay McGhee, OStJ, D.L., Grand Master Mason

Brethren,

18th December 2020

I mentioned briefly last week that the results of the international survey in which more than 7500 of our Brethren participated have been finalised. The results are with the strategy group, but Grand Secretary will arrange to get the results sent to all Districts and Provinces, hopefully today. I am keen that you look at how you can use the information locally but equally keen that you give feedback to the strategy group. It is important that the strategy group take on board the views and recommendations from the Districts and Provinces in order that they can present as holistic a report to the Administration Committee as possible. In addition, as a direct result of the findings, I am looking to set up a “young masons forum” in the new year. Fuller details of the timescales and how the feedback can be achieved from the Provinces and Districts will be included in the covering letter from Grand Secretary. I look forward to receiving your responses and to learn how you intend to use the information locally. I extend grateful thanks to Brother Kenneth Miller who has worked extremely hard both organising the Survey and analysing the results. A job well done.

SCFS

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Scottish.Constitution.Freemasonry.Supports/>

Excellent week on SCFS, lots of posts, new members, and another milestone reached.

The group once again witnessed another increase in its membership, which has now risen to 4169... Brethren from all 4 Quarters of the Globe.

An additional 41 posts were shared on the group, bringing the total number to 567, these having been submitted by 231 group members on behalf of 286 Lodges working under the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

Last week the total identifiable monetary value of contributions was £632 short of £400,000 and the group Admin Team was very much looking forward to reporting this week that the £400k barrier had been broken. However, those expectations were surpassed by a country mile.

Bro. Kevin Taggart, PM, one of the team who administer the group, received on behalf of his Mother Lodge, Lodge Buchan St. John, No. 636 a quantity of long-life foodstuffs from a benefactor who wishes to remain anonymous. The value of the produce received was in excess of £100,000. This has now been shared with Lodges and Provinces throughout the country with which Lodge Buchan St John has an association. These foodstuffs are now in the process of being distributed to various groups and organisations which provide invaluable help and support to those most in need within those communities. As a result, the total identifiable monetary value of contributions has risen to £506,928.



SCFS Overseas Report

Membership is steadily climbing and is now standing at **1244** Members. New members were welcomed from Lodges in Belgium, Middle East, Newfoundland and Labrador, Panama, Sierra Leone and The Gambia, Western Australia

- *International Constitution Members* joined from the National Grand Lodge of France, Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the Philippines and the Grand Lodge of Ireland. We now have **99** members from other constitutions and look forward to welcoming our 100th ICM this coming week.
- Extremely interesting posts were received from Lodge San Andreas, No. 1835, (Bahamas), Lodge St. Andrew, No. 1140, (Republic of Panama) and Lodge Ailsa, No. 1172, (Singapore, Middle East), which shared the wonderful support being provided by them to their local communities.
- “The Clansman” District Publication, featuring a wonderful compilation of support given by all Lodges within the District of the Middle East since the COVID-19 pandemic started, was received from Brother Teo Beng Hock, District Grand Secretary... a “must read”.

As we approach the end of what has been a difficult year, we have a very special addition to our Grand Lodge shop. A painting of Grand Lodge was created by local staff nurse, Julie Fitzsimmons, who painted iconic Edinburgh buildings to de-stress in between shifts at the Royal Infirmary ICU in Edinburgh. We are delighted that she chose Grand Lodge as one of her subjects. We have decided to issue Limited Edition prints for sale in our shop as a fitting tribute to the Year 2020. We only have 250 of these prints - just to keep it a bit special - so if you're interested in this special Limited Edition, please place your orders as soon as possible. The cost will be a very modest £20 per un-framed print. I've ordered mine.

Last Saturday night proved to be another first. Sitting in front of the computer screen in full regalia, I attended, along with another fourteen Grand Masters, the Installation of Brother John Smith as the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of South Africa. There was only about twenty or so in the Temple – everyone else was connected by Zoom. The Ceremony was conducted differently from normal but nevertheless with much dignity. There was organ music throughout but no singing. The new Grand Master took his Obligation on a Bible he carried into the Lodge with him as did those who were obligated thereafter. The Installing Master didn't invest the new Grand Master, he invested himself with the regalia of his Office all other Office-bearers wore full Regalia from the outset so that there was no contact with each other whatsoever. When the Grand Master was presenting what we would refer to as the Commissions, they were framed but before lifting and presenting the Commission, his hands and the hands of the recipient were sprayed by the equivalent of one of our Grand Stewards – this was done in an obvious but unobtrusive way and in no way detracted from the dignity of the ceremony. It certainly demonstrated what we will need to look at doing whenever we are allowed by Government restrictions to open the Lodges once again.

I think it is fair to say that whenever we are able to start catching up with the list of Lodge Rededications, they will, certainly at first, be carried out with restricted numbers and possibly no Dinners or Harmonies but that does not matter too much. The important thing will be to Rededicate the Lodge – the celebratory dinner can happen at a later date. There will be three teams from Grand Lodge out and about every Saturday (and on other evenings) in an endeavour to meet every commitment we have as soon as we can.

Finally, what splendid news this week from Dougie Fergie – Brethren throughout the world are certainly keeping that great tenet of Freemasonry – Charity – to the fore. In monetary terms alone Scottish Freemasons have been contributing over £15,500 per week into the communities where they operate plus the Brotherly Love shown in so many other ways is incalculable. Keep up the good work – stay safe.



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Grand Master Mason



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