

DECEMBER 2025



# The Plumblīne

NEWSLETTER OF  
THE PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF MUNSTER



Fifteenth Lodge of Ireland, Townsend Street, Skibbereen.

# Provincial Grand Lodge of Munster

Freemason's Hall, 27 Tuckey Street, Cork.



2025 has been an extraordinary year celebrating, as we have, the Tercentenary of Irish Freemasonry. And for a few days at the end of June brethren from throughout the Irish Constitution, both home and overseas, were joined by delegations from 44 foreign Constitutions for a wonderful festival of celebration to mark our 300th Anniversary. It was truly spectacular and tremendous credit must go to the organizing committee in Molesworth Street for the huge effort that went into making it the event of which every Irish Mason could be justifiably proud.

In anticipation of our very own 300th Anniversary here in Munster in 2026, and anxious to promote the Lady Freemason Fundraising Appeal, I had the pleasure and privilege to visit 3 overseas Provinces this year. In March R.W. Bro. Malcolm Tyrrell and myself, along with our ladies, were guests of **R.W. Bro. Fred Leung**, PGM of The Far East, for the annual St. Patrick's Day Ball in Hong Kong. In July, at the invitation of **R.W. Bro. Vijayakrishnan Nambiar**, PGM South East Asia, I travelled to Singapore to witness Provincial Grand Lodge there launch *their* celebrations of 300 years of Irish Freemasonry and in August R.W. Bro. Tyrrell and myself flew to Cape Town to visit **R.W. Bro. Tony Alsemgeest**, PGM Southern Cape and his Province there. In all 3 Provinces it was wonderful to see brethren upholding the very best traditions of Irish Freemasonry with exemplary ritual (somewhat different to Munster Tradition it must be said!) and fantastic hospitality. I would commend a visit to any, or all, of these Provinces to experience Masonry that is at once very different but



Pictured at the launch of Heritage Day in the Cork Opera House were R.W. Bro. Derek Dunne, V.W. Bro. Kevin Ryan and V.W. Bro. Vincent O'Donovan.

still the same.

*'Somebody ought to do it, but why should I?  
Somebody ought to do it, but why not I?  
Between these two sentences lie whole centuries of moral evolution.*

These words of Annie Besant the English socialist who managed to juggle being a Freemason, a women's rights and Home Rule activist and the first female president of the Indian National Congress come to mind again as we continue with the planned development works to our Provincial Headquarters in Tuckey St. Real progress has been made over the summer months but frustratingly, and not altogether surprisingly, there have been a few road bumps along the way which have created a slow down to developments.

The joys, I'm afraid, of trying to dovetail a 21st Century newbuild with our existing 18th Century premises, a premises whose compliance with modern day fire prevention and electrical regulations was found wanting. I extend my thanks and that of the Province to **R.W. Bro. Stuart Brownlow** and members of the House Committee for the work they do on our behalf and for keeping us abreast of developments with the weekly updates.

The appeal for donations to cover the cost of the project is still open, in the words of Annie Besant 'Somebody ought to do it.....' and all contributions/loans, both great and small, will be gratefully received.

On that note I want to congratulate Neptune Lodge 190, and in particular, **W. Bro. Walter Mahony**, for organizing a most wonderful day on Saturday 13th.

September. Following a very impressive Entered Apprentice Degree given to Bro. Demenkov in Kinsale in the afternoon we were joined by ladies and guests for the Gala Ball and Auction in the Carrigaline Court

Hotel that evening. Over €6,000 was raised for the Tuckey Street Development Fund with a further €900 raised through the sale of 'Red Ted', **W. Bro. Liam Cunningham's** skydiving teddy, for the charity Teddies for Loving Care – a truly wonderful social occasion.

During 2025 Munster lost a number of stalwart Masons in the persons of **W. Bro. Michael Birrane**, W.M. Shamrock Lodge 27, **V.W. Bro. Ronnie Shellard**, P.M. St. Fin Barre's Lodge No. 8 and Hon. P.P.J.G. Warden, **V.W. Bro. Mike Saville**, P.M. Third Lodge of Ireland and P.P.S.G. Warden, **R.W. Bro. Ben McDowell**, P.M. St. FinBarre's Lodge No. 8, and Past Representative at Grand Lodge of The Grand Lodge

of Alpina, Switzerland, **W.Bro. John Hosford**, P.M. Fifteenth Lodge of Ireland and **V.W. Bro. John Wolfe**, P.M. Fifteenth Lodge of Ireland and Hon. P.P.J.G. Warden. The combined service to Lodge and Province given by these fine Brethren spans centuries and our gratitude cannot hope to be captured in this short paragraph but we remember with thankfulness the times spent in Lodge and at festive board in their company and we extend to their wives, partners, families and Lodge Brethren our deep and heartfelt condolences.

I do hope you enjoy reading the various articles contained within this edition of The Plumline and I wish to thank our indomitable Editor who, by the time these notes go to print, will have been invested as Representative at Grand Lodge of the Grand Lodge of Texas (Prince Hall) – The Rhinestone Mason, yee-haw!

I would also like to thank each and every one of our Provincial Grand Lodge Officers for their unstinting support and dedication throughout the year. Their work, often undetected by radar, is phenomenal - it ensures the smooth running of our Province and is worthy of our deepest gratitude.

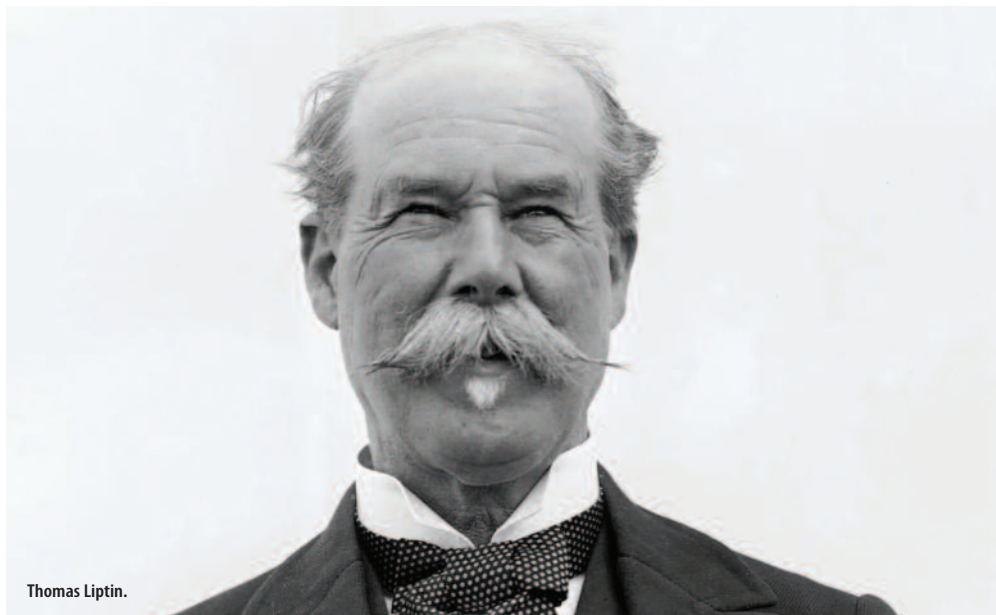
In conclusion I want to wish you and yours a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful Festive Season.

Yours sincerely and fraternally,



**Derek Dunne**  
PGM

# Sir Thomas Lipton, Grocer, Tea Merchant & Freemason



Thomas Lipton.

R.W.Bro. Alan Campbell writes:

The great famine (**An Gorta Mor**) was a terrible period of starvation & disease which struck Ireland during the years **1845 to 1852**. We, in this part of the world may think it was at its worst in **West Cork** & indeed that area suffered terribly. However, it also affected the **Province of Ulster**, in particular the Counties of **Cavan, Fermanagh & Monaghan**. The population of the province dropped by 15.7% during those years, amounting to 340,000 people. At that time, a farmer of a small holding in **Roslea, Co.Fermanagh**, Thomas Lipton found he could no longer sustain himself, his wife Frances and 3 small children on the farm which his family had worked for generations. They gathered their belongings and set off for Glasgow, settling in an area known as the **Gorbals**. This place which is

on the south bank of the river **Clyde**, in the late 19th century became densely populated by Scots from rural areas as well as migrants such as the Liptons, attracted by the employment opportunities afforded by Glasgow. My own grandfather who was raised in Glasgow used to say it was a place of huge tenements and many tough characters lived there. At the time in question, it became home to many immigrants from **Ulster, Italy** and also large numbers of **Jewish people** from the **Russian Empire** where they were often the subject of lethal pogroms.

This was the year **1847** and Thomas found work as a labourer, then a printer and finally in the early 1860's he and his wife opened a shop at **11, Crown Street** in the **Gorbals** where they sold groceries such as bread, butter, eggs and pork.

In 1848 the couple had a new addition to



the family, **Thomas**, called after his father and known to all as Tommy. Very sadly his three older siblings died in childhood, and he was the only one to reach adulthood. Horrifying to us in 2025 but very unfortunately, common for many families in the 19th century.

Now let us trace the life of Tommy from his humble beginnings to his gaining of great wealth and his extreme kindness to others. Tommy Lipton attended **St. Andrew's Parish School** from 1853 when he was 5 years old until 1861 when 13. He then left full time education & found employment as a printer's errand boy and later as a shirt cutter. He tried to improve his education by attending night classes at the Gorbals Youth School as well. His wages would, no doubt, have helped his parents in those poor times.

In 1864 Tommy signed up as a cabin boy on a steamer running between **Glasgow & Belfast** and it was at this period of his life that he started to develop his love of sailing and the lure of faraway places.

When his job on the steamer finished, he used his savings to book a passage to America where he spent five years working at anything and everything. He worked on a tobacco plantation, as an accountant and book – keeper, as a door-to-door salesman, a farmhand and finally and most importantly as his life turned out, as a grocery assistant in **New York**.

On his return to Glasgow, he worked for a short period in his parent's little provisions shop. About a year later he opened his own first shop called **Lipton's Market**, in **Stobcross Street** in the **Anderston** area of the city. He stacked goods in the American manner which caught customer's attention. He worked 18 hours a day and often slept under the counter.

This shop proved to be successful and Tommy before long established a chain of

grocery shops, firstly across Glasgow but later throughout **Britain & Ireland** and indeed he had one on **Patrick Street** in **Cork** which was still trading when I was a boy in the 1950's./1960's.



Lipton's Shop on Patrick Street, Cork in 1928

By 1888 his stores had grown to an amazing 300 and he decided to enter the tea trade for which he became very famous, and Lipton's tea is still traded today although now owned by **CVC Capital Partners** who acquired it from **Unilever** in 2022.



The Famous Lipton Tea

His success in the tea trade was based on his method of trading which bypassed the traditional trading and wholesale distribution channels to be able to sell teas at what were at the time, amazingly low prices. His slogan was "**Direct from the tea gardens to the teapot**". Up to then tea was expensive and the drink of the upper and wealthy classes. He realised that there was a huge untapped market among working class people and having reached that market by his direct buying and by producing small packs, he made a fortune.

One thing can be said for Tommy Lipton and that was that he never forgot where he came from and was always ready to help the less well off.

One of many examples of this occurred in 1897 at **Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee** when he gave £25,000 (approx. £4.1m today) to provide dinners for many poor Londoners.

In World War 1 he was actively involved in humanitarian work, especially in **Serbia**. He made his yachts available to the Red Cross, provided significant financial support and medical supplies to Serbian military and civilians to help those who were affected by both the war and a typhus epidemic which broke out at that time. His efforts provided field hospitals and general relief to those in need.

For leisure Tommy loved sailing and he became famous for his 5 challenges for the America's cup with his yachts called "**Shamrock**" through to "**Shamrock V**" His efforts to win were so famous and he was so good humoured about losing he was presented with a specially designed cup for "**the best of all losers**"

Interestingly, he was made a member of the **Royal Cork Yacht Club** in 1900

In 1898, **Queen Victoria** knighted him for his commercial success & philanthropy and in 1902, **King Edward VII** created him a baronet and so the poor boy from the Gorbals in Glasgow became **Sir Thomas Lipton**.

Described as being a very genial man to meet who always put a stranger quickly at ease. He neither smoked nor drank alcohol but his affability and generosity was said to have won him a large circle of friends. Tommy never married though he was described as "**the world's most eligible bachelor**" and he cultivated a public image of being a **ladies' man**. He always said he could never find a **woman to equal his**



Photo of Shamrock IV

**mother.**

Thomas Lipton was initiated in **Scotia Lodge no. 178** in Glasgow in 1870 and at the time of his death in 1931 was the longest serving member of the Lodge having been a **Mason for 61 years**.

He may not have been very active in Masonry but one of its principles he strictly enforced on his yachts was that there was to be no discussion of religion or politics. I think everyone can agree that he was certainly a wonderful ambassador for the Order through all his charitable and humanitarian work.

He left most of his **fortune** which was almost £1,m (Approx. £87 m today) to the City of Glasgow to help the poor and to fund healthcare. His house, he left to be converted into a Nursing Home.

His funeral took place in **St George's Church** in Glasgow and thousands of Glaswegians attended and lined the streets as he was taken for burial with his parents and siblings in Glasgow's Southern Necropolis.

**A tale of rags to riches, I think you will agree.**

# 66 Years A Mason

**Writes V.W Fred Cassidy (Hon. P.P.G.D of Ceremonies )**

---

The first time I entered a Masonic Lodge was in Limerick in 1957, where I was working at the time. My friend's father, V W B Bill Morrow, and suffering from Parkinson's disease at the time, was a very keen Mason. Despite his illness, he insisted on going to his lodge meetings every month. One time I assisted his son, Trevor, to bring him to the meeting. Following that night Bill insisted that I always helped to bring him. I eventually joined the Triune Lodge 333 in Limerick in May 1959. I got my Master Mason's Degree in December 1959, but shortly afterwards I was transferred with my job back to Cork.

For a while I visited different Lodges, but eventually I opted for St. Patrick's Lodge No8. In those days it was quite a thriving Lodge. I became W M in 1971 but at that time the Lodge in Tuckey Street was closed due to a disastrous fire in Jennings Furniture Shop next door. Our Lodge meetings were then held in the old St. Nicholas school house in Cove Street, until the renovations were complete.

Numbers in the Lodge unfortunately began to decline due to members being transferred out of Cork, and due to older members ill health, etc. In the early 1990's we barely had enough members to continue. Other Lodges were in a similar situation. R.W. B Alan Campbell, who was the Provincial Deputy G M, proposed at the time that maybe there could be a merger between the Lodges. This was discussed, however Lodge No. 595 decided that they would continue themselves, and so the merger was between Lodge No. 209 and No. 8. We had a few meetings to

decide on the future of the Lodge, and it was agreed that we would merge under No. 8 (being the oldest) but change the name from St. Patrick's to St. Fin Barre's. This subsequently came to pass in 1996.

Around that time Masonry was beginning to become more outgoing and were holding social events open to everyone. One such event, which continues today, is the Friday coffee mornings in Tuckey Street, from 10.30am to 12.30pm. The door was, and is, open to anyone, and if someone was genuinely interested, a brother will gladly show them around the Lodge and explain the purpose of the Order. As a result, membership began to increase and is still increasing to this day. Most new members are very enthusiastic.

Our most important function in the year is when our new W M is installed. On this occasion we hold an Installation Dinner, to which members of other Lodges are invited. It is a very social event, but also a great fund raiser for our many charities as there is a collection on the night, to which all contribute. Looking back on my 66 years as a Mason, I am very glad that I joined, and I continue to be an active member. I now try to encourage the younger members as much as I can. One of my proudest moments was when I was recently bestowed the Honorary Past Provincial Grand Officer by Provincial Grand Master, R.W. Bro. Derek Dunne.

# A Hidden Legacy: Uncovering My Father's Masonic Path

By Bro. Bart Ooms

First Lodge of Ireland, Cork

---

In 1989, I experienced the profound loss of both my parents, a moment that marked a significant turning point in my life and left a quiet but lasting imprint on my sense of identity. My father had served with distinction in the **Belgian Military**, and among the possessions passed on to me after his death was a modest wooden box containing his service medals. At first glance, it appeared to be nothing more than a tribute to his years of disciplined commitment and national service. However, years later, while revisiting that same box, I noticed something peculiar about its construction. Upon closer inspection, I discovered a hidden compartment beneath a false bottom. Inside lay a **collection of medals**, clearly not military in nature. They were ornate, symbolic, and entirely unfamiliar to me. This unexpected discovery piqued my curiosity and compelled me to investigate further.

Turning to online research, I began to piece together the significance of these mysterious items. What I uncovered revealed a side of my father's life that had never been spoken of during his lifetime. The **medals were Masonic**, each rich in symbolism and representative of a tradition I knew little about. Slowly, a new understanding began to take shape.

This revelation also cast a new light on memories from my father's funeral. I recalled the church being filled, as expected, with members of the armed forces. But there had also been another group of individuals in attendance. They were impeccably dressed, composed, and stood together with a sense of quiet unity. At the time, I could not place who they were, though I sensed they shared a meaningful con-

nection with my father. Only years later did I come to realise that they were likely members of his lodge, gathered discreetly to pay their final respects.

In 2008, I relocated to **Cork**, Ireland, embracing a new chapter in life while still carrying with me the unanswered questions about my father's hidden affiliations. One year, during **Cork Culture Day**, I happened upon the **Freemasons' Hall on Tuckey Street**. The building had opened its doors to the public for the occasion, and my longstanding curiosity led me inside to explore further.

What I encountered within those walls felt **strangely resonant**. The symbols, the architecture, and the atmosphere conveyed a sense of heritage, purpose, and fraternity that aligned uncannily with what I had uncovered in my father's secret collection. It was as though **I had stepped into a world that had been quietly waiting for me to find it**.

Motivated by a desire to understand more, and to honour the quiet legacy my father had left behind, I took the step to join the **First Lodge of Ireland**. That decision marked the beginning of a deeply meaningful journey, one that has brought both clarity and connection. Though I never had the opportunity to speak with my father about his Masonic path, I now walk a similar one, guided in part by the clues he left behind.

Today, being a member of the First Lodge of Ireland not only allows me to continue the Masonic lineage that began with my father, but it has also provided me with a true sense of belonging. In many ways, the Lodge has given me **roots here in Ireland**: a grounding presence that connects past and present, family and fraternity, and helps define who I am in this place I now call home.



# PGLM Masonic Passport

By W. Bro. David Peters,  
Provincial Grand Inspector of Munster

I am pleased to announce the introduction of a **PGLM Masonic Passport**. This initiative is aimed at all Masons, and I hope will actively encourage brothers to visit other lodges and serve as a permanent aid de memoir of meetings attended, degrees given, festive boards, and convivial fraternal brotherhood.

The front inside pages is reserved for your personal details your advancement through the blue degrees and details of your mother lodge.

The rest of the pages can be stamped and signed at each lodge visited.

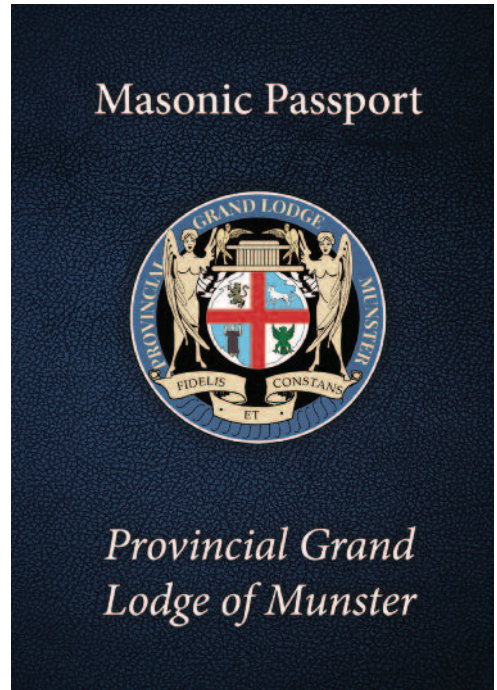
There is a **nominal cost of 15 euros each**, all proceeds will go to the **Tuckey St Building fund**.

On another note, **Munster Young Masons** have had a successful year with “Virtual Pub” zoom meetings, a sea fishing trip, golf (pitch and Putt) tournament and there is rumours of a darts tournament in the near future. I must give a vote of thanks **the R.W.Bro.Derek Dunne** for donating a prize of strong drink for each event.

In other news an **MYM logo** has been approved, and production of ties is ongoing. MYM can now boast **75 members** (to date) and the ambition is to reach 100 this coming Masonic season, there is also sterling work going on in the background to host a 2026 social event, open to family and friends of young masons.

Remember that a “Young Mason” isn’t a number it’s a brother who hasn’t yet had the privilege of sitting in the chair of King Solomon.

To conclude, in the preceding paragraph I



mentioned the coming “Masonic Season” I was of course referring to lodges opening again, meetings attended, degrees given, and relationships reestablished. However I would encourage all masons, Young and not so young to socialise through whatever means during the summer months, when lodges traditionally go “**Dark**,” bring your non masonic friends with you, they will see that we are not such bad chaps after all and may encourage people of the right calibre to join our ranks.

We must focus on the **three R’s Recruit, Retain, and Reintroduce**

# Munster Young Masons Swing Easy

Munster Young Masons inaugural Pitch & Putt tournament was held in Garyduff Sports Complex recently, the event was won by **Bro. Xander Van Wyk**. Blessed with glorious weather and very few stray balls. Thanks to **Bro. Varun Orban** for organising, a great way to strengthen bonds between lodges, Looking forward to next year, **Rory McIlroy** you are on notice



Munster Young Masons teeing off at the inaugural pitch & putt tournament in Garyduff Sports Complex recently.



Bro. Xander Van Wyk, winner of the Munster Young Masons inaugural Pitch & Putt tournament



Munster Young Masons at the 19th hole

# Antient Traditions Adapt

Freemasons' Hall Youghal – originally built in the last quarter of the eighteenth century as a music theatre and home to Youghal Lodge and Royal Arch Chapter 68 since 1863 – has seen a very busy year as principal host venue for the 2025 quarterly meetings of our Provincial Grand Lodge, District Grand Chapter, as well as a good number of lodge, chapter and council regular and installation meetings.



**Above:** District Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Munster

**Below:** Mourne Preceptory of High Knights Templar

While Provincial Grand Lodge and District Grand Chapter of Munster had



been previously convened at Youghal, history was made with the first meeting of a High Knights Templar preceptory and its constituent Priory of Malta since 1848, when a previous Youghal Lodge No. 504 – which held lodge, chapter and preceptor warrants – ceased to meet as a result of the emigration and removal so prevalent in those

difficult years. Preceptory met at Youghal in March and September.





Appropriately enough, the Mourne Priory of Malta, convened at Youghal in November 2025, oversaw the installation of three members of Youghal Lodge and RAC 68 – Sir Knights Alex Brown, Adriano da Silva and David Peters – as Eminent Prior and Knights of Malta, respectively, as a

courtesy to the Waterford Priory.

**Above:** Mourne Priory of Malta  
**Below:** Cork Chapter of Prince Masons

Members of Cork Chapter of Prince Rose Croix No. 1, also gathered at Youghal in March, September and November 2025, continuing the tradition of meeting prior to a festive board, hosted by the preceptory, which were well attended and much enjoyed by all.



*David J. Butler*



## Freemasons Hall Cork – Scenes from a Remarkable Year

As a year of transformative works at Freemasons' Hall Cork comes to a close, it is appropriate to encapsulate that progress in a quartet of images, taken throughout that progress.



**Upper Left:** Foundation Stone laying, 29 November 2024

**Upper Right:** Metal Structures complete, 28 February 2025



**Lower Left:** Extension is Weatherproof, 7 June 2025

**Lower Right:** Park Works Complete, 11 November 2025



## **Knight Templar of Ireland – Inaugural Order of Merit Award**

At the quarterly meeting of The Great Priory of Ireland on 4th December 2024 in The Grand Lodge Room, Dublin, a signal honour was conferred by The Grand Master of The Order of the Temple, Robert G Quigley G.C.T., upon Right Eminent Sir Knight Edwin W. Hunter, K.C.T.

Right Eminent Sir Knight Edwin has been a member of the Cork and Waterford preceptories for some 35 years, during which time he has most generously given of his time and ability to confer the degrees of that branch of the Order – High Knight Templar, Masonic Knight of Malta, and their accompanying Eminent Preceptor and Eminent Prior degrees – upon countless candidates. All of this in addition to his work in every branch of the Order, as a Grand Chaplain, as a degree giver, as a district and grand officer.

A good number of Sir Knights of his Cork and Waterford preceptories

travelled to witness his being one of the inaugural quartet of recipients of the Knights Templar of Ireland Order of Merit [K.T.O.M.] neck jewel and framed parchment.



Right Eminent Sir Knight is pictured here with Eminent Sir Knight David J. Butler, representing Waterford preceptory and Very Eminent Sir Knight Robin E.W. Newenham, representing Cork preceptory.

*David J. Butler*

# The Trio of Masonic Oil-on-Canvas Tracing Boards:

Writes David J. Butler

Lodge No. 68 is the proud owner of a unique trio of Masonic oil-on-canvas Tracing Boards. During 1834 – at the same time that a new warrant was being sought for Youghal in the names of W. Bros. Thomas John, Walter Giles and Wallis Adams – the trio commissioned W. Bro. John Leahy – a past master of Lodge No. 504 and civil engineer – to draw up and paint a combined craft tracing board, for the purposes of illustrating all three degrees to incoming candidates. Subsequently, the lodge commissioned a royal arch tracing board and a knight's templar tracing board, which are – according to a leading art conservator<sup>16</sup> – after the same style, but not by the same hand.

The craft tracing board was used by Lodge No. 68 throughout the nineteenth century, but it is doubtful that the other two were more than an adornment to the lodge room. The craft lodge was in possession of a floor cloth as late as 1929 – when it was photographed for the Lodge of Research – but the original trio of tracing boards had already been superseded by a trio of conventional first, second and third degree



tracing boards, early in the twentieth century – most likely around 1912 – when the oils-on-canvas were remounted in their current frames.

No other conservation was undertaken at this time, so that, the removal of layers of grime, dirt and old yellowed varnish, the filling and repainting of any areas of scarring was required, as well as the application of a layer of protective resin varnish, and the repair to the wooden frames of 1912 – in themselves, a bespoke and handsome addition to the oils-on-canvas.



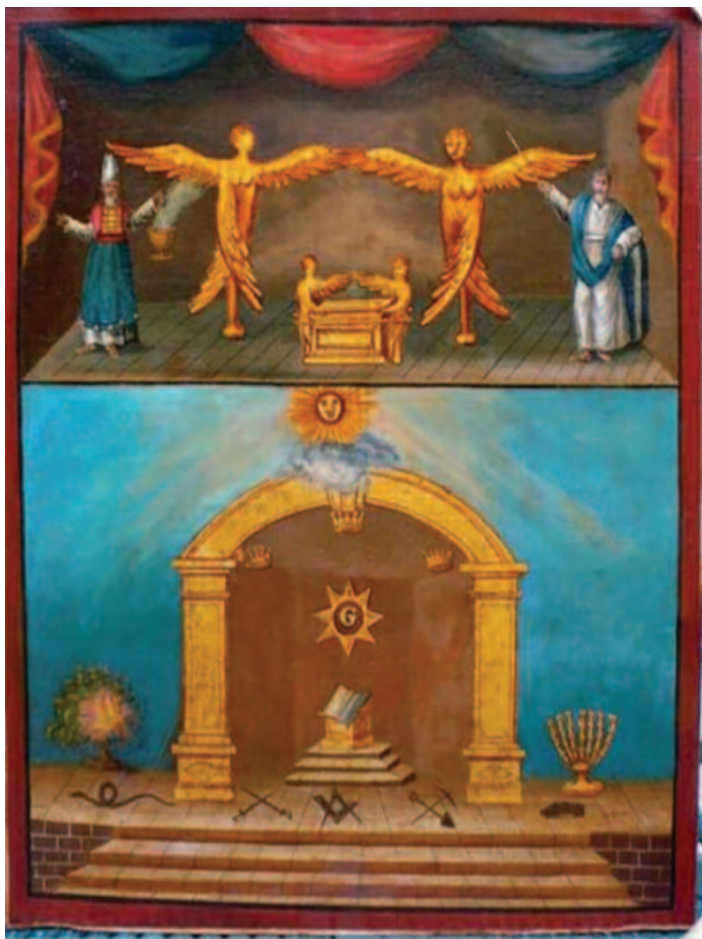
## Combined Craft Tracing Board – before and after conservation.

In content, the combined craft tracing board comprises three columns on a raised three-step dais, beneath a central eye.

These three columns represent the three lesser lights of Freemasonry – the sun, the moon, and the master of the lodge – each radiant in glory atop a column.

Three brass lodge candlesticks – with blue wax candles lighting – surround the Volume of the Sacred Laws with square and compass in readiness, while strewn about the steps are the lodge officer collar jewels, symbolic of the offices of treasurer (crossed keys) and secretary (crossed quills) to either side of the central column; in

the left foreground, lies the level of the Senior Warden, along with a pair of equilateral triangles, while in the right foreground, lies the plumb rule of the Junior Warden, alongside the square of the Worshipful Master and the square and compass of the Immediate Past Master. A series of symbols surround the other columns; to the left-hand side, a deacon's wand, leaning against a pillar, the slipper (of the newly initiated candidate), a trowel, and – symbolising industry – a pick, an hour-glass, a bee-hive and, behind a second pillar,



a mysterious hand grasping a trowel; to the right-hand side, the cable tow (of the newly initiated candidate), a mallet, a ladder (symbolising movement between the three degrees), a chest (for the lodge regalia) and, behind a secondary pillar, a mysterious hand, this time suspending a plumb-line. At the base of the steps on the left-hand-side is the signature of the draftsman and artist – W. Bro. John Leahy, with the date, 1834; and, on the right-hand-side, the names of the trio of founding brethren: Thomas John Esq., Mas[ter], Walt[er] Giles, Wallis Adams, Warden[s].



## Royal Arch Tracing Board – before and after conservation

The second tracing board is divided into two parts: the upper centres on two angels guarding the Arc of the Covenant, flanked on the left by the High Priest in his robes, with incense burner, mitre, and breastplate

of judgement and, on the right, by the Excellent King, crowned, in his robes, with sceptre raised. The lower part of the canvas centres upon the Holy Royal Arch, the radiant Sun sitting on a cloud above its keystone while, beneath the arch itself, the three crowns of the three principal officers and a centrally placed star with the letter 'G'. Atop a three-step dais within the arch is the arc of the covenant – as represented by the pedestal, on which lies an open volume of the sacred laws; to the left of the arch, the burning bush and fleeing serpent; to the right of the arch, the Jewish menorah or seven-branch candelabra and a slipper; in front of the arch, at the top of three steps,

lies the crossed square and compass, symbolic of the Masonic Order, flanked to the left by a pair of crossed swords and, to the right, by a crossed pick and shovel, the working tools of the Royal Arch Mason.

## Knights Templar Tracing Board – before and after conservation

The last of the trio of oil-on-canvas tracing boards focuses on the High Knights Templar, featuring as it does, a twin-towered bridge above a banner with the phrase, In Hoc Signo Vinces; 'With this [cross] as



your standard, you shall have victory' while, to the left hand side, a Maltese Cross crowned with the Latin phrase Veritas, meaning 'Truth', the scales of justice, a warrior on horseback and a hand symbolically holding a trowel aloft; to the right hand side, a depiction of Noah's Ark in the flood, and a hand holding a dagger aloft. The tracing board centres on a star knights templar breast jewel, with Mememto Mori 'Remember You Must Die' encircling a central templar cross; beneath this, along one side of an equilateral triangle a crown, a cockerel (an early symbol of Christianity) and an hour-glass; the skull and cross-bones – emblems of mortality – lie centrally placed within this triangle while, along the other two sides, lies a drawn Templar sword. To the left of this triangle stand a serpent-draped cross and a chalice; to the right, a lamb with red military banner and a coffin with skull and cross-bones insert: these various Christian and related symbols serve to underline the victory of good over evil.

# The Unique Wall and Ceiling Frescoes of the Fifteenth Lodge of Ireland

When visiting the lodge room in Skibbereen for the first time, one is immediately struck by its hand painted wall and ceiling frescoes, floral garlands complete with exquisite stencilling. The lodge acquired the present masonic hall for £250 in 1869. Prior to its acquisition, the building was used for various commercial purposes and thus required modification for use for masonic purposes. The architect, W.Bro. Richard Lee, estimated that the cost of modification at £150 with a further £50 for ornamentation of the front elevation which is a reference to the impressive neo-classical façade with square and compasses set in the pediment.

In 1878 it was proposed to engage Mr. C. Murphy of Cork to decorate the lodge room and by June of that year he was seeking a final instalment payment of £7. It is not known who designed the frescoes themselves which obviously required much thought and planning. Unfortunately, as a consequence of a fire in 2006, the lodge room was in large part destroyed. Subsequently, extensive refurbishment work was undertaken under the watchful eye and management of V.W.Bro. Dermot O'Brien. The restoration of the hand-painted murals was expertly carried out by Nigel and Louise Connell from Drimoleague and are true reproductions of the originals.

In 1990, following a meeting of the Irish Lodge of Research at Tuckey Street, R.W.Bro. Robert Bashford (Moyarget Lodge 280) spent a family holiday in Glandore and, by invitation of our late W.Bro. John Hosford, he visited the lodge room in

Skibbereen. R.W.Bro. Bashford subsequently published a paper in March 1991 entitled, *"Skibbereen, a Lodge and its Premises, the story of an interesting old Masonic Hall in the Province of Munster."*

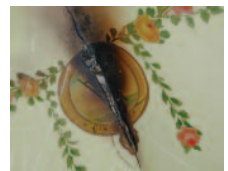
With the kind permission of R.W.Bro. Robert, I set out extracts from his paper below which elucidate the masonic iconography on the walls and ceilings. It will be of interest for the reader to note that the photographs that accompany his text depict the original frescoes as photographed by him during his visit in 1990 and predate the fire in 2006.

## Ceiling Frescoes

1. Crossed Quills & Inkpot representing the Secretary and his important role.



2. Three Rung Ladder with the letters F. H. & C. on each rung stretching from Earth to the Celestial Canopy of Heaven. This symbol is known as Jacobs Ladder and is emblematic of the hopes at all Masons to reach Eternal Salvation through Faith in God, Hope of Salvation and Charity to all Mankind. This symbol was originally found as a Ladder of seven rungs but Masons usually only refer to the three main rungs Faith, Hope and Charity.



3. The Level is an emblem of equality. In the sight of God who alone is great, all men are equal, subject to the same infirmities, hastening to the same goal, and preparing to be judged by the same immutable Law.



The Level or Jewel of the Senior Warden, reminding him of his duty to ensure that the principle of Equality is preserved in our Meetings.

4. The Christian Cross compete with Pascal Lamb symbolic of the High Knight Templars. This was the name used by what is more widely known today as Preceptory Masonry.



5. Three Great Lights emblematically shown as the Compass, Square and Holy Bible. Around the perimeter is the Latin inscription 'SIT. LUX. ET. LUX. FUIT' which translates into the phrase 'Let There Be Light And there Was Light'.



6. The Chipping Maul and Trowel which are the tools used by the Operative Mason. Symbolically, the Maul is used to remind us that Masons should constantly chip away at their characters to remove aspects of their lives which are not in accordance with the teaching of our Order. Similarly, the Trowel is used to symbolise the Bond



of Friendship that links all Masons as Brothers.

7. The winged figure of Mercury which has been used since ancient times as a symbol for the Deacons. Indeed, James Brush a well-respected eighteenth-century Masonic Jeweller from Dublin is well known for sets of Officers Jewels including the winged figure of Mercury. Mercury was chosen to fill this role as with his winged feet he was reputed to be the Messenger to the Gods. This group of Ceiling Frescoes is matched by a number of similar decorated panels painted within floral bands to the actual walls. They start at the Worshipful Master's position and proceed uniformly around the walls. Symbols used include the following:



## Wall Frescoes

8. Five-pointed Crown surmounted on an Equilateral Triangle. It has long been the custom to use the Crown as the emblem for the Excellent King and the Equilateral Triangle is used to symbolise the Chapter.



9. Similarly, the Triple Tau within an Equilateral Triangle is used to symbolise the threefold nature of Royal Arch Masonry and is a symbol encountered on many old Certificates. The Tau is a very ancient symbol dated back to Egyptian Times and was



used as the symbol of Eternal Life. It used to be the symbol drawn on the bodies of initiates to show that they were set apart. It was also reputed to be the symbol used by Moses to mark the doors of the Jews so that they might be spared by the Angel of Death. In the Royal Arch it is used in a threefold manner to represent the Deity.

**10. The Keystone with the letters 'H. T. W. S. S. T. K. S.'** is another symbol associated with the workings of the Mark Master Mason degree.



**11. The Open Compasses within an Equilateral Triangle within the centre of two interlaced Equilateral Triangles.**

This symbol predates the Erection of the Skibbereen Hall by nearly 100 years and was originally used in an early form of the Royal Arch as a symbol for the threefold nature of the Order.



**12. The Ineffable Word** which again is instantly recognisable to all Royal Arch Masons. This Jewish Word with four letters was considered to be so sacred that it was only spoken by the High Priest in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement and the noise of symbols and trumpets prevented the People from hearing it. The reason for this was to prevent neighbouring tribes learning the name and applying it blasphemously to their idols. In the course of time the Temple was



despoiled, and the proper pronunciation of the name was lost. As the Hebrew language is made up mostly of consonants. The vowel sounds are provided by the reader based on his knowledge of the proper pronunciation. If he does not know the proper intended pronunciation, he will not be able to pronounce the Word.

**13. The Seven Stemmed Candelabra** which was used as the sacred candelstick in the Temple. Seven has always been considered a sacred number as it is made up of the sum of sides from a Triangle and Square. Indeed, the theme of seven can be related back to the Jacobs Ladder.



**14. The All-Seeing Eye within interlaced Equilateral Triangles.** Again, this is another symbol used to illustrate the Omnipresent nature of the Godhead. Two interlaced triangles in this manner are sometimes known as the Seal of Solomon.

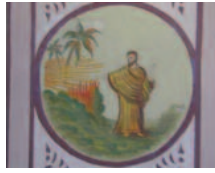


**15. The Broken Columns** which has been used since Time Immemorial to represent Loss or Bereavement. By association it has come to represent Charity and occasionally one encounters a Lodge Charity Box in the shape of a Broken Column.





16. The next symbol is quite unusual being the symbol of Moses at the Burning Bush. This reference along with the references to the Walking Stick, and the Snake will again be instantly recognised by Royal Arch Masons.



The Burning Bush is referred to in Royal Arch Ceremonies as the original location where the Angel of the Lord gave the Tetragrammaton (The Ineffable Name of God.) to Moses. The word comprised four Hebrew characters and will be found on a golden triangle in the centre of the Royal Arch Jewel. The references to the Walking Stick and the Snake are associated with the Veils Ceremony in Irish Royal Arch Masonry.

17. A Doorway approached by seven winding steps which is located within an Archway supported by another Arch.



Over the doorway is the letter 'G' and the seven steps are lettered as follows: - 'G. R. L. A. G. M. A.' These letters may not be as apparent to Companions today as they once were. However, they refer to the Seven Liberal Arts which were once illustrated in the Fellow craft Degree. The letters refer to Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy. The symbol of the Doorway approached by Seven Steps is just another metaphor for the Seven Rung Ladder of Jacob and suggests that Masons hope to reach Heaven by the assistance of Jacob's Theological Ladder.

18. A Golden Key with two interlaced triangles on top suggests that the artist is referring to the Royal Arch symbolism of Silence and



Circumspection. It was Dr Oliver, the noted Royal Arch Mason, who commented that the Key bears the appearance of a common instrument confined to the performance of one simple act. But the well instructed Brother beholds in it the symbol which teaches him to keep a tongue of good report and to abstain from the debasing vices of Slander and Defamation.

19. The Ark of the Covenant being the repository for the Word of God was originally a chest constructed by Moses to contain the



two Stone Tablets with the Ten Commandments inscribed thereon. It also contained a golden Pot of Manna, Aaron's Rod and the Tables of the Covenant. It was placed in the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Temple by King Solomon and was lost on the destruction of the Temple. Its subsequent history is of great interest to Royal Arch Masons. As can be seen from the foregoing this series of decorations is quite unique to Skibbereen. The Room itself has been decorated in a balanced manner, and the Frescoes are a part of the overall scheme. Most of the symbolism employed will be readily familiar to Royal Arch Masons but would not often be encountered in this manner."

(Acknowledgement and credit to **R. W. Bro. Robert Bashford**)

# Second Munster Gala huge success



Neptune Lodge 190 Cóbh meeting in Bezaleel Lodge 234 Kinsale for the initiation of Brother Mr. Jon Demenkov. The second Munster Gala took place on Saturday 13th September 2025 in aid of the Tuckey Street Building Fund.

## Report W. Bro Walt Mahony

The day commenced at 1pm with Bezaleel Lodge 234 Kinsale hosting Neptune Lodge 190 Cóbh for the Entered Apprentice degree for Mr. Jon Demenkov. The meeting was spectacularly well attended with distinguished guests present such as the PGM Rt.W.Bro Derek Dunne, esteemed brethren from Northern Ireland, Dublin, London, Essex and Jersey.

At 5pm that evening the Gala commenced again in Carrigaline Court Hotel to a crowd of over 130 present. The 4 course dinner was a spectacular success as was the energetic and exciting auction event hosted by Rt. W. Bro. Malcolm Tyrrell, assisted by

VW. Bro. Kevin Ryan and W Bro. David Peters. The PGM then welcomed all to the event in a speech wherein he explained the nature of the works in Tuckey Street to all present. Following this, all guests were treated to the magnificent talents of the band “Century” hailing from Cóbh.

A special thanks to everyone who supported the evening and to VW. Bro. Vincent O’ Donovan for all of the wonderful photos taken at the event.

**Finally, a sincere thanks to my family Rach, Pat and Joan for putting up with me through the various elements of organisation.**



Jane & Alec Bryan, Fountainstown, at the Munster Freemasons Gala Dinner, Carrigaline Court Hotel, 13th September 2025. Photos: Siobhán Russell



Giselle Campbell & Eamon Nash with Brenda Haubold & Ed & Pamela O'Reilly, Carrigaline.



Kay & Barry Jenkins, Crosshaven.



Pat, Joan, Walt & Rachael Mahony, with Richie Hamilton & Catherine Franklin.



Sarah Lynch & Davide Aquaro, Silversprings, with Belinda Olden & David Peters, Blarney.



Oliver Berezka with Karen & Terence Murphy, Cobh.



Rebecca Jagoe, Kian Buckley & Emma Jagoe, Carrigaline.



George & Frances Jagoe, Hilltown.





Pawl Wojcik & Claudia Maciag, Inchigeelagh, with Daniel Gubina & Erica Lopez, Killarney.



Catherine & Joe Patterson, Frankfield, with Irene & Jeffrey Johnstone, Farran.



Luke Free & Eileen Oliver-Free, Carrigaline.



Jane & Uwe Schiller, Douglas.



Margaret & Robin Newenham, Fountainstown.



Ellen Foley & Dan Olden, Blarney, with Aoife McCarthy, Middleton & David O'Sullivan, Youghal.



Janette Murphy & Derek Dunne, with Lucy & Malcolm Tyrell, Douglas.



Andi & Craig Setterfield, Lismore, Co. Waterford.





Kenneth Buttimer & Abra Hennessy, with Graham McCarthy, Kinsale.



Elaine & Wayne Bufton, Kent England.



Cobh Branch, at the Munster Freemasons Gala Dinner.



Barry Brewster & Elaine Hayes, Co.Down.



Dawn & Geoff Delaney, with Jen & Niall Daly, Rochestown.



Mairead Harte & Vincent O'Donovan, Crosshaven, with Ann & Kevin Ryan, Curraghmore.



Rebecca Curry & Dean Richardson, Essex, with Bernadette McGrath & Giovanni Caroto, Mallow.

# Racing the hidden lodges of the Baltic

W. Bro. Hugo Beasse

Travelling eastward from the bustle of London by bus and train, crossing a patchwork of countries all the way to Estonia, turned out to be an adventure both ambitious and humbling. Each border felt like another rung raised towards the building fund, and it's only thanks to the steadfast support of the brethren, whether in generous donation, quick wit, or wisdom shared over coffee at dawn. Getting to the Baltic countries I have learned a few things about Freemasonry there.

## Lithuania



Vilnius, with its winding medieval lanes and baroque façades, hides some truly brilliant

masonic tales. By the late 1700s, Vilnius was a hub for masonic activity, with lodges attracting noble thinkers and romantic rebels alike. The first Lithuanian masonic lodge, St. John's Lodge Memphis, was founded in 1776, but the city gained masonic notoriety when three new lodges appeared by 1781, fuelling both philosophical debate and suspicions from the Russian authorities.

Enlightenment ideals breezed in alongside Georgian wine and wild ambitions for social reform. Members ranged from aristocrats to poets ; a typical meeting could veer from a heated lecture on liberty to ad hoc violin recitals. Vilnius masons, for all their seriousness, were famous for blending wit with ideology sometimes dressing up in the sort of surplus baroque clothing that would make a theatre troop jealous.

Despite their popularity, masonic lodges became easy targets for czarist suspicion. Official bans swept in, briefly snuffing out the visible side of masonic life. Yet, behind curtains and under the guise of harmless book clubs, masons continued convening, gossiping about mysterious rituals. Only after Lithuania's independence in 1990 did lodges confidently reemerge, eventually forming the modern Grand Lodge of Lithuania in 2002. Present-day masons share cross-border ties and no shortage of stories, proving that, in Vilnius, the line between secret society and social club is humorously thin.

## Latvia

Riga claim to establishing the first Baltic lodge, Zum Nordstern (Northern Star) in 1750. This lodge wasn't just a footnote in regional history; Riga



quickly grew as a northern center of masonic intrigue and intellectual ferment. Led by Johann Zuckerbecker and Johann Dietrich von der Heyde, and often convening in merchant houses such as the one on Peitavas Street, local masons collected a guestlist extending from German aristocrats and Swedish diplomats to wandering philosophers.

The bustling city gave masonic ideals a new home: tolerance, philanthropy, and the sort of elaborate regalia that made everyday coat shopping seem boring. Riga's diversity meant lodges hosted philosophical knife-fights among different cultural groups. A joyous mishmash of rituals, sometimes English, sometimes German, occasionally improvised. Rigans took their charity work seriously, but also maintained a reputation for after-hours feasts rivaling anything from the city's more official institutions.

The tide of history, however, ran unpredictable. Lodges periodically closed when local rulers got nervous, reopening in peacetime with as much ceremony as a parade. Today, Riga's historic lodges are celebrated as places where drama, debate, and brotherhood flourished side by side, leaving the modern masons to carry forward a legacy that is equal parts earnest and eccentric.

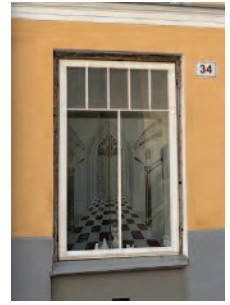
## Estonia

Tallinn might look a touch reserved from the outside, but don't let the calm stone walls fool anyone. Freemasonry arrived there in the late 18th century, with the first documented lodge founded in 1773, reflecting Estonia's strong links with Sweden, both mystical and bureaucratic. These early lodges promised rational debate, personal growth, and, not infrequently, lively arguments over Estonia's alphabet and local pastries.

Tallinn's masons often preferred learning over showiness, with members dabbling in political reform or linguistic invention. When authorities grew suspicious or occupations forced masons underground, the spirit of the Craft lived on quietly, maintaining rituals in private and dreaming of grand returns.

After renewed independence in 1991, Freemasonry reawakened in Estonia, soon rallying enough to establish the Grand Lodge of Estonia in 1999. New lodges blossomed in Tallinn, Tartu, and elsewhere. Estonian masons today embrace both tradition and innovation, welcoming brethren from around the world while maintaining a distinct local charm.

The history of Freemasonry in the Baltic states ultimately reflects a blend of high ideals, fortitude, and a refreshing dash of humour. Across Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, masonic lodges have managed to survive czarist scrutiny, Soviet bans, and local rivalries, not just by hiding rituals, but by fostering resilient networks where a love of learning, laughter, and brotherhood endures.





# A Big Thank You !



Ngawang Sangmo, Liz o'Donnell, Leonard Mangan, Mr Liam Cunningham, Mairead O'Connor, Cecelia McGarry, Dr Daniel Onyekwere. Front Row : Dr Misbah Atta, Theresa o'Sullivan.

## Writes W. Bro. Liam Cunningham

On Tuesday, the 26th August, in University Hospital Kerry, I was privileged to be presented with a cheque for TLC to the amount of €1010.00.

This money was raised by the hospital's own Sports and Social Club and amounted to fifty per cent of the proceeds of a quiz night. The other fifty per cent going to support the Kerry entrant in the Rose of Tralee contest, whose mum works in UHK.

Whilst I was thanking them for their kindness and generosity for this unsolicited donation, they were adamant that they were extremely grateful to all Masonic Brethren for the provision of TLC Bears to the hospital. They sighted cases such as a child who has had to attend the hospital every week or so for the last eighteen months, and who, on every visit, is accompanied by the TLC Bear they received on their initial visit.

There are many more relatable stories, but principally this cheque, this donation, is their way of saying 'Thank you' for what we do and what TLC is all about.

On a personal note, I set out on this skydive fundraiser adventure with a goal of around €2,500, but thanks to your generosity and the generosity of total strangers, we have reached €8072.00 to date.

Thank you all very much for what you are and what you have done. €8072 is equal to a lot of Teddies that will bring a lot of smiles to children we will never know, but who might, one day, remember us for that tiny little bit of relief at a time of stress in their young lives.

**In conclusion, I'll use the observations of the paediatrician in the picture who summarised it so well in saying that, in his opinion, there are children receiving TLC Teddies today who will cherish them for the rest of their lives.**



# A Good Man and Mason

**Writes Bro. Conor O' Dwyer**

We so often hear the words **“Conduct yourselves as good men and Masons”** at every meeting we attend right before we close and for a while this was something I struggled with as to what this means in my everyday life as I'm sure many of us have. While it may seem obvious and self-explanatory it is vastly open to interpretation. To me it meant I was to treat everyone I meet with the kindness, decency and the respect we show each other in Lodge and to help others if I have the ability to do so, but It was only when I was sitting in a church listening to the stories and being surrounded by those who he had not only helped, mentored and given of himself to others that I finally understood what it truly meant.

Edward (Ted) Rea began his journey in Freemasonry receiving his First degree in 1975, subsequently receiving his second and third degrees in the months that follow and right from the start Ted took it upon himself to learn all he needed in order to be able to contribute back to Freemasonry as quickly as he could, not only into his own Lodge but into other Lodges and further beyond when he got the chance. Ted quickly began to get involved with giving of the degrees and travelling around the province to help where he could in other Lodges. A student of the craft and broader Masonry in general Ted continued to develop and become a stalwart in Freemasonry from his own Lodge in 67 to others in the province and going on to hold offices in Provincial Grand Lodge and in the Grand Lodge of Ireland. At some point in our Masonic Journeys many of us would have crossed paths with Ted either by receiving degrees or being installed in Solomon's chair. Outside of Lodge Ted was what can only be

described as a true friend to many and family to some and was known for his lighthearted antics, always up for enjoying a laugh with Brethren and infusing joy into the world of those around him. On the day of Ted's funeral, we got to hear the story of how he took over the role of Sexton within his church from the previous gentleman retiring. For many months Ted would pick up his predecessor on his way to the church, sit him

inside while going off to carry out his duties. Everybody who would come to attend the church would see the previous Sexton sitting inside and they all assumed that he was still carrying out the duties in which he had done for so many years previous not realising that for months it was Ted who was indeed performing these duties. Ted did not seek recognition, nor did he wish to make it known, he was simply there to carry out the duties for the role he had undertaken in a selfless manner without hesita-



R.W. Bro Rea

tion.

Since his passing I have heard so many stories of all the things Ted had done for the betterment of Freemasonry but more importantly for the betterment of his fellow Brethren and while these few words will never be able to convey all Ted has accomplished in life and in his fifty years as a Freemason I hope it will encourage those in the Craft and those who are just beginning their Masonic journeys to use Ted's example of what it is to be A good man and Mason.

**Hearing this story is what helped me define that Phrase “Good Men and Masons” as I'm sure it did for many others but was it the Masons that made the Man or the Man that made himself a Mason!**

**May you Rest in Peace R.W. Bro Rea, our Brother.**

# Harmony Lodge 67

## *From Tuckey Street to Brinny - United in Progress, and in Grief*



Installation of Worshipful Master Peter Farrell and Officers for 2025 alongside the Provincial Deputy Grand Master R.W.Bro Stuart Brownlow and Officers from the Provincial Grand Lodge of Munster with visiting brethren from Lodges in the Province of Durham of The United Grand Lodge of England.

### **Writes Bro. Conor O' Dwyer**

January saw the beginning of the installation season and for many it meant doing so away from the familiar setting of Tuckey Street and so Harmony Lodge 67 travelled to the Bandon Lodge room where we got the opportunity to witness W.Bro Peter Farrell take Solomon's Chair to guide us into the prosperous future that lay ahead. Our installation meeting was a great success with many brethren advancing in office witnessed by brethren visiting from Lodges of the UGLE. Once the meeting closed, we conducted ourselves to the Innishannon House Hotel for dinner and refreshments where we were treated to a wonderful surprise from PPJGW of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham and Lumley Lodge 5807 R.W.Bro Craig Pattinson who performed "The Masters song" to our incoming

Worshipful Master Peter Farrell. The evening was full of laughter and joy as the bonds of friendship and brotherhood continued to grow between all new and returning brethren.



PPSGD R.W.Bro Anthony Hall of Lumley Lodge 5807 and Provincial Deputy Grand Master R.W.Bro Stuart Brownlow exchanging ties at the Harmony Lodge 67 installation dinner.

As the months went on, we saw Bro. Nick Williams and Bro. David Sharpe raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason in the lodge room of Antient Bandon Lodge no.84 in Brinny. At our last meeting before the summer break, we were delighted to have The Provincial Grand Master of Munster R.W.Bro Derek Dunne in attendance. We closed the meeting and gathered for the festive board in which we celebrated the bonds of brotherhood.

The Worshipful Master, Officers and Brethren of Harmony Lodge 67 would like to convey our sincere thanks to the Worshipful Master and Brethren of Antient Bandon Lodge no. 84 for allowing us to use the lodge room until such time as we return to Tuckey St.

### A Greivous Loss

On February 7th we received word that our brother, Right Worshipful Ted Rea had passed. This news was met with great sadness as R.W.Bro Rea was a brother, friend



Worshipful Master Sean McClean of Lumley Lodge 5807 and Past Master W.Bro David Williams also exchange ties at the Harmony Lodge 67 installation dinner.



W.Bro Martin Mason congratulating R.W.Bro Ted Rea on receiving his 50-year Jewel and certificate.

and mentor to many, not only in Harmony Lodge 67 but in all Lodges throughout Munster. This was evident in the gathering of brethren attending his funeral service and the many tales of which I have heard of his life in Freemasonry. R.W.Bro Rea received his Jewel marking fifty years as a Freemason in the months before he passed which is a tremendous achievement but what is more remarkable is the impact on not only brethren but on all those who knew him, R.W.Bro Rea was the embodiment of being a Good Man and Mason as we are so often asked to conduct ourselves as we close lodge.

May he rest in peace.



# Shamrock Lodge No. 27

***The Brethren of Shamrock Lodge No. 27 have suffered a great loss in the passing to the Grand Lodge above of their Worshipful Master, W. Bro. Michael Birrane, on 2nd July last. It was totally unexpected and a great shock to his family and to those who knew him.***

He took his Masonic duties seriously, attended regularly, and was an enthusiastic and committed member of the Order.

He was initiated on the 8th May, 2008, passed to the Second or Fellow Craft Degree on 14th May, 2009, and was raised to the Third or Sublime Degree of Master Mason on the 11th March, 2010.

He was a member of Royal Arch Chapter No. 3 and received his Royal Arch Degree on 10th October, 2011.

He was installed as Worshipful Master of the Lodge in

February of this year and last took the Chair at the April Communication which was held in Kinsale.

The many tributes to him published after his death testified to his character and to the

esteem in which he was held by his friends and colleagues and equally so by his fellow Brethren.

There was a very good attendance by members of his Lodge at his Requiem Mass in Frankfield, and three Brethren from the Lodge travelled to Ballina, Co. Mayo, for a memorial service on

9th August, which was full to capacity. This was a tremendous effort and show of support which I am sure was much appreciated by his family.

We remember Michael's widow, Deborah, his sons,

William and Adam, and his daughter Amy, and the wider family.

***- W. Bro. Guy St. Leger***



W. Bro. Michael Birrane



~ IN MEMORIAM ~

# Most Worshipful Bro. Rodney Mccurley

## Past Grand Master

**R.W. Bro. Edwin W. Hunter**

On the morning of 18th February 2025, the members of the Constitution of Irish Freemasonry were rocked by the rumors of the passing of The Most Worshipful the Grand Master Rodney McCurley.

Initial reaction was of course one of disbelief, as some members said that they had seen him in previous days and that he was hale and hearty. However, as the day wore on an official announcement from Grand Lodge confirmed the rumors to be sadly correct and a stay on all Masonic activity was imposed till after the funeral

The funeral was a magnificent gathering in Glengormley Presbyterian Church. Despite the size of the church, It was packed with only standing room in the two side aisles, many had to stand outside in not the best of weather. Such was the numbers that some were seated some two and a half hours before 11.30 am. The vast number of Masons who turned up were led by the **Deputy Grand Master, R.W. Bro. Richard Ensor**, and the **Assistant Grand Master R.W.Bro.Leslie Nixon**, and **The Grand Secretary R.W.Bro.Philip Daley**. A host of Masonic dignitaries including the leaders of each of our different branches and their deputies were present as well as representatives from our sister constitutions **The United Grand Lodge of England and Wales**, and the **Grand lodge of Scotland**, attesting to the love and respect in which our Grand Master was held. Indeed, such was the Masonic crowd that one had to constantly remind oneself that this was not a purely Masonic occasion but was a family occasion in which Rodney's Family, his wife Mary, his children Nicola and David, and his 5 grandchildren, relatives and friends had come to say their final and respectful goodbyes to a husband, a father and grandfather. After a meaningful service conducted by the

**Pastor of Glengormley Presbyterian Church Rev R, McCormick**, at which the Masonic input was a C.V. of Rodney read by Rt Wor. Bro.

Richard Ensor with a contribution by Rt. Wor. Bro Leslie Nixon and Rt. Wor. Bro. Philip Daley. A note of thanks needs to be recorded to the Organist who filled at least two hours before the service with music, no mean feat, and then continued his duty in the service. Following the service the coffin was shouldered out by the family and then several teams of Masons took over to shoulder the coffin to a hearse waiting up the road where a journey to Newtownabbey Crematorium followed.



What of this man Rodney born on 25th April 1946, one of four, educated at Springfield Elementary School and also in Ballygomartin Secondary school. Attending Belfast Tech obtaining his HNC in Electric Engineering, followed by a Management studies. Diploma from Ulster University.

For 39 years he served in the GPO, while still finding time to play Football and Golf and serve on the board of Northern Ireland Hospice.

**Rodney joined Abbercorn Lodge 114 in 1974** serving as **Worshipful Master in 1986**. From here on Rodney served in a succession of roles progressing from the Entered apprentice to the highest office of **Grand Master appointed in April 2023** over a period of 50 years.

**WE express our sorrow and support to the family of Rodney the Husband the Father and Grandfather on their loss, and we as masons remember with thanksgiving a Mason who gave of himself unstintingly in the service of our order.**

# A Tale of "Clamour and Turbulence"

## The Ephraimites of the Second Masonic Degree

*W. Bro. Andrew Petersen of The Third Lodge of Ireland writes:*

The Ephraimites are the first-mentioned tribe in the ritual narrative, being introduced to us as having crossed the River Jordan in a "hostile manner" against the neighbouring Gileadites. An early use of the unfriendly adjective seems to convey a cautious reservation about the Ephraimites in general that may or may not be entirely warranted. For instance, one supportive resource intimates that the Ephraimite beligerence was a direct consequence of being excluded by their allies from war with the Ammonites, whilst the Gileadites were similarly infuriated and equally confrontational at being deserted in war to fight alone. Whatever the truth or whatever view Masons might hold of the ritually-described Ephraimites, we will never know who was ultimately guilty of the first offence in that appalling conflict.

So, who were the Ephraimites and why do they figure in the Masonic 2nd Degree? In Biblical times, the Ephraimites were simply one of 12 desert tribes that comprised the people of Israel - later to become the Jewish people. Actually, there were 13 tribes, but the number 12 was preserved by excluding the Levites when Ephraim and Manasseh are cited separately. As Masons well know, the 12 tribes took their names after sons or grandsons of Jacob, himself a grandson of Abraham, a Gentile who became the first Hebrew. The 12 tribes were Asher, Benjamin, Dan, Ephraim, Gad, Issachar, Judah (from whom a tribe and the Davidic monarchy were descended), Manasseh, Naphtali, Reuben, Simeon and Zebulun. The Ephraimite tribe was therefore named after Ephraim (meaning 'double fruit'), who was a grandson of Jacob. After the death of Moses, who freed the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery around 1220 b.c., Joshua, an Ephraimite himself, led the Hebrews/Israelites into the Promised Land of

Canaan, a land covering roughly the area of present day Israel i.e. 21,000 sq. km/8,500 sq. miles. For comparison, the area of the island of Ireland is almost exactly four times greater, at 84,500 sq. km/32,500 sq. miles. Having taken Canaan in a monstrous campaign of annihilation and total destruction ("a holy war"), Joshua afterwards assigned territory to each one of the 12 tribes. His tribe, the Ephraimites, settled in a roughly rectangular area of land (the 'Hill Country of Ephraim' or 'Samaria') measuring some 55 miles long by 30 miles broad in the fertile, hilly region of central Palestine a little after 1200 b.c. Its borders extended westward to Gezer and included the cities of Ai, Atarot-addar, Bethel, Beth-Eloron the Upper, Eroc, Shiloh and Gazara. The southernmost bounds stretched to the town of Ibelin while its northern border was defined by the southern bank of the Kanah (the Wady Kanah) along which it ran eastward to the plain of Mukhneh.

Although relatively undersized by other tribal standards, Ephraimite territory possessed some distinctly attractive features which were immediately recognised and exploited by the politically-adroit Joshua. It occupied hilly country, thereby enhancing tribal protection in fractious times. Its long, western slopes constituted some of the finest land in Palestine, with many links to and from the maritime plain. It boasted higher rainfall and better drainage for the lucrative, seasonal production of corn, wine, raisins, figs, fruits olives and oil. Moreover, major roadways criss-crossed Ephraimite land, thus facilitating commercial activities in all directions.

Significantly, plentiful supplies of limestone were at hand enabling the military-minded, beligerent Ephraimites to build sophisticated walled defences and fortresses throughout the country. All in all, the territory of Ephraim offered Joshua and his tribe every prospect of a highly-prosperous, contented existence.

Although their immigrant number was small -

just 32,500, down from a wandering, desert population of 40,500 - the ambitiously-determined Ephraimites slowly but surely gained great wealth, power and authority, notwithstanding the loss of some 42,000 military personnel in their spectacularly disastrous war with the Gileadites. Although the precise number of Ephraimite casualties has long been the subject of scholarly dispute, the tally sufficed to confirm a complete Gileadite victory. For the Ephraimites, that defeat - as recounted in the Password narrative - effectively brought their tribal numbers, strength and political influence to a standstill for at least one generation. Despite the disaster, however, Ephraimite growth revived and flourished principally owing to the wisely-chosen, central location of the tribal territory in Canaan. That continued to be a hectic and profitable focal point for all trading activities from north to south and from east to west. Also, since the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle were kept inside Ephraimite territory at Shiloh and Bethel, the tribe became the obligatory hosts for all religious gatherings of the other 11 Israelite tribes. Thus, their status as the leading host remained fundamentally uncontested for the next 400-500 years, during which the temperamental Ephraimites maintained an obdurate pre-eminence at all times. They considered themselves as the first among equals, the primary political and coercive influence over an entire nation devoid at the time of any central government. Their unrelenting behaviour led the other tribes to deservedly denigrate them as clamorous, turbulent, rebellious, stiff-necked, haughty, tenacious, domineering, discontented! Not until King David proclaimed Jerusalem to be the capital city of all Israel and the permanent home for the Ark of the Covenant and the Jewish religion did Ephraimite power commence its slow decline. However, whilst still on the crest of their self-appointed authority, the Ephraimites in 930 b.c., the year of King Solomon's death, led the 10 northern tribes in a successful revolt against

the south (Solomon's Kingdom of Judah) and established their own Kingdom of Israel, often referred to as the Northern Kingdom or the Kingdom of Ephraim, obviously reflecting the tribe's political importance. From then on, both kingdoms remained fiercely combative and even their various tribes relentlessly engaged in internal religious confrontations that lasted until 587 b.c.

In 722 b.c., the Northern Kingdom of Ephraim fell to the Assyrians who then cleared out the privileged and high-ranking inhabitants, deporting large numbers to Mesopotamia whilst gradually assimilating others in an over-all act of very deliberate ethnic cleansing. These purges were mostly responsible for the eventual disappearance of the tribe of Ephraim and the nine other confederacy tribes scattered across northern Palestine. Their populations have become known in legend as the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.

As is colourfully conveyed to us in its descriptive commentary, the 2nd Degree Password is declared to have originated in the immediate aftermath of the bloody conflict between the Gileadites and Ephraimite raiders intent on appropriating some or all of war-plunder captured by General Jephtha from his Ammonite enemy. The veiled moral behind the defeat and humiliation of Ephraimite haughtiness, aggression and arrogance derives from a one-sided expectation of acquiring the rich spoils of the war without participating in the battle, or that reward must not be expected without effort and work. First-ordered as a vengeful test-word by Jephtha "to distinguish friend from foe" at "the passages of the River Jordan", it became in due course the term decreed by King Solomon (999 b.c. - 930 b.c.) to safeguard right of entry into his Temple's middle chamber, the Holy Place (Hekhal). For Fellow Craft and Master Masons everywhere, Solomon's Password - which "can be given freely and at length" (fortunately without lethal consequences these days!) - always accompanies the Pass Grip of the 2nd Degree.

# Remembering V. Wor. Bro. Ronnie Shellard (1936–2025)

It is with great sadness that we mark the passing of our dear friend and Brother, V. Wor. Bro. Ronnie Shellard, who left us on 22nd August 2025. To Betty, Keith, Stuart, Audrey, Jean, and the wider family, we send our deepest sympathy and affection.

Ronnie came to Cork as a small boy and, in his daughter Audrey's words, had "a typical Church of Ireland childhood." What followed, however, was anything but ordinary. Over the decades, Ronnie became one of those rare people who seemed to be part of the very foundations of both Lodge and Garryduff Sports Club life.

Within St. Fin Barre's Lodge No. 8, there was not a role he didn't hold. Always reliable, always ready to step in at short notice, Ronnie was the steady hand you could depend on. His years as Almoner stand out—he had a way of making everyone feel important, listened to, and cared for. He never sought attention, but his wisdom and kindness were quietly shared with all who asked (and many who didn't even need to). Ronnie was one of the regulars at the Masonic Coffee morning in Garryduff Sports Club every Wednesday morning. Even over the past year, when he was quite ill, he made it his priority to attend the coffee morning, with the help of his daughter,

Jean. Ronnie regaled us with many stories of his exploits and insights into life in Cork over eight decades.

Of course, Ronnie was every bit as well known on the bowls green as in the Lodge room. His name is etched on more club trophies than we could list here, and the stories of his winning shots—sometimes played in near darkness—will be told for years to come. He was twice Garryduff Sports Club President, a loyal volunteer barman, and a man who could be found helping out in a hundred little ways that made all the difference. His crowning sporting honour came in 2014, when he became the first Cork man ever to serve as



V. Wor. Bro. Ronnie Shellard

President of the Bowling League of Ireland. Yet, when we think of Ronnie, it is not just titles and achievements that come to mind. We remember his quick wit, razor-sharp humour, infectious smile that could light up a room, and the genuine welcome he gave to everyone he met. He had that rare gift of leaving people better than he found them. Ronnie Shellard was a stalwart, a gentleman, and above all, a friend. He will be missed by all who had the pleasure to know him—but he will also be remembered with fondness, laughter, and no small measure of pride.

May he Rest in Peace and rise in Glory.



# Bezaleel Lodge No. 234 seek refuge In Rugby due to overcrowding!

**Writes Bro. Damien Gash**

In February some of members of 234 packed their bags (some of which overpacked leading to Ryanair increased profits) and headed across the pond to Rugby where we had been kindly invited by WB Maxwell, who is a valued member of both lodges, to attend the installation of officers of Eastfield lodge 8959. Not wishing to bore you with the travel details but after a brief six hour trip we arrived at the historical town of rugby. Its beauty and history were apparent. After a well-earned lunch and a tour of the town where the game of Rugby was founded, we prepared ourselves as best we could for and headed for Arnold House for the installation meeting and festivities. On arrival one couldn't avoid being taken back by the premises, a beautiful art deco building only a stones throw from the town centre. On the ground floor a function room and bar that any hotel would be delighted to have. The atmosphere the moment we arrived was apparent, relaxed, friendly, welcoming and warm. We were quickly made feel at ease and shown around and given a rundown how the evening events would go.

As the meeting was about to begin 234 members huddled in a pack like a rugby team coming up with a plan for the next lineout, but once again the members of 8959 and the tyler guided us.



W. Bro. Maxwell at the door of the hotel welcoming the weary travellers.

Now I always feel one of the best parts of visiting is playing spot the difference to see what slight differences are in the rituals. There was no slight here! while the principal was the same. It was very different from what I knew which led to a little bit of confusion at times but also made for a most enjoyable and interesting meeting. The lodge room itself was a large room where I think a hundred people would fit comfortably. As you walk in the door you are welcomed by a large pipe organ, with a bright and airy feel with a high ceiling. Afterwards we went down stairs for the installation dinner. Well what can one say only WoW. They really pulled out all the stops and every part of the dinner was just fantastic. Now as with anything masonic

there is traditions and rituals now this is where we got very lost at one stage i believe some of the irish brothers were doing the macarena and some doing the mexican wave but thankfully the incoming WM explained and slowed down and before long we were back on the level. WM Tim Murphy spoke and showed are appreciation the night was rounded off by by WB Gould telling his story about his pet parrot (if you have not heard it yet i would urge you to ask bro Gould when you next see him). We entered Arnold house at 7pm nothing but a bunch of strangers at 10pm i looked around the room there was no longer any strangers just Brothers enjoying the moment enjoying everything that the fraternity has to offer No matter what the difference in ritual or traditions or even country one thing was the same, an outreaching hand an open welcome a common ground. To the brethren and WM Willis of 8959 thank you and the members of 234 who did all the organising and especially WB Maxwell for the invite and for being such a good host.



W. Bro. Acton withholding the mysteries and privileges of free masonry from HM customs and border patrol.



The Brethren of Bezaleel Lodge after the installation of W. M. Bro Tim Wills of East fields Lodge No 8959.



Bezaleel Lodge 234 Kinsale hosting Neptune Lodge 190 Cóbh for the Entered Apprentice degree for Mr. Jon Demenkov. The meeting was spectacularly well attended with distinguished guests present such as the PGM RWBro Derek Dunne, esteemed brethren from Northern Ireland, Dublin, London, Essex and Jersey.



Visitors from a few Edinburgh Lodges pictured in Antient Bandon Lodge No.84 last April.



# Act of remembrance Grand Lodge of Ireland Molesworth street

Wednesday 12th November 2025

**Writes W. Bro David Peters**

On the 12th day of November 2025 seven brethren from the province of Munster gathered in Grand lodge for the annual service of remembrance, the party was led by PGI David Peters, the ceremony of laying the PGL wreath was performed by W. Bro Derek Molloy of lodge Hibernian lodge 95 The most worshipful grand master commented on the strong support from the province of Munster.



The Munster delegation at the Act of Remembrance at Grand Lodge.



# Grand Lodge Tercentenary Meeting Belfast



R.W. Bro J. Paul Harvey and his three hardworking assistants.

## R.W. Bro. Robert Bashford

---

Arrived at the Europa just after 12.00 Noon and found Rt Wor Bro J. Paul Harvey and his three hardworking assistants, busily engaged in getting the room prepared for this afternoon's meeting. Shortly thereafter Very Wor Bro David Robinson arrived, followed shortly thereafter by Very Wor Bro Barry S. Fawcett Grand Tyler and got their preparations underway. After some debate, it was decided to relocate the sales area inside the main hall and all the necessary tables, covers and sales material was sorted out and displayed to encourage our Brethren to buy early, buy often. Then of course more help arrived, when we were joined by Isobella, one of our hard working staff down in Molesworth Street, who spent the morning, travelling up from Dublin on a bus, on her way up to help with sales and support.

By now our Brethren were starting to assemble and many old friends arrived ready for an inter-

esting and enjoyable afternoon. Despite all the excitement with storm Amy, and the resultant disruption to trains and road transport, by 3pm the Hall was full to capacity. My general impression was that no more than half a dozen seats were un-occupied. Our Grand Lodge Officers were led in, sharp on 3.00pm by Most Wor Bro Richard S.G. Ensor, Most Wor Grand Master of The Grand Lodge of Ireland, accompanied by his Deputy Rt Wor Bro Leslie Nixon and Assistant Grand Master Rt Wor Bro John W. Montgomery. We then received delegations from The Grand Lodge of Greece – Most Wor Bro Ioannis Benetatos, Grand Master, Grand Lodge of Greece and Very Wor Bro Robert Elsener Grand Orator and Wor Bro Jason Gonce Grand Deacon from The Grand Lodge of Alabama, who were greeted in Due Form, Saluted and taken to their seats on the Dias. The roll was called, and the Grand Lodge was opened in Due Form. The Opening ode was heartily sung and then, we in the Northern Provinces learned quite a bit from the Presentations of our Most Wor Grand

Master, Rt Wor Deputy Grand Master, and the Assistant Grand Master. Between them we received a brief summary of our 300 year history and then moved on to learn a little about our Tercentenary celebrations in Dublin in June and Limerick in September. There were some 1000 Brethren present in St Patrick's Cathedral on the afternoon of Sunday the 22nd June to take part in the service of thanksgiving to celebrate 300 years of Irish Freemasonry.

The Most Wor Grand Master referred to the meeting of Glittering Star Lodge No 322 on the afternoon of Monday the 23rd, when Members of the Lodge presented a brief history of their military Lodge from its Constitution in 1759. He expressed his praise of the Lodge Master Very Wor Bro Tony Darlison, and then went on to advise the Brethren of his sympathy on learning of the unexpected death of Very Wor Bro Darlison, a few short weeks after their meeting in Dublin. He then referred to the Lodge Ireland 2000 meeting later that afternoon and then went on to tell us quite a bit about the

Tercentenary celebrations in The Dublin Royal Convention Centre on Tuesday the 24th June 2025. In the after noon a further celebration of music and the spoken word was held in the Convention Centre for Brethren, their wives, and friends and in the evening a Gala Banquet was held, with entertainment and an after party which ran on to 1.00am on the Wednesday morning.

As you can see Brethren, we all got a great flavour of our celebrations in Dublin on the day and then we learned a little more about the Limerick meeting. Grand Lodge business resumed with the recognition of a number of Foreign Grand Lodge Representatives followed by the presentation of Honorary ranks to a number of worthy Brethren throughout the Constitution. By now, the afternoon was drawing to a close and after the charity collection was lifted and announcements presented Grand Lodge was closed and, we all made our way either to the Banquet in City Hall or slowly homewards.



Newly invested as Representative at Grand Lodge of the Grand Lodge of Texas (Prince Hall). R.W. Bro. Vincent O' Donovan pictured with M.W.Bro. Richard Ensor, R.W. Bro. Derek Dunne PGM and officers and brethren from Munster at the Grand Lodge meeting in Belfast.

# Lady Freemason Appeal

Provincial Grand Lodge of Munster



Visit

[www.ladyfreemasonappeal.com](http://www.ladyfreemasonappeal.com)

or scan the QR Code beside

SCAN ME



# *The* Plumblíne

*To submit articles for 2026 issue of  
The Plumblíne,  
please forward them to:*

***R.W. Bro. Vincent O'Donovan***  
***vincent@carrigdhoun.com***