

# The Square and Compasses.

A newsletter for the Grand Lodge of South Africa. No. 134 March 2023



Most Worshipful Brother John Smith OSAI MSA.

## Masonic Obligations and their Meaning

In every degree we progress through and in every office to which we are elected or appointed in our Lodges, in our Provincial Grand Lodges and in Grand Lodge we are requested to take an obligation on the Volume of the Sacred Law and in the presence of our fellow brethren. While these obligations may differ in content and length, there is a common thread in every Masonic obligation in which we promise to fulfil certain duties. None of these duties are in conflict with those which we owe to the Great Architect of the Universe, to the laws of our Country or to our families and fellow men. In the Apprentice Degree we promise, for example, to observe the golden rule to “do unto others as we would have them do unto us”; to obey the Brethren to whom the management of the Lodge has been entrusted as well as the Constitution, Laws and Regulations of the Grand Lodge. When a member is elected as Presiding Master of his Lodge he must, for example, promise to maintain and uphold the dignity of his Lodge and to watch over its glory, welfare and prosperity. This is similar to the obligations taken by a Provincial Grand Master on accepting the appointment to this office and by the Grand Master on being elected to the highest office in any Grand Lodge.

What do these promises or obligations mean? In this context, a promise is defined as a declaration or assurance that a person will do something. It is that person’s word of honour, pledge, vow or guarantee and the persons to whom the promise is made can expect the person making the promise to do what he is promising to do. As far back as 1722 it was accepted

that a Lodge is not a building or a place but rather an assemblage of Freemasons who possess a Volume of the Sacred Law, a square, a compass and a Charter or Warrant of Constitution which empowers them to perform the work which is described therein. In other words, a Lodge is the members of the group which is now called by a specific name, for example Lodge X. The member of this group who is elected as the Presiding Master promises to maintain and uphold the dignity of each and every member of this group and to watch over each and every member’s glory, welfare and prosperity. This is a very onerous obligation.

Masonic obligations are therefore central to the principles and values of Freemasonry and are the foundation of Masonic teaching. They are an essential part of every ceremony where a member is requested to promise to fulfil any duty and must be taken seriously. The principles of Freemasonry remind every member to live a life of integrity, to practice high moral standards and to be of service to all persons. Masonic obligations encourage members to be dedicated to Freemasonry and to the members of the community in which they live and work. These obligations are therefore not only essential to the fraternity of Freemasons but are also significant to society.

William Preston, a renowned Freemason, stated that union is cemented by sincere attachment in the Lodge and pleasure is reciprocally communicated in the cheerful observances of every office. Tools and implements of architecture have been selected to imprint serious truths on our memory and so the principles and tenets of Freemasonry have been transmitted by its members through the ages. Albert Mackey, the author of Jurisprudence of Freemasonry, stated that there are no secrets to Masonic obligations and more injury has been done to Freemasonry by needless reserve than by liberal publication of its principles and values. By complying strictly with our Masonic obligations we will therefore continue to build a multi-cultural brotherhood of good men who practice brotherly love and benevolence and who are united in the enhancement of truth, wisdom, high moral standards, equality and justice and who are committed to making the World a better place for all persons.

**MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA  
Grand Master**

**A good and true Mason  
would be just even if there were  
no laws, human or divine, except  
those written in his heart by the  
finger of his divine Creator.**

— THE FARMERS ALMANAC FOR 1823

## Central Weekend a Great Success

Over the past few years we really have got into the habit of making Divisional AGM weekends extremely busy. This year's visit to Bloemfontein was no exception. We all came out of it feeling totally exhausted but agreed that it had been very worthwhile. We started early on Friday 31 March with our Annual Chain's Conference, followed by a 1<sup>st</sup> degree working and a formal dinner. On Saturday morning we had a Grand Committee meeting, Saturday afternoon was the Central Division AGM and Saturday evening saw us much enjoying a very informal braai together.

## The Annual Chain's Conference

The 2023 Chain's Conference was directed by the Deputy Grand Master, RW Bro Brandon Topham. The central theme was "Growing our Numbers" and the 30 delegates encompassed chain-bearers at all levels within our organisation and from all of our Divisions.

After the Grand Secretary had given the delegates an end 2022 overview on exactly where we were at as far as our Divisional head-counts were concerned, RW Bro Topham set the parameters for the day ahead. It was not going to be a formal meeting as such and we would not be having a number of presentations on different topics. It was rather going to be an informal, open-ended discussion where the participants would be given the opportunity to share their opinions and contribute any ideas which they felt could make a practical contribution to our Grand Lodge's progress.



The ideas were varied and diverse. There were many different opinions and it was exciting to hear the thoughts expressed. Random comments included:

- Our Lodges have got to be attractive places for new members to settle into.
- Our members don't know what we are selling!
- We must use Social Media more effectively.
- GLSA membership should reflect our country's national demographics.
- We should have more "special interest" Lodges.
- Our Past Masters need to actively encourage and support the new Worshipful Masters more.
- We need to tighten up our Advancement Criteria – and also implement Worshipful Master programs.
- Our Brethren must support our new initiatives.
- We should involve our youngsters more in our top level debates and strategic planning.
- We have the tools such as GrandView. We need to be using them more effectively.
- Appendant bodies such as Royal Arch and AASR are integral and appealing parts of our offering.

The ideas were many and far-reaching. Some, of course, were far more practical than others. They were all, however, thought-provoking and will assist all of us as we look to making our plans for the future.

In closing, we appreciated the Richard Branson quotation provided by our Grand Master – "If your dreams don't scare you, they are not worth having".

## Dagbreek Initiate Bro Juan Botes

On Friday 31 March, Losie Dagbreek chose to take advantage of the number of experienced ritualists attending the Central weekend and involved a few of them in their 1<sup>st</sup> degree working. The Lodge's new Master, Wor Bro John Meyer, was in the chair and he really performed extremely well. Bro Juan Botes was the candidate and he had an excellent experience.



*Bro Juan Botes with MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA on his right and Wor Bro John Meyer on his left.*

After the working we had a crowded but most enjoyable formal festive board. As always, the food was top class and much enjoyed by all present.

## The Central Division Annual Meeting

This took place on Saturday 1 April and was to be RW Bro Frans Appelgryn's last as Provincial Grand Master of Central Division. The afternoon was well organised and everything was attended to as was to be expected. As always, there were several awards made and honours bestowed, but this simply makes the event that much more interesting. In our picture (r), Wor Bro Donovan le Roux is congratulated by PGM, RW Bro Frans Appelgryn on his installation as the Division's Secretary and Treasurer.



Over the past few years Wor Bro Riaan Croucamp has regularly impressed with his work as the PGL Secretary and the Grand Master, MW Bro Smith, took the opportunity to recognise the contribution that he has made.

The inter-Division camaraderie was highlighted by Central Division's presentation of a very attractive gong to Eastern Cape for use in their new Temple



*Wor Bro Theoniel Pieterse, MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA, RW Bro Keith Hutton OSM, RW Bro Frans Appelgryn*



*Seated in this Central AGM picture are RW Bros Alf Brönner, Johan Britz MSA, Godfrey Place, Avron Jacobson MSA, MW Bros Geoff Edwards OSM, John Smith OSM MSA, RW Bro Frans Appelgryn with RW Bro Vic Müühlenbeck amongst Visitors.*



*In early March Consistory Unie advanced Ven Bros Pieter Loots (4L) and Francois Dauth (5L) to the 30th degree. The meeting took place in the Kimberley Temple and the attendees included AASR Lt Commander M Ill Bro Cor van Zyl (2L).*

### Deputy Grand Master visits Liberia

The Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Liberia recently celebrated 155 years since their consecration. They have been very supportive of our Grand Lodge and it was appropriate that we support them as well. It was decided that Deputy GM, RW Bro Brandon Topham, would represent us and he duly undertook the long and tiring journey to North Africa. On his return he spoke



in glowing terms of his experiences and the lessons that he had learned from the other Grand Lodges.

In our picture he is seen with Liberia's Grand Master, MW Bro Anthony Deline, who had so much enjoyed his visit to Cape Town in 2022.

### de Goede Kaap Elevates Jarred Clarke

On Wednesday 15 March Royal Arch Chapter de Goede Kaap elevated Comp Jarred Clarke to the Excellent Master degree. He is seen below (4L) with his Companions, including the First Grand Principal, MEC John Smith OSM MSA (2L) and the Chapter's MEZ, MEC Malcolm Gessler (3L).



On Wednesday 31 May Chapter de Goede Kaap will present "How Royal Arch Freemasonry can Enrich your Masonic Journey". This attempts to give non RA members an overview of what RA really offers.

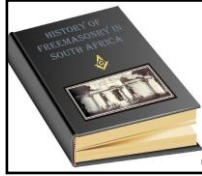
## GLSA Online Shop

If you are looking to purchase GLSA or Masonic items or memorabilia, log into our GLSA Online Shop and explore our offerings. The link is below:

[GLSA Online Shop](#)

There are various items available, but 2 well worth your consideration are:

**The Heritage Book** In 2022, South Africa celebrated 250 years of Freemasonry. To mark this event, we published a Heritage Book which explored our history over all Constitutions and Divisions. A few remaining copies of the A4 book are still available.



### GLSA and RA Ties

If you wear ties to work or for any other purpose, you really should include these handsome additions in your collection. The GLSA tie is navy blue, while the RA tie comes in navy blue or red.



## Electing the New Grand Master

As you are probably aware, the Grand Master, MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA, completes his term of Office this year. The new Grand Master will be elected by the Grand Conclave (GLSA Constitution – Article 14) in Durban on 20 May 2023.

The Divisions have nominated 2 Brethren for the Conclave to consider and ballot for, these being:

**RW Bro Godfrey Place:** an Assistant Grand Master who is based in Northern Division. Spent 3 years as Provincial Grand Master before his promotion to his present Office in 2022. Is currently the Chairman of the Constitution Committee and serves on the Education and Ritual Committees. He is Master of Prins Frederik. Godfrey has clear ideas on the need for proper planning and is determined that our Grand Lodge will provide all its members with the best possible Masonic experience.



**RW Bro Keith Hutton OSM:** the Provincial Grand Master of the Eastern Cape Division. Was appointed to his current position when the Division was going through a very difficult time and has handled the challenge extremely well. Has relocated a Lodge and opened new ones and has found, purchased and upgraded a very impressive new Temple. Keith loves all aspects of Freemasonry and has senior positions in both Royal Arch and the AASR. He will strongly promote such Masonic precepts as Truth, Morality and Charity.



## Almoner's Report

It is with much sadness that we advise you of the passing of RW Bro Hymie Becker (de Goede Verwachting). Hymie had belonged to our Grand Lodge for over 63 years and was one of our best loved members. For most of his Masonic life he had been a member of St Jan in Malmesbury, only moving when they went into recess. He had been a PGL chain, a Grand Orator and had Grand Junior Warden conferred upon him. Our deepest sympathy is extended to Rose and the family.



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 Kevin Smith	082 8883890
Central Wor Bro Johnny Cambanis	083 9865397
Eastern Wor Bro Andrew Pover	084 2597108
E Cape Wor Bro Ian Hetherington	082 9545297

## PGL Northern visit Losie Brits

On a regular basis our PGL Chains visit the various Lodges in their Divisions. This is to both ensure that we are all applying the same standards and also to provide advice and support where it is needed.



Wor Bro Wikus Steyl, Assistant PGM of Northern Division, paid a visit to Losie Brits where he spent an evening with Wor Bro Pieter Pretorius and his team.

## Are Jeffrey's Bay the "Noisy Neighbours"?

Some years ago Sir Alex Ferguson, the Manager of Manchester United, started calling the fast emerging Manchester City "the Noisy Neighbours".

Our newest Lodge, Jeffrey's Bay, are a bit like that. They are everywhere and involved in everything. The Lidderds, Rademeyers and their team are a fun addition to the GLSA and any noise is most welcome!

