

VICTORIA LODGE OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
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RECOLLECTIONS OF SCOTTISH LODGES

by

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Imagine traveling to 10 Scottish Masonic Lodges in less than 3 weeks!. Visiting Lodges like Mother Kilwinning No.0, Scoon and Perth No.3 as well as the Grand Lodge of Scotland. That's what we accomplished on our Grand Lodge of British Columbia Tour of Scotland in April and May earlier this year. A total of 73 Masons their wives and friends accompanied M. W. Bro. Alexander Reid and the Northern Lights Degree Team From Discovery Lodge No.149 of Campbell River. The 21-day tour was arranged by W. Bro. Simon Sheppard of Travel Options while the Lodge visits were coordinated by V. W. Bro. Bill McSeveney, Grand Director of Ceremonies.

The Northern Lights Degree Team exemplified the Master Mason Degree six times following the B. C. Ancient or American ritual with a precise yet entertaining manner. Dressed in full Highland apparel featuring the Maple Leaf tartan; the team made imposing figures especially in the small Scottish Lodgerooms and easily captured the attention of the Brethren with their flawless floor work and polished oratorical skills. News of the Northern Lights Degree Team's presentations spread rapidly and some of the Scottish Freemasons traveled over 100 miles to see them perform. In my mind I can still see W. Bro. Mark Donaldson striding across the floor and hear the distinctive voices of W. Bro. Ed Lomax and W. Bro. David Davidson echoing throughout the Scottish Lodgerooms. The team from Campbell River were truly great Canadian Masonic ambassadors

Before we consider the Scottish Lodges individually, let us scan the itinerary
Monday 28 April 1997 Lodge Scoon and Perth No.3 Perth

Tuesday 29 April Lodge Dundee Ancient No.9 Dundee

Thursday 1 May Grand Lodge of Scotland Edinburgh
Sir Robert Moray No.1641 Edinburgh

Saturday 3 May St. John Kilwinning No.28 Kirkintilloch

Monday 5 May. Lodge Mother Kilwinning No.0 Kilwinning
Lodge St. James No.125 Ayr

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Thursday 8 May Lodge St. George No.190 Aberdeen

Saturday 10 May Lodge St. Duthus No.82 Tain

Tuesday 13 May Lodge Dunoon Argyll No.335 Dunoon

Wednesday 14 May *Lodge Cadder Freestone No.1584 Glasgow

* not visited by this writer

LODGE SCOON AND. PERTH No.3

Lodge Scoon and Perth No.3 had a magnificent Lodgeroom with twenty Ionic and two Corinthian pillars. The story of Ju. . was illustrated in ten frames on the north wall while "Freemasonry through the Ages" was depicted on the opposite side. The four seasons were represented on a frieze beneath the ceiling and four large murals of Masonic significance completed the enchanting pictorial presentation. The use of painting on this scale is never seen in Lodges in British Columbia and we would obviously benefit from the addition of an appropriate mural in most Lodge halls. Another outstanding feature of the Lodgeroom of Scoon and Perth was the heptagonal altar. This seven sided altar was further adorned with an inlaid light that was on when the Lodge was at

labour. This beautiful fixture must be unique in the world of Freemasonry.

LODGE DUNDEE - ANCIENT NO. 49

At first our coach driver had some difficulty locating Lodge Dundee Ancient No.49 but with the help of some Scottish Masons, who noticed our plight, we found 7 Artillery Lane. Our group was met courteously at the door, directed to a room to don our regalia, then requested to sign the porchbook. - The Degree Team from Discovery Lodge No.149 in Campbell River and the current Grand Lodge Officers were admitted separately while the remainder of the visiting Canadians entered with the Scottish Freemasons. This procedure was to be followed in most Lodges that we visited. When our group was introduced by M. W. Bro. Alex. Reid, the room was very, very crowded. It was an honour for me to be invited by M.W. Bro. Grant Wardlaw to sit on the raised dais along with our Past Grand Masters. However as the meeting progressed the room became hotter and hotter. Unfortunately for me with my chair at the edge of the platform; I could not relax. I observed with envy some of our Canadian Masons, such as R.W. Bro. Stanley Horner of Vancouver and Quadra No.2 lounging comfortably at the back enjoying the meeting. Some were even dozing off when the heat became too much.

The ritual practiced in Dundee Ancient was a form of Emulation, and was fascinating to watch.. Not only were the aprons and sashes of the local and visiting Scottish Masons of varied colours and tartans but some of the Masonic signs also differed slightly. Obviously the colour of regalia and selection of ritual must to a large extent be left to the individual Lodges.

Fortunately for us, the Grand Lodge Officers were excused before the closing. A cool complimentary beverage was very much appreciated in the banquet room. An excellent buffet followed. At Scottish Masonic meetings, collections for charity are regularly made. Almost one hundred fifty pounds were donated at this meeting of Lodge Dundee Ancient No.49.

THE GRAND LODGE OF' SCOTLAND

The Grand Lodge of Scotland schedules quarterly communications. When our group arrived at George Street, Edinburgh shortly before one on Thursday 1 May, we were led to a room next to their museum to prepare for the meeting. We were next directed to excellent seats to the left of the dais in the Grand Lodge Room. The hall was very large. It had a balcony and an exceptionally high ceiling. As the organ boomed out an anthem, the various Grand Lodge Officers proceeded to their stations with all the colour, pomp and ceremony that one would expect. The Grand Master Mason, Lord Burton, opened the session. The guests, including our group from British Columbia, were warmly welcomed. The Grand Secretary and the Grand Master Mason conducted the business very expeditiously. An item was read

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aloud. The assembled Scottish Brethren showed their approval by rapidly stamping their feet. Then the next resolution was read out. Once again followed by a stamping of feet. Evidently, each proposal was dealt with in a more democratic manner in a General Purpose Meeting preceding the Quarterly Communication.

The singing of the Brethren at the Grand Lodge Communication must be mentioned. Was it the acoustics of the hall, the excitement of the organ, the enthusiasm of the Scottish Freemasons, or a combination of all these elements? Whatever, the singing was fantastic! It was inspiring; made you feel good about being a Freemason. Some enthusiastic singing by our Brethren would probably improve the Communications of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia. Surprisingly the closing was very short.

LODGE SIR ROBERT MORAY No.1641

After some light refreshments in a nearby pub around the corner from the Grand Lodge building on George Street, many of our group proceeded to 19 Hill Street. This address is probably meaningless to most of you, but Mary 5 Chapel, the Lodge of Edinburgh No.1 likely rings a bell. A number of Lodges meet at this famous location. We were attending the installation of the Master and Officers of Lodge Sir Robert. Moray No.1641. This Lodge of Instruction and Research bears the name of the earliest initiate to Scottish Freemasonry on "English" soil. "Mr. the Right Honerbell Mr. Robert Moray, General Quartermaster to the Armie of Scotland" was initiated on the 20th of May 1641 at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Once again the Lodgeroom was very crowded. I felt fortunate when offered a seat in the front row. I felt even more blessed when I learned that the Brother offering the seat was Ewan Rutherford. Presiding

Master of the Lodge of Edinburgh (Mary's Chapel) No.1. He kindly gave me his Lodge meeting card. This pleasant experience was short as the Grand Lodge Officers from B.C. were called out to form up then enter the room as a group. Imagine my frustration when I learned that only the Grand Masters were to be introduced and that somebody else now occupied the seat next to the distinguished yet friendly Brother from Lodge No.1. S.R.

The ceremony installing the new Master of Sir Robert Moray Lodge was somewhat similar to a Board of Installed Masters in B.C. This part was conducted by Lord Elgin. When he called for the Master's signs, the responses were so diverse that you would have been overwhelmed. The remainder of the Officers were invested by the Immediate Past Master.

Following the meeting, a banquet was scheduled but there were not enough seats for V. W Bro. Bob Stewart of Goldstream Lodge No.161 and myself. We finished our drinks at the well-stocked bar then enjoyed the cool, refreshing air as we strolled along Hill Street looking for a pub that served fish and chips.

LODGE: ST. JOHN KILWINNING NO.28

About 3 p.m. the Canadian Masons left the Central Station Hotel for Lodge St. John Kilwinning at Kirkintilloch in Dunbartonshire north of Glasgow. One of their members told me that the normal attendance at the Lodge was about thirty but approximately one hundred twenty were there that Saturday. The fame of the Northern Lights Degree Team from Lodge No.149 had spread speedily. Some of the visiting Scottish Masons had traveled over one hundred miles to see this team perform. Because the meetings were becoming lengthy, the Presiding Master of St. John Kilwinning, R. W. Bro. Thomas Christie, had been given the choice of seeing half the Master Mason Degree or the full show. He chose the latter. The exemplification was again a great success. As in previous meetings, M. W. Bro. Alex Reid and W. Bro. Richard Ebbert, Worshipful Master of Discovery Lodge No.149 exchanged gifts with the host

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Lodge. Later while we gathered at the bar, - the Lodgeroom was transformed into a banquet hall. We were served a full meal as the 'Harmony Menu' indicated and the members of St. John Kilwinning that sat nearby made sure that our glasses were topped up for the toasts. As a treat, we were entertained by Benn Gunn, a noted comedian who often stars with the White Heather Show on its tours of Canada. However, because of my unfamiliarity with the Glaswegian dialect I missed many of his obviously hilarious jokes; what I really needed was V. W Bro.

John Russell of Discovery Lodge No.149 nearby to translate.

LODGE MOTHER KILWINNING No.0

Members of Mother Kilwinning were waiting for us when our two coaches arrived in the village north of Ayr. The visiting Masons from British Columbia were ushered into the Lodgeroom and a brief but very informative history of Lodge Mother Kilwinning No.0 was presented by the current Worshipful Master. It is recognized as the oldest Scottish Lodge and is, in fact, a Provincial Grand Lodge by itself. Meanwhile our ladies had been guided through the enthralling Lodge museum. The groups exchanged locales then later met for drinks in their very comfortable lounge.

When the Grand Lodge of Scotland was formed in October of 1736, the 33 Lodges that met were assigned a temporary place on the Roll in the order in which they had entered the hall. On St. Andrew's Day November 30) the following year, the Grand Lodge voted to number the Lodges according to seniority based documentation and those Lodges producing no verified documents would be placed at the end of the Roll. Because their earliest entry in a Minute Book was verified as July 1599, the Lodge of Edinburgh (St. Mary's) was assigned the Number One. Kilwinning Lodge was not able to produce any documentation that would place their foundation at an earlier date even though they claimed that their Lodge had been founded in the 12th century and that Mother Kilwinning should be the Heid (Head) Lodge of Scotland." Years later in 1743, Lodge Mother Kilwinning declared its independence and for the next 70 years she granted charters in Scotland, North America and other overseas locations. These Lodges usually had the word "Kilwinning" in their titles. However, in 1813, the Grand Lodge of Scotland and the Kilwinning Lodges reached a reconciliation. Lodge Mother Kilwinning now appeared at the head of the Roll of Scottish Lodges with the number "0" assigned

LODGE ST. JAMES No.125

Around six o'clock on the afternoon of 5 May, our group assembled for drinks in the lounge of the Caledonian Jarvis Hotel in Ayr. About 6.40 p.m. the Masons from B.C. walked about half a block. towards the Firth of Clyde to visit Lodge St. James No.125 at 26 Fullarton Street. There was a huge turnout; possibly 150 Freemasons. The exemplification went very well but the meeting did not finish until about eleven and once again the room had overheated. Luckily when we went downstairs, cool drinks were waiting. I chose my favourite Scottish ale. After delicious lentil chicken soup we were served tatties, neeps and haggis which I enjoy. Ayrshire is. "Burns' Country" so it was not surprising that the entertainment consisted of a talented Scot reciting Tam O'Shanter" and a skillful Ayrshire fiddler playing tunes of Robert Burns.

I don't know whether I expected the songs of Robert Burns to be played on the bagpipes or to be sung but to bear them played by the fiddler, who performed just a few feet away, was a pleasant surprise. The music that he produced was truly a joy to hear.

Later I learned that.: Robert Burns had. written about 200 songs. Burns loved native fiddle music that played a very important role in the everyday lives of ordinary Scottish folk. He wrote words for traditional Scottish fiddle music rather than composing his own scores. Many of these tunes exist today, only because Robert Burns was able to match his poems to the music.

LODGE .ST. GEORGE No.190

Lodge St. George meets in a very elegant Masonic Hall at 85 Crown Street in Aberdeen. This

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elegance was further emphasized in the stunning entrance hall and the tastefully appointed Lodgeroom. Because their organist was unavailable that Thursday evening; V. W. Bro. Bill. McColl of Vancouver & Quadra No.2 was asked to play for the meeting. We were admitted to the Lodgeroom early, before the Lodge so that V. W. Bro. McColl could familiarize himself with the organ. While I was looking about the beautifully paneled room, one of the Past Masters of St. George Lodge asked if I knew the story of the "eyes of the maidens" that adorned the cornice. My reply was that I would like to know.. To the best of my memory, he related that the architect in charge of the building, apparently a Freemason, had insisted that the eyes of the comely maidens would appear closed to the actions of the Brethren about the floor of the Lodge yet open to those Brothers seated on the sidelines. Thus, the secrets of Scottish Freemasonry would remain intact. Incidentally, V. W. Bro. McColl did an admirable job.

LODGE ST. DUTHUS No.82

My ancestors on my father's side came from the village of Tam in Ross-shire, 35 miles north east of Inverness. Although some of my relatives had been Freemasons, I often wondered if any ancestors in Scotland had been members of the Craft. Last January I finally got "a-round to-it" and wrote the Secretary of Lodge St. Duthus No.82 in Tam requesting that he search the Lodge Roll for George Smith, shoemaker, born in Tam 1826, married Margaret Dow 1850 and resided on Chapel Street. The Secretary, Bro. Patience, searched but could find no trace of my great grandfather. However, he did offer to arrange for the Lodge to be open to view if I did travel to Tam and to go through the records of St. Duthus Lodge to check out the names of other ancestors.

As the train pulled out of Inverness Station, I felt a stir of excitement for I was returning to the home of my grandparents who had emigrated to British Columbia over a century ago. Brother Patience was on the platform in Tam (Baile Dhubnthaich in Gaelic).

The Brother Secretary drove to a nearby Old Cemetery where we looked for Smith graves. Unlike B.C. where it is a common name, there was only one family of Smiths in Tam a hundred years ago. Brother Patience drove up to the village. Then he gave an excellent tour of the Masonic Hall on Queen Street. He related that this was the third hall for Lodge St. Duthus which was chartered on February 2, 1761. The tessellated rug and the frieze around the ceiling were bordered with masonic symbols while the Master's and Wardens' Stations were decorated in three colours and appropriate working tools were depicted on the front panels. The Lodgeroom of St. Duthus was about the size of Sidney No.143. fine items were exhibited in the small archives. Before we left the Lodge, Brother Patience presented me with a Mark Master's Penny and a Commemorative shotglass. Unfortunately, I had brought nothing to give him in return. Nothing, except gratitude for his help and consideration on my special visit to Lodge St. Duthus No.82. As we exchanged a Masonic Grip just before parting, I felt how lucky I was to be a Freemason.

LODGE DUNOON ARGYLL No.335

Our visit to Dunoon Argyll. actually started with a reception for our mixed group at the Hafton Holiday Centre in Dunoon. It was a treat being piped into the main building where we were welcomed by the Worshipful Master of Lodge Dunoon Argyll No.335. Later that evening our coach delivered us to the Masonic

Hall at 145 Argyll Street where a savory buffet was waiting. The meeting went well in the classically decorated Lodgeroom. For a change our ladies joined us after Lodge closed. Once again the refreshment table was loaded with tasty items. This social setting gave us the opportunity to visit with our Scottish hosts and their wives. As a memento of our visit, the Masons from British Columbia were given glasses commemorating the 160th Anniversary of the founding of Lodge Dunoon Argyll No.33.

CONCLUSION

Each of the ten Lodges that our group visited was naturally different as far as physical
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arrangements, decor and atmosphere but all had one characteristic in common; that friendliness that radiates from sincere Masonic Brotherhood. Every Scottish Lodge made you feel welcome, made you feel at home and made you feel glad that you had come to visit.

REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Diary, Grand Lodge of B.C. Trip to Scotland April-May 1997
Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry, Mackey
Guide to Lodges in Scotland, Victoria Regalia, Edinburgh
Pocket Guide to Scottish Words, Glasgow
The Pocket History of Freemasonry, Pick & Night, London
Original Presentation Supplemented by Photographs most of which by Bro. Don Souza of Sebastopol, California

(This paper is accompanied by a small map of Scotland indicating the locations of the Lodges visited.)
