



# Mitre Review

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## CHANGE OF NAME

Mature consideration or a flash of inspiration has led us to change the title of these offerings from Mitre News to Mitre Review, the latter being a much more accurate reflection of the contents.

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## THE BITS THAT DON'T GO IN THE MINUTES!

The installation of Peter Myers in October went very well and was followed by an excellent meal. As the Representative of the RW PGM, W Bro Gerald Gelder, Prov GDC, commended the retiring WM, Dennis Carman, for battling so bravely against ill health to perform his duties during his year in the Chair, a sentiment echoed by those assembled. Dennis, in his new rôle as IPM, proposed Peter's health and spoke warmly of Peter's father-in-law and proposer, the late John Taylor, remarks which again were warmly applauded. At the instigation of David Marsh, our indefatigable Charity Steward, a raffle was held in aid of the Provincial Grand Charity and a cheque for £217.00 was handed to the Representative. On a much lighter note, the response to the toast to 'Our Guests' was given by W Bro David Baron, WM of the Ridings Tablers Lodge No 9596, who told perhaps the shaggiest 'shaggy dog' story we've heard for ages. When lost in the desert in future years, we shall be very careful not to be 'hambushed'!

Peter Myers' first ceremony in November, a First, was carried off with authority and wit. As the JW put it, there was a 'select attendance', but lack of numbers was made up for by great enthusiasm. Colin Thompson was the Initiate and made a very good impression both by his deportment and by the way in which he responded to his toast. The JW gave a commendably brief introduction to the toast to 'Our Guests' and it was a pleasure to hear an equally brief, but sincere, response from W Bro Ian Wright of Falcon Lodge No 1416. Ian is almost 'one of ours' as a regular

supporter of Lodge activities and as an Officer of our associated Chapter.

December's meeting was another pleasurable experience in Raising Karl Hardman. With visitors, there were forty-nine Brethren present, and there was a real feeling of sincerity, warmth and good humour both in the Lodge Room and at the meal afterwards. The JW was again in good form, combining a welcome to our guests with some thought-provoking comment, to which W Bro Chris Beddowes of St. Michael's Lodge No 4353 (Yorkshire West Riding) responded pleasantly. The raffle raised £118.00 for the Almoner's Fund and the WM exemplified the mood of the evening by making a presentation to Karl for his son, Ross, whose tenth birthday was on that day and who'd given his dad permission to be with us instead of being with him at home!

## CONGRATULATIONS

It was with great pleasure that we saw Steve Coupland wearing the deep blue collar and apron of his recently-awarded Metropolitan London Grand Rank, which equates to Provincial Grand Lodge membership. Apart from his support for us, Steve is a Past Master of The Rangoon and Ormond-Isles Lodge No 1268.

John Buckland risked life and limb by completing a sponsored parachute descent in aid of Yorkshire Cancer Research at Bridlington on 26 November and, in so doing, raised over £1100.00 for that very good cause. We gather that next he's to go in for sponsored wire-walking for charity in the new year. Any offers to join him?

## A BIT ABOUT THE WM

I was born in the village of Kirk Hammerton, then in the West Riding of Yorkshire and only about ten miles from York.

At the age of about six we moved to Bishopthorpe near York where I spent my formative years. I have (so far as I am aware) no Masonic connections in my life. My father was a motor engineer, specialising in heavy commercial vehicles and machinery and he spent most of my childhood working under the bonnet of some wagon or another.

This did give me several distinct advantages; firstly, I could drive by the time I was twelve and secondly, I got trips all over the country, after being secreted away in the cab of the firm's vehicles.

Secondary school for me was Tadcaster Grammar School, which meant an hour on the bus either way, but which did its level best to educate me. I often feel quite guilty that I don't have the relationship with my school that clearly many Mitre members have with Archbishop Holgate's, but I am proud to be associated (even if only by proxy) with the school.

I left school and went straight into the motor trade (it seemed the right thing to do at the time) where I spent fourteen years working for several companies and generally having a good time. In the early nineties, I realised it was time for a career so, seeing that the motor trade was never going to supply this, I decided to join the railway.

Living in Bishopthorpe, I lived right beside the then East Coast Main Line, and my lullaby throughout those early years was the sound of the twin Napier engines of the Deltic locomotives as they sped north and south on the line. So you could say that the railway was always in my blood.

To leave my 'glittering career' for a while, it was in eighties that I met the most important person in my life, my wife, Jane, and after a long engagement I finally got her down the aisle in 1988. Along with Jane, of course came her family, including W Bro John Taylor.

John joined Mitre in the late eighties and knowing him as I did I could be sure that there was nothing 'dodgy' about Masonry. This feeling was further confirmed by Jane's uncle, Ray Ingham, who was a long serving Mason down in Kent.

After speaking to them, I decided that I would like to become involved, so in the May of 1994 I was Initiated into Mitre at Duncombe Place. The rest, as they say 'is history' and here I am, a mere twelve years later, having the cheek to call myself Master of the Lodge.

And what a time those twelve years have been. I have done OK at the railway (survived privatisation at any rate) and worked all over the North of England and enjoyed (and continue to enjoy) almost every minute of it.

Best of all though, we have been blessed with two wonderful (if, at times, infuriating) children. James (now 7) and Sophie (nearly 4) make me realise every day what we are actually put on this planet for, and all I ever ask myself is why did we wait so long to have them. Then I look at our bank balance and realise. Having kids is certainly an expensive hobby.

What of Masonry? I was proved right. Nothing dodgy at all (at least nothing I have seen, but they could be keeping it from me). Both John and Ray are sadly no longer with us, but I am sure that they would be inordinately proud to see me where I am.

I am proud of being a Mason, I am extremely proud of belonging to Mitre. The reason is that what you get in a Lodge is genuine unpolluted friendship. If you have a piece of ritual to learn and you stand up there to speak it, everyone in that room is with you and wants you to succeed, and if you need the odd prompt, who cares? You did your best and that is all anyone can ask.

I am not a good Mason. (I wish I was). It is true that I can make a fair fist aof the odd bit of ritual, but to me Masonry is far more than that. I have never brought a new brother into our organisation (a shortfall I feel deeply) and I can't always attend as frequently as I would like, but nonetheless I am extremely pleased that you all felt confident enough to elect me as Master for this year.

John Taylor had a theme for his year. 'Involvement', he called it. Well, I have a theme too, and that is 'enjoyment'. I hope that in October when I install my replacement we can all say, 'That was a good year. We enjoyed ourselves.' (I know that I intend to).

I find visiting difficult, especially the early starts but I do want us to be represented, so if you fancy a visit, either to accompany me or (unfortunately) to go in my stead, then please speak to me or Brother Secretary and we will make the arrangements.

Instruction Lodge is vital too. Here we can all learn so much, but in an atmosphere nowhere near as pressured as Open Lodge. Instruction Lodge is invaluable, not only in giving greater understanding of the meanings of what we do and say in our ceremonies, but also in demonstrating and explaining some of the protocols, so if you have never been or have not attended for a while, come along to Connaught Court on the second Wednesday of the month. You never know what you will learn.

I would like to take this opportunity finally to thank all those who make Mitre what it is, not forgetting the officers who agreed to get involved this year. I may be the first Mason in my family, but I hope and trust I am not the last.

## CAROLS AND QUIZ

There was another full house on 9 December and the one hundred and three members and guests were in great form producing the most responsive singing we've had for years. We followed the usual format, with the carols and readings chosen by Peter and Jane Myers, who also read for us, and again had the great pleasure of involving the youngsters in judging the singing, which they did with great enthusiasm. The audiences' rendering of 'The Twelve days of Christmas', complete with suitable actions, earned a merited 10/10 from every judge. Bill Seddon again acted as MC and Chorus Master, while the real musicianship came from Nicholas Page, 'the Reginald Dixon of St. Saviourgate'. In the gap between the end of the singing and the serving of the meal, Peter made welcoming noises, thanked those who had been involved in the events of the evening, gave out the 'Parish notes' and showed his talent as a stand-up comedian. We're not sure if he should give up his day job or not! After a very satisfying meal, Tony Hodgson quizzed us in his inimitable fashion, raffle prizes were drawn and the party broke up at about 11.15. The raffle raised the splendid sum of £297.00 for the Almoner's Fund and there were many pleasing comments about the 'family' feel of the evening.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday, 24 February - Visit to the Theatre Royal to see 'Thoroughly Modern Millie', preceded by a meal at St. Saviourgate. Details and booking applications shortly.

Sunday, 25 March - 'The Organist Entertains' Nicholas Page at St Saviourgate, followed by Sunday lunch. Again, details and booking form to follow.

To be determined - An event based on the NRM, to be organised by the WM. We've heard the words 'Treasure Hunt' and a meal.

## ADMINISTRATION OF SOCIAL EVENTS

This will be undertaken this year by Tony Hodgson and Bill Seddon, and their wives, so don't be too surprised to receive notices from either of them. They'll try not to send out two notices for one event!

## OVER THE SEA TO.....?

Friday October 27th saw twenty-three hardy souls muster in 'Archie's' car park to board the bus on the first stage of their journey to Holland. No passports having been left at home this year, departure was pretty prompt - only ten minutes late - we picked up two more travellers at Wilberfoss and five others joined us at Hull though initially we were a bit worried about four of them. Chris and Peggy Stokoe and Mike and Kath Helliard had a most horrendous journey on the M1 from a posher part of England, but made it about ninety minutes later than anticipated and in time to join the party for the evening meal together and very enjoyable 'after proceedings' in the Piano Bar.

The crossing was good and, as expected, we were welcomed by our Dutch hosts of Three Pillars Lodge after disembarking. We had been given a programme of events which indicated that we'd leave the dockside and be transported to Delft, a distance of some ten miles, by 9.30 (all timings as usual being indicative, not absolute). It would seem that Delft had been moved overnight without notice being given to our Dutch guide, Brother Frank Lader, as we seemed to be taking a long time to reach it. In essence, we had come off the motorway at the wrong exit and became lost. We quite enjoyed the circular tour(s) of Delft, particularly that part which involved our driver, Glenn, trying to coax his 53-seater down a very narrow street made even more hazardous by a parked van and trailer in the charge of a workman who wouldn't move it. After a good deal of 'backing and filling' with clearances of less than an inch on either side, the workman, with some reluctance, moved his obstacles and off we went again. Frank, who is a lovely chap, had to endure a good deal of 'stick' for the remainder of the journey - and after - but as the son of an Englishman, he took it all in the spirit in which it was intended. In due course, we reached our goal, the lodge building Silentium, Delft, where refreshments had been arranged and where we were due to meet other visitors from a German Lodge in Darmstadt. They had finished their coffee before we arrived and were on their way out as we entered. The intended programme was to have taken us to Amsterdam by 11.30 to visit the Anne Frank House and to follow this by a gentle stroll through the historic suburb of Jordaan before lunching. Our hosts had been advised that no booking was possible on a Saturday for the Anne Frank House and that a short wait of no more than fifteen minutes might be necessary, but we were more than an hour later than planned and the queue for admission was at least a hundred yards long. A quick street corner meeting took little time to decide that a short stroll and lunch were the preferred options

and so we split into smaller escorted groups and did just that, regrouping at about 2.45 to board the coach and return to Rotterdam and the Hilton Hotel. This also took some time, as we had to return via Delft to drop off one of our escorts. We finally booked in at 4.10 having seen rather more of the Dutch scenery and the inside of our coach than either our hosts or we had intended.

But let it not be thought that our spirits were low! Tony Hodgson was our liaison man with the Dutch (alright, was in charge of our party) and had what might have been an unenviable task in communicating changes in the plan. ('What plan?' as one colleague chirped.) With Frank as his 'feed man', when Tony rose on the coach or 'passed amongst us', his cheerful countenance and the manner of his delivery, coupled with some interjections from Frank, stimulated audience participation and what became known as 'The Cabaret' kept us in high spirits.

Then followed a period of relative calm, as we were not required to meet together until 6.45 to go to Delft where an evening function for us and the German party had been arranged. Cases could be unpacked, feet could be put up and refreshing sleep might be possible. But, a transport problem had come to the surface. EU rules apparently prohibit a driver from driving outside a time frame of fifteen hours from first moving his vehicle, irrespective of the actual amount of driving done within that time. As Glenn had pulled off the ferry at about 7.30 am, his time was up at 10.30 pm, so although he could take us to Delft, he couldn't bring us back unless we cut our stay short. Happily, this was solved by our hosts who arranged that we would return by a taxi-coach. And we did.

Reaching the Johannes Vermeer Hotel, which was the base of the German party, involved quite a long walk from the bus drop-off point to the building. The party was, of course, escorted. Well, most of it was. Poor Tony was left behind as he confirmed Sunday's arrangements with Glenn and he had to be recovered by a rescue party after phoning Barbara for assistance. The function itself was highly successful with a string trio, a hot and cold buffet, liberal hospitality and a chance to mingle and talk with both Dutch and German masons and their ladies. At the request of our hosts, we had arranged to sing 'The Ladies Song' and, having given out the words, were joined by both Dutch and German brethren. I think it's fair to say that it has been sung better!

We left the hotel at about 11.30 to walk to the arranged pick-up point and found ourselves underneath a balcony on which stood a languorous young lady admiring the scene and taking the night air. As the bus loaded, the author of this article, finishing a small cigar, was about to board when two charming friends of the damsel on the balcony engaged him in conversation. Having exchanged pleasantries (in impeccable English), he was bidden a good stay in Rotterdam and good night. We were back at the Hilton in twenty minutes, then, as Pepys put it, 'And so to bed.'

Sunday morning was less stressful, with time to pack and prepare for the Lodge meeting at Three Pillars Lodge at midday. We moved off at 10.45 on foot, as the Lodge building is less than five minutes walk from the Hilton, for coffee and light refreshments. The ladies from both parties had their own options of shopping or a visit to the World Museum and the Brethren enjoyed a First degree ceremony, toward the end of which we sang 'The Entered Apprentice's Song' in the Lodge Room in honour of the candidate. The ladies rejoined us for lunch and we left about 3.30 for the short ride to the historic market town of Brielle where we had a most interesting short guided tour before more refreshments at the Lodge l'Aurore, which has existed in the same building since the later 18th century.

Rejoining the coach, we returned to Rotterdam for embarkation (with more cabaret on the way, including an interesting discussion on the domestic habits of a well-known Mitre family), where we made our farewells and expressed our thanks to our hosts for their warm welcome, friendship and generous hospitality.

On the voyage we enjoyed another convivial evening together, a smooth crossing and then a return to York by mid-morning.

So ended another thoroughly enjoyable Mitre activity which would not have been quite the same without the administrative skill and ebullient personality of Tony Hodgson, ably assisted, as we know, by Barbara. At those moments when it looked as if 'the wheel might come off the waggon' and when an instant decision was required, Tony was there to see that matters were sorted out. He might well have been like the swan, calm and serene above the water and paddling like hell beneath it, but he came up with the goods, as always. We owe him our very sincere thanks, not merely for this visit, but for all the other activities which he has organised for the Lodge over the past few years.

PS

1. Did I mention that we'd visited Delft? 2. Who, why, where and when said, 'I don't pee on my hands'?

**If you have any articles for the newsletter please send them to the editor:  
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