



Mitre Review

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'BUT AS WE ARE NOT ALL OPERATIVE MASONS.....'

Well, one of us now is. Steve Coupland recently completed the national Traditional Building Skills Bursary Scheme in Masonry after ten years of learning in his own time and a six-month placement in the Minster stone yard. Our congratulations go to him on achieving what he set out to do. We wonder if there are any other Lodges in the Province who have a 'real' mason in their number?

VERY FAR AWAY BUT PRACTISING MASONIC VIRTUES

Kerry Hutchinson, a Territorial Army Captain, is on a six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan's Helmand province and is experiencing at first hand the enormous problems faced by the native population and by our servicemen there. The Yorkshire Evening Press carried a long report from him in November in which he commented on the grinding poverty of the Afghans, of their lack of medical help and clean water and of their fear of the Taliban. He ended his report thus, 'Faced on our patrols with such desperate poverty and corruption, it is difficult to see how the lives of these poor Afghan Pushtu villagers intersect with ours in York. But the connection stares me morally in the face. They are fellow humans, just like us.'

THE BITS THAT DON'T GO IN THE MINUTES!

The Installation in October of Nicholas Page was attended by no less than sixty-seven Brethren, of whom forty-one were visitors, reflecting Nicholas' already wide connections. It was a splendid ceremony – sincere with

touches of good humour – and John Back's witty organ 'bits' for the movement of newly invested Officers did not go unnoticed.

David Blore's 'maiden speech' in the presentation of the First Degree Working Tools was also very commendable: a daunting task in the presence of so many 'wearers of the dark blue'!

In responding to the toast to Provincial Grand Lodge, most effectively given by John Bogue, the Representative of the RWPGM, W Bro. Malcolm Dabbs, spoke warmly of the ceremony and the reception from the Lodge. He emphasised the RWPGM's importance of fun within Masonry, reflected on the need and advantage of tolerance and strongly encouraged progression into the Royal Arch.

Charles Burdett spoke briefly but very sincerely in proposing the toast to our new WM. Tony Pearson and John Back delivered the WM's song in excellent style. Nicholas responded spiritedly and humorously, hoping that we would all have a happy year. He also stressed the need for us to be united by regular attendance and support for all our activities. Before proposing the toast to 'Our Visitors', the JW received the Mitre Lodge Joke Book from his predecessor. This was, mercifully, not used and Roy's introduction to the toast was commendably brief. (We await the next Lodge with interest!)

W Bro. Jim Hunter, WM of our Mother Lodge, Albert Victor No. 2328, made a suitable response and the proceedings closed at 10.05. The collection raised £84.00.

November's Lodge fell on Bonfire Night and though there were no bangers, there

was plenty of sparkle. The WM conducted a splendid ceremony initiating Lee Townsend and was very well supported by his Officers and other participants. Thirty-three members and guests enjoyed events both above and below stairs and it was pleasing to see Nick Mason and Brian Aconley, whose work keeps them away from us (and from home) too often. It was also a pleasure to see Colin Owen-Stanford back with us after his recent bereavement. We also welcomed David Marsh, now an Assistant PGM and an Officer of Grand Lodge but we reckon that he came so that he could hear his name read out and saluted with five! (David won't be upset by this entry, as he knows I'm writing it. Ed.).

Christian Edwards proposed the toast to the Initiate most succinctly and Brother Lee responded in similar fashion. In proposing the toast to the visitors, the JW spoke humorously but sincerely about the value and importance of tradition in society and especially in the British Army, musing on how and when 'traditions' began and became accepted and then reinforced his message by continuing what is becoming a tradition among our JWs by ignoring the Mitre Lodge Joke Book. The response was very well given by W Bro. Terry Mansell of Martin Lodge No. 3202 in the Royal Province of Berkshire. The raffle raised £80.00 and the collection £40.00.

December saw Duncan Miller initiated in great fashion before forty-two members and visitors. There were only four prompts during the ceremony, which was carried out with both sincerity and good humour. Visitors included a small party from St Michael's Lodge No.4353 in Leeds and a very welcome young American, James Hester, now resident in York, all of whom expressed their appreciation of the proceedings.

It was especially pleasing that John Benson was able to be with us for the whole of the evening, looking well and in his usual cheerful spirits. The toast to Duncan was well made by Peter Myers and Duncan's response was brief but obviously sincere. Bill Seddon deputised for Tony Pearson in singing 'The Apprentice's Song' and the brethren endured the offering with resignation and stoicism! In proposing 'Our Visitors', the JW continued his theme from November in comparing military and Masonic facets, this time homing in on ritual, its importance and the phraseology which goes with it. His telling of the incident when a Drill Instructor had a mental blackout of the kind known to us when involved in ritual, and substituted 'snap, crackle and pop' for the usual and appropriate instruction in arms drill went down very well. W Bro. Mark Napier, WM of Eboracum Lodge No. 1611 was playing on home territory when responding to the toast, which he did with skill.

The raffle raised £82.00 and the collection £43.90 – and the meal was excellent.

CAROLS AND QUIZ

This was another 'sell-out' evening with all the available tickets claimed well in advance. Nicholas Page was barred from the organ this year, as it was his right and duty as WM to sit comfortably whilst occupying the principal seat on the 'top deck'.

His choice of carols did not include 'Good King Wenceslas', as he might have been disturbed by the instruction in verse two, 'Hither Page, and stand by me!' He did, however, stand to present his two chosen readings.

His place in the box was taken by another Nicolas, Bill Seddon's son, who supported his Dad and the massed choir in excellent fashion. The choir was in splendid form, too.

Their performance of 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' was the best yet and they made a very good attempt at John Gardner's version of 'The holly and the ivy', which came to them, and to the WM, as a total surprise.

An innovation, perhaps better not repeated, was an appearance by the York Waits, usually known as John Bogue, Tony Hodgson, Tony Pearson and Bill Seddon, ably supported as the Village Bobby by Karl Hardman, singing (?) 'The Carol Singers' by TC Sterndale-Bennett.

Thirsts having been created, there was a short time for them to be slaked before we ate a very good meal, after which followed another of Tony and Barbara Hodgson's now famous quizzes.

The raffle, organised by John Back, was drawn in suitable gaps and raised £220.00 for charity.

After the meal, Martin Hemenway's daughter, Rebecca (Becky), took some superb photographs of small groups of members and friends. The proceeds from the sale of these will be donated to Masonic Charity. We thank Becky most sincerely for her enterprise and generosity.

Nicholas ended the evening by thanking all those who had assisted in making the evening possible. 'And so to bed', as another famous diarist put it!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The Organist Entertains – Nicholas Page at St Saviourgate on Sunday, March 8th.

Ladies' Festival at the Fulford Golf Club on Saturday, April 18th.