

Issue 1 - June 2026

Connecting Brethren Across the Craft in Southern Africa



THE CRAFT
CONNECTION

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Lifestyle & Heritage Magazine

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THE CRAFT CONNECTION

Dear Brethren,

Welcome to the first issue of The Craft Connection, a publication created to strengthen the bonds of our Craft through shared knowledge, fellowship, and inspiration.

Our aim is to bring together Freemasons across South Africa by sharing news from Lodges and Districts, exploring the wisdom and history of the Craft, and celebrating the work of Brethren within their communities.

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Masonic Events and News Scan: Southern Africa

Coverage reviewed: February–May 2026

Upcoming events: June–August 2026

Please confirm details directly with organisers before making travel or attendance arrangements, as dates and venues may occasionally change.

DISTRICT & REGIONAL NEWS

World Conference of Regular Masonic Grand Lodges

One of the most significant Masonic events held in Southern Africa in recent years took place in Cape Town from 17–21 May 2026 when the World Conference of Regular Masonic Grand Lodges convened for its first meeting on African soil.

The conference brought together representatives of recognised Grand Lodges from around the world and highlighted South Africa's growing role within international Freemasonry. The event provided an opportunity for fraternal engagement, discussion, and the strengthening of relationships between Regular Grand Lodges.

Western Division Leadership Transition

The Western Division of the District Grand Lodge of South Africa, Northern Division, recently welcomed W.Bro Jack Levin as Right Worshipful District Grand Master Designate.

His installation took place in Cape Town during May and marks an important transition in leadership within the Division. Brethren from across the region attended the occasion to support the incoming District Grand Master and celebrate the continuing growth of Freemasonry in the Western Cape.

Around the District

Central Division Annual District Gathering – Kimberley

Brethren from across the Central Division gathered in Kimberley during May for the annual District Convocation and Communication.

The event provided an opportunity for fellowship, discussion and the conduct of District business.

Representatives from Lodges throughout the Division were in attendance, including visitors from neighbouring Districts.

A full report and photographic feature on the Kimberley gathering will appear in the next issue of The Craft Connection.

UGLE Centenary Hall Stone Appeal

The United Grand Lodge of England's Centenary Hall Stone Appeal remains open until the end of June 2026.

The appeal supports improvements and developments at Freemasons' Hall in London and provides Brethren with the opportunity to make a once-off contribution in recognition of the continuing legacy of English Freemasonry.

Brethren wishing to participate are encouraged to contact their respective District offices for further information about the UGLE Centenary Hall Stone Appeal.



UPCOMING EVENTS

June 2026

KZN Communication and Convocation
13 June 2026

Tirrochmore Golf Day
6 June 2026

Natalia Prince Alfred Craft Installation
4 June 2026

Fort Jameson SC Installation
12 June 2026

Zululand Mark/RAM Installation
13 June 2026

St Andrews SC Installation
17 June 2026

Skelmersdale Craft Installation and Ikwezi Royal Arch Installation
23 June 2026

Around the District

...UPCOMING EVENTS

Camperdown Peace Craft
Installation
27 June 2026

July 2026

Umlazi Craft Installation
1 July 2026

Empangeni Royal Arch
Installation
11 July 2026

Inanda Craft Installation
14 July 2026

Klip River County Rose Croix
Enthronement
25 July 2026

August 2026

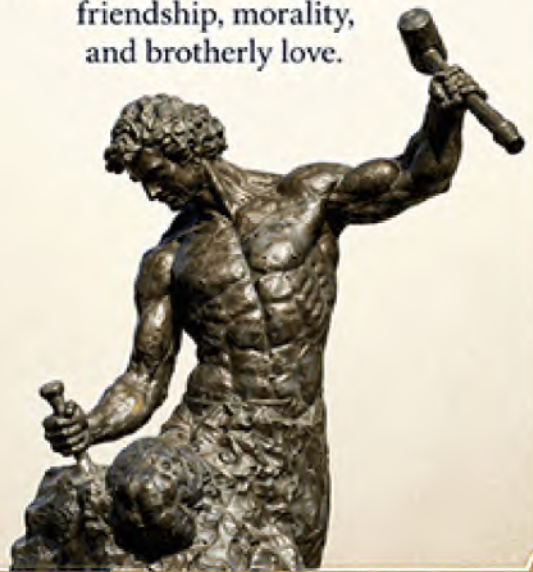
Port Shepstone Craft Installation
8 August 2026

Southern Natal Royal Arch
Installation
8 August 2026

MASONIC REFLECTION

“ *The strength of our
Fraternity lies not in
our buildings or
ceremonies, but in the
character of the men
who practise its
principles.*

Freemasonry teaches that true
greatness is found in service,
integrity, and the continual
pursuit of self-improvement.
Across generations and across
the District, these principles
continue to unite Brethren in
friendship, morality,
and brotherly love.



Around the District

Share Your News With Us!

Brethren, **we want to hear from you!** The Craft Connection is your newsletter, and we invite all Lodges and Brethren across the Districts to share their news, events, activities, and charity initiatives with us.

Whether it is an upcoming installation, a social function, a charitable endeavour, or any item of Masonic interest, we would be delighted to feature it in a future issue.

Please send your contributions, photographs, and details to the editorial team thecraftconnection@masonicgoodies.co.za.

Together, let us celebrate the wonderful work being done across our Districts.



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An Evening of Fellowship and Distinguished Company



In Honour of RW Bro Sir David Wootton

The Masonic Centre in Bloemfontein recently played host to a memorable evening of fellowship, refinement, and warm companionship as Brethren and their partners gathered in honour of RW Bro Sir David Wootton.

The evening commenced with a period of relaxed social fellowship, allowing guests the opportunity to reconnect and enjoy one another's company prior to dinner. The atmosphere throughout the evening was one of genuine warmth and enjoyment, reflecting the enduring spirit of Freemasonry and the value of shared companionship beyond the Lodge room.

Guests were treated to an excellent dinner, widely praised by attendees for both its quality and presentation. The combination of fine food, engaging conversation, and distinguished company ensured that the occasion was not only formal in character, but also deeply enjoyable for all present – including the many partners who attended alongside the Brethren.

Around the District

The evening programme included a number of addresses and reflections celebrating the values of Freemasonry, international fraternity, and the importance of maintaining strong personal and Masonic relationships across Districts and Constitutions.



Feedback received following the event was overwhelmingly complimentary, with many attendees describing the evening as uplifting, meaningful, and exceptionally well organised. Particularly appreciated was the balance achieved between dignity and informality, allowing the evening to remain ceremonial in nature while still relaxed and welcoming.

The District extends its sincere appreciation to all those involved in organising the event, the catering and hospitality teams, and especially to the distinguished guests whose presence contributed so greatly to the success of the occasion.

Most importantly, the evening served as a reminder that Freemasonry continues to flourish through fellowship, friendship, shared values, and the enjoyment of one another's company in both formal and social settings.

Around the District



Around the District



"An evening of friendship, laughter and fellowship reminded us that the bonds of Freemasonry extend far beyond the Lodge room."

RW Bro Sir David Wootton

PDepGM & 2nd GPrin

RW Bro Sir David Wootton is internationally recognised for his distinguished service within Freemasonry and currently serves as a Past Deputy Grand Master and Second Grand Principal under the United Grand Lodge of England.

Widely respected for his commitment to Masonic education, charitable work and international fraternal relations, his visit to Bloemfontein was greatly appreciated by all who attended and provided a valued opportunity for fellowship with one of the Craft's most respected figures.



W Bro Thomas Hawley

PDepGDC



W Bro Thomas Hawley accompanied RW Bro Sir David Wootton during the visit and quickly endeared himself to attendees through his approachable nature and warm manner.

His presence contributed greatly to the relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere of the evening, and the District extends its sincere thanks for his companionship and support throughout the occasion.

Around the District



During the recent visit of RW Bro Sir David Wootton, PDepGM & 2nd GPrin, the initial address was delivered from a chair of exceptional historical significance.

This remarkable chair once served as the Presidential Chair of the Orange Free State Republic and was presented to Rising Star Lodge No. 1022 in July 1893 by President F.W. Reitz.

Among those believed to have occupied the chair are several prominent Presidents of the

Orange Free State Republic, including President J.H. Brand and President M.W. Pretorius, both of whom were Freemasons.

More than a century later, the chair remains in active use within the Lodge room, providing a tangible link between South African history, the Orange Free State Republic and the Masonic heritage of the region.

The Craft Connection will explore the history of this remarkable chair in a future edition.



Lodge Highlights

Alan B Gordon Lodge #3528

Alan B Gordon Lodge No 3528, located in Bethulie, Free State Province, is a Masonic lodge under the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE). The lodge is part of the District Grand Lodge of the Orange Free State, which was established in 1933 with W.Bro. William Hae Weekes as its first District Grand Master. The Alan B Gordon Lodge was established on April 11, 1911

All roads lead to Bethulie

For decades, the physical lodge room has been the sanctuary for the Brethren in the Bethulie area. However, the decision to become a “Travellers Lodge” marks a return to the oldest traditions of the craft, where strangers meet and become brothers.

A Historic Transition in Bethulie

Situated in the Southern Free State, Bethulie has a rich history tied to both the farming community and the local community. By transitioning to a travelers lodge status, Alan B Gordon Lodge 3528 ensures that the Masonic principles of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth remain active in the region.



An Unintended Prophecy?

The name Bethulie is traditionally interpreted as meaning "House of Affliction" or "House of the Oppressed." Although the settlement received its name decades before the Anglo-Boer War, many historians and residents have remarked on the poignancy of this meaning in light of the suffering later experienced in the Bethulie concentration camp and surrounding district during the conflict.

Lodge Highlights

Why the Change?

1. Increase Visibility:

By meeting in Bethulie, the lodge can reach potential new members in the area, the lodge is situated at 32 Pretoria Street, Bethulie

2. Financial Sustainability:

We need more members to make sure the lodge can meet its financial obligations, plus the lodge fees are very affordable. You can be a member of this lodge and visit other lodges.



3. Strengthening Bonds:

Travelling encourages members to make an effort to attend the meeting thereby fostering a stronger sense of brotherhood.

The “Travelling Man” Heritage

This move echoes the Military Lodges of the 18th and 19th centuries that carried their charters across South Africa during various historical conflicts. For the members of Alan B Gordon Lodge 3528, the journey ahead is not about losing a home, but about making the entire country their home, where Freemasons from the entire country can meet twice a year.

An Installation meeting and a Regular meeting, and special meeting if required.

To join this “traveling” Lodge contact the Secretary at:
alanbgordon@fs-fm.co.za

Discover Bethulie



History, Heritage and Hospitality

Known as the "House of God," Bethulie is one of the Free State's oldest towns and a place where history and hospitality meet. Established in 1828 as a mission station, the town has played an important role in South Africa's development and remains a fascinating destination for visitors today.

History enthusiasts can explore sites connected to the Anglo-Boer War, including the Bethulie Concentration Camp Memorial, while the town's historic buildings provide a glimpse into a bygone era.

Just a short drive away lies the magnificent Gariep Dam, South Africa's largest dam. The area offers opportunities for boating, fishing, birdwatching, photography, and scenic drives through the beautiful southern Free State countryside.

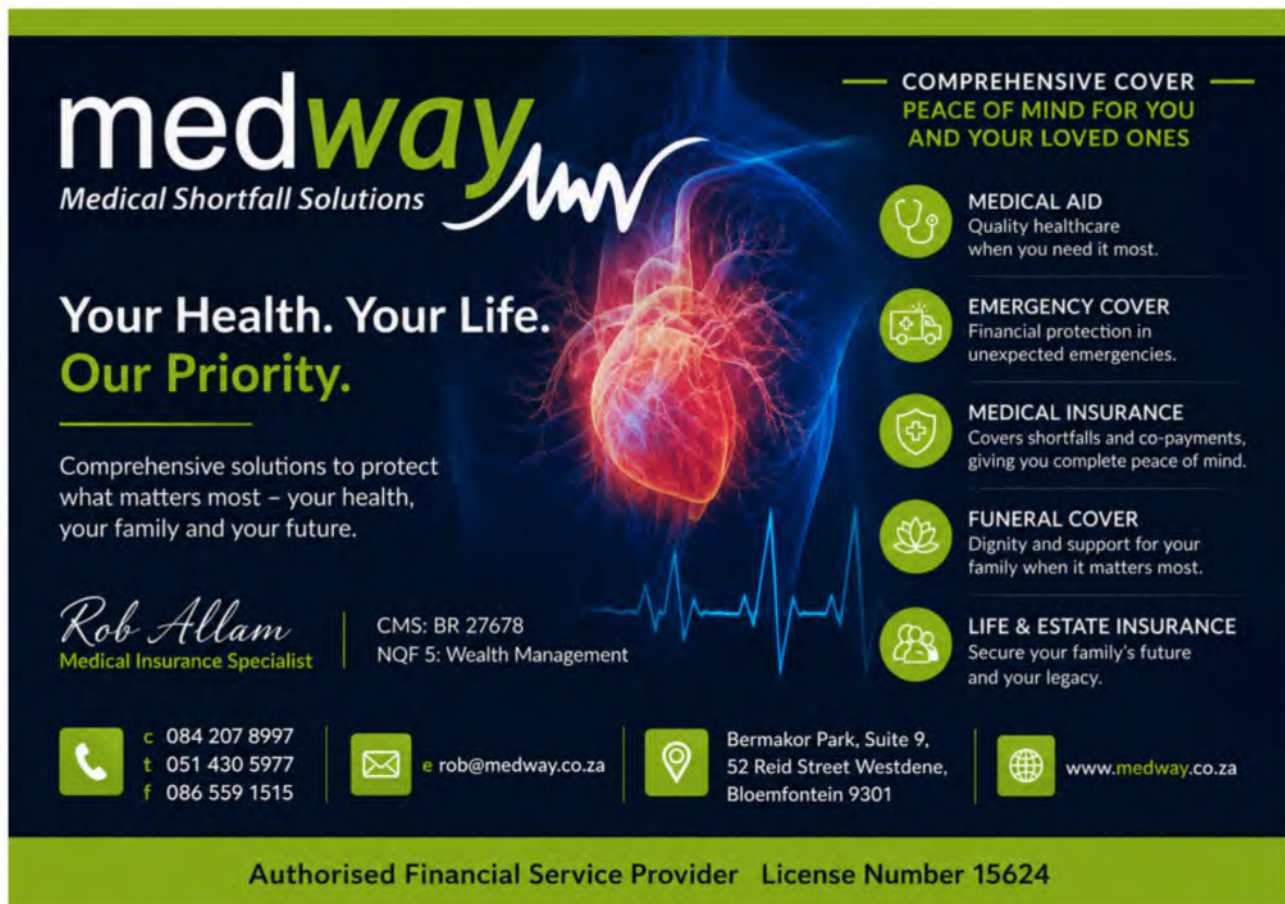
Lodge Highlights

Visitors are often struck by Bethulie's peaceful atmosphere, friendly residents, and rich heritage. Whether attending a Lodge meeting, exploring local history, or simply enjoying a weekend away, there is much to discover in this charming Free State town.

Highlights

- Bethulie Concentration Camp Memorial
- Historic town centre
- Gariep Dam and Nature Reserve
- Fishing and watersports
- Birdwatching and photography
- Scenic Orange River views

"All roads lead to Bethulie – and many visitors find reasons to return."



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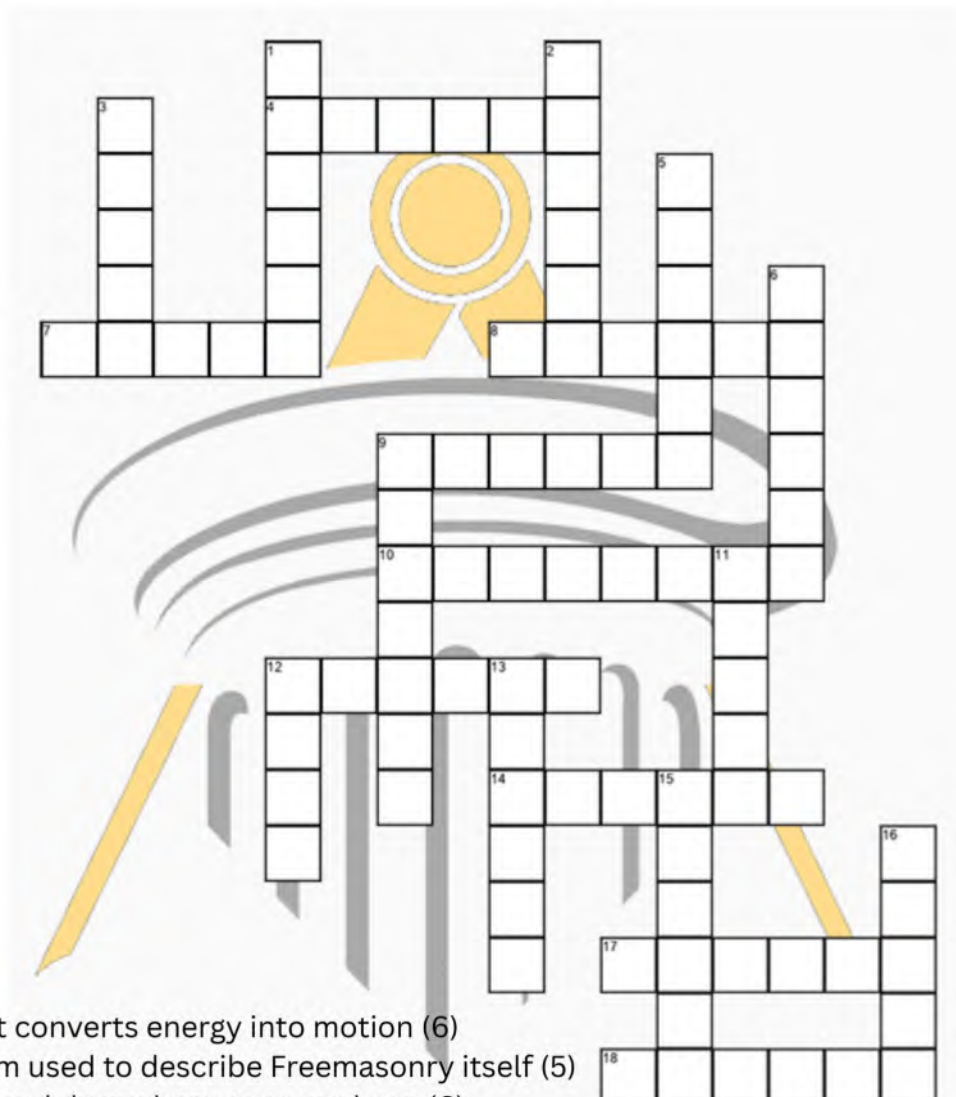
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Craftsman's Challenge



ACROSS

- A machine that converts energy into motion (6)
- A common term used to describe Freemasonry itself (5)
- A cloud of gas and dust where stars are born (6)
- An underground passage through a hill or mountain (6)
- The compiler of the 1723 Masonic Constitutions (8)
- A structure designed to span rivers or valleys (6)
- A landmass completely surrounded by water (6)
- A large area dominated by trees (6)
- A stone representing the moral refinement of a Mason (6)

DOWN

- 1. A dry region with minimal rainfall (6)
- 2. Solomon's sacred structure central to Masonic allegory (6)
- 3. The Lodge officer responsible for guarding the door (5)
- 5. The formal set of ceremonies practiced in Freemasonry (6)
- 6. The companion pillar standing opposite Boaz at the Temple (6)
- 9. A board used to display symbolic Lodge diagrams (7)
- 11. A vast expanse of salt water covering most of Earth (5)
- 12. A principal pillar at the entrance of Solomon's Temple (4)
- 13. A six-stringed musical instrument (6)
- 15. Traditional garments worn during Lodge meetings (6)
- 16. The ringed giant among the planets (6)

DARK & LIGHT SQUARES



**Black to move,
mate in two.**



Masonic Chess Club

A Simple Idea with Lasting Benefits



Masonic Chess Club welcomes players of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.

The Masonic Chess Club was established to bring together people who share a passion for chess, fellowship, and friendly competition. Open to Masons and non-Masons alike, the club provides a welcoming environment where players of all ages and abilities can enjoy the timeless challenge of the game.

The concept is deliberately simple. Lodges host regular chess gatherings where members of their local communities can meet, play, learn, and socialise. Experienced players can mentor newcomers, while casual players can enjoy the game in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere.

Beyond the chessboard, these gatherings create opportunities to build friendships, strengthen communities, and showcase our Lodge

Lodge Highlights

buildings as vibrant centres of learning, fellowship, and social engagement. They also provide an excellent way for Lodges to engage with individuals who may never otherwise discover the opportunities that Freemasonry offers.

Our vision extends beyond individual Lodges. As more Lodges establish local Masonic Chess Clubs, we hope to create a network of clubs that can come together in the spirit of friendly competition at District-hosted chess tournaments, fostering even greater fellowship across our communities.

We encourage Lodges throughout the District and beyond to become part of this growing initiative. Establishing a club requires little more than a venue, a few chessboards, and enthusiastic participants.

To learn more about starting a Masonic Chess Club in your area, contact us at admin@masonicchessclub.com.



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Lodge Highlights

A Unique Father and Son Masonic Legacy in Southern Africa!



Ronald Thomas Potter was initiated into Freemasonry in January 1968 at The Mufulira Lodge No 5326 EC in Zambia, with more than six family members and cousins present at the ceremony – a significant family occasion marking the beginning of a distinguished Masonic journey.

After relocating to Durban, Ronald joined Ikwezi Lodge No 7638 EC, where he later became Worshipful Master in 1993. He was also a founding member of Durban Installed Masters (DIM's) Lodge. Throughout his extensive Masonic

- career, he has held numerous offices and continues to serve the Craft with distinction. He is currently a member of Krantzkloof Lodge No. 6546 EC and remains actively involved in several side orders, including:
-
- 3rd Principal in the District of KwaZulu-Natal Royal Arch
- 32° Mason
- Sub Prior in the Knights Templar & Malta
- Current President of the Board of General Purposes
- Holder of Grand Rank, as Past Grand Standard Bearer

His son, Mark Lee Potter, was initiated into Freemasonry in October 1992 at Rose and Thistle Lodge No 3150 EC in the Eastern Division, with both his father and uncle present at the ceremony – continuing the family's strong Masonic tradition.

After moving to Durban, Mark became a member of Krantzkloof Lodge No. 6546 EC, where he remains an active and dedicated Mason.

Lodge Highlights

Mark is also involved in the Royal Arch, Rose Croix, 30-degree Mason and The Knights Templar & Malta Orders.

In 2015, he joined the Widows Sons Masonic Motorcycle Association and continues as an active member.

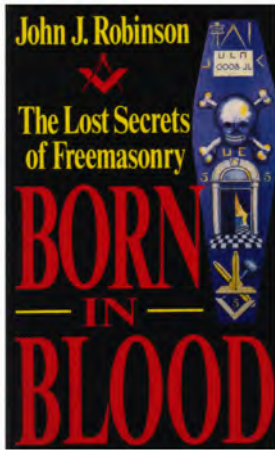
Mark served as Worshipful Master of Krantzkloof Lodge No 6546 EC in 2010 & 2011 and in 2014 received District Grand Rank as Standard Bearer. It was during this period and after discussion with London and the DGM at the time, that the Connaught Club was started in South Africa for new masons.

In 2022, at the age of 53, he was appointed Assistant District Grand Master, a position he continues to hold to date.

In April 2026, at the age of 57, Mark was honoured with Grand Rank as Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies — a notable recognition of his service and commitment to Freemasonry.

Today, Ronald and Mark stand in a uniquely distinguished position as the only known father and son within the KwaZulu-Natal District — and possibly within Southern Africa — to both hold Grand Rank. This is an exceptionally rare and remarkable achievement, reflecting not only individual dedication, but a proud family legacy of service, leadership, and commitment to Freemasonry.

Reading Review...



In **Born in Blood**, John J. Robinson presents a provocative and highly readable exploration of Freemasonry's possible origins. Departing from the traditional stonemason narrative, Robinson proposes that the Craft may instead trace its roots to the persecuted Knights Templar of the 14th century.

The book draws parallels between Masonic ritual, symbolism, and historical events surrounding the suppression of the Templars—particularly the mass arrests of the Knights Templar on Friday the 13th. Robinson argues that remnants of the order may have survived underground, evolving over time into what we now recognise as Freemasonry.

Accessible and engaging, the work blends historical investigation with informed speculation. While not universally accepted by scholars, it has sparked enduring discussion among Masons and historians alike.



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The Silent Pillars of the Craft



Freemasonry is often described as a journey of self-improvement, fellowship, service, and personal growth. While much attention is naturally given to the Brethren who attend meetings, participate in ceremonies, and undertake the responsibilities of Lodge life, it is important to recognise that no Mason walks this path alone. Behind many dedicated Brethren stands a partner whose encouragement, patience, and understanding make that journey possible.

Masonic commitments often require evenings away from home, attendance at social functions, participation in charitable activities, and travel to visit Lodges both near and far. These commitments are willingly undertaken by Masons, but they are frequently supported by partners who understand the importance of the Craft and the values it seeks to cultivate.

The contribution of Masonic partners is seldom measured in titles or honours, yet it is deeply felt throughout our Lodges and Districts. Their support allows Brethren to fulfil their obligations, participate in the life of the Lodge, and contribute to the wider Masonic community.

The warmth and hospitality experienced throughout Freemasonry are often made possible by the support, encouragement, and understanding shown behind the scenes.

The Silent Pillars of the Craft

Their presence reminds us that Freemasonry is not merely an organisation of individuals but a community connected through shared values of kindness, integrity, and mutual respect.

As we reflect on the many successes and achievements celebrated within our District, it is fitting that we also express our sincere gratitude to the wives, partners, and families who support the Craft behind the scenes. Their understanding and encouragement form an essential part of the foundation upon which our Lodges continue to flourish.

To all our Masonic partners, we offer our heartfelt thanks. Your support is appreciated more than words can adequately express, and your contribution to the life of the Craft is both recognised and valued.



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Ghanaian Delegation to South Africa

Visiting the District Grand Lodge Orange Free State 10th September to 20th September 2025

On the 10th of September 2025, The following Brethren from Ghana boarded a plane for South Africa to visit Ficksburg, Bloemfontein, Johannesburg, and Pretoria.

On board were, W Bro's Christopher Boatin (Group Leader), Kwabena Asiedu Gyimah, John Ojri Ukoand, Charles Attah Nyarko and Kafui Kwame Akpedonu, and Bro's George Ankamah, Isaac Ansah Boateng, Benard Boakye-Yiadom, Dennis Kwarteng, and George Nti Aning. With 2 ladies Jemima Uko and Yvette Ansong.

The Cherry Capital (Ficksburg) & Lesotho

Wednesday, 10th September:
Arrival

·Evening: Arrival in Ficksburg, Free State Province. A get together and the DGM of the OFS, W Bro Yaw Nameke Gyasi-Agyei.

o The delegation were welcomed with a "Pure Sesotho" welcome, and the menu was a traditional Pap and Vegetables, with local Ficksburg brewed Cherry products (Alcoholic & Non-alcoholic options) also available.

It was a wonderful evening enjoyed by all.

Thursday, 11th September:
Charity & Brotherhood

·Morning: Breakfast at the Guesthouse followed by a cross-border visit to Lesotho.

·Activity: Charity Team Presentation.

·Lunch & Supper: Return to Ficksburg.

·Evening Event: Grand Spit Braai with local Freemasons and Rotarians.

o Highlight: Special "Sorabi to Drop" celebration

Travelogue...

The City of Roses (Bloemfontein)
Friday, 12th September: Transit
to Bloem

- Morning: Final Breakfast at Imperani Guesthouse.

- Afternoon: Depart for Bloemfontein.

- Evening (17:00–18:00): Meet & Greet at the Lodge, and a light supper with the local Brethren from the DGLOFS. A wonderful opportunity to meet some of the local Brethren and the Brethren from Ghana offered to assist in a second degree working, on behalf of the Star of Bethlehem Lodge 2522.

Saturday, 13th September:
Masonic Honors

- Morning: Breakfast at the Guesthouse.

- Ceremony: While the main meeting was the Annual General Convocation and the Annual General Communication, the Ghanaian Brethren performed a very impressive 2nd degree for Brother Andre le Roux, from the Star of Bethlehem Lodge 2522, taking the positions of SW, JW, SD, JD and IG. It was a wonderful meeting, enjoyed by all.

The meeting was held by dispensation to perform a special ceremony where W Bro Phillip Kruger.

- The Festive Board was held at the New York Restaurant, there were about 50 Brethren and Ladies present, followed by a night drive through Bloemfontein.

Sunday, 14th September:
The Journey North

- Morning: Farewell Breakfast at Arista.

- Travel: Road trip back to the Johannesburg/Pretoria hub.

Part 3: Gauteng Exploration & Safari

Monday, 15th September:
Culinary Classics

- Supper: A feast of SA staples: Bunny Chow, Bobotie, and a traditional Braai featuring Boerwors, Chakalaka, and Pap.

Tuesday, 16th September: Safari & Shopping

- Morning: Breakfast at the Guesthouse.

- Day Activity: Safari Sightseeing followed by a shopping excursion for local crafts and goods.

Travelogue...

·Supper: Relaxed Braai featuring authentic Biltong & Droëwors snacks.

Wednesday, 17th September: City Gold

·Morning: Breakfast and hotel check-in.

·Activity: Sightseeing across Johannesburg, exploring the rich history of the "City of Gold."

Departure

Saturday, 20th September

·Return: Safe travels back to Accra, Ghana.



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Contact **Rob** for more info on **0842078997**.

Travelogue...



SCOTTISH FREEMASONRY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Bro David Slingsby P.M. | Lodge Southern Cross - Part 1 of 3

INTRODUCTION

Prior to setting out to uncover the journey of Scottish Freemasonry in South Africa, one needs to paint a brief history of Europe and South Africa, leading up to the Charter of Lodge Southern Cross. It was the first Scottish Lodge in South Africa, in the Southern Hemisphere, and only the ninth outside Scotland. The later development of Scottish Freemasonry was dependent upon Eurocentric immigration to this country, for a variety of reasons, mostly war and the discovery of valuable natural resources.

The 16th and 17th centuries are regarded by historians as the centuries in which the rise of Western civilization began. As schoolboys we were taught about the era of reformation, an era when men started to explore the earth, the quest for knowledge, the quest for spices to make food more palatable etc.

The era of colonialism established mercantilism as the leading school of economic thought, where the economic system was viewed as a zero-sum game in which any gain by one party required a loss by another. The mercantilist doctrine was the cause of many intra-European wars of the period and arguably fuelled European expansion and imperialism throughout the World during the 19th century and early 20th century.

The Protestant Reformation resulted in a major blow to the authority of the papacy and the Catholic Church. European politics became dominated by religious conflicts, with the groundwork for the epochal Thirty Years' War being laid towards the end of the 19th century.

In Italy various contributions made by leading renaissance figures led to the foundation of important subjects which included accounting and political science.

Galileo Galilei invented the first thermometer and made substantial contributions in the field of scientific revolution.

During the 18th century, elements of Enlightenment thinking culminated in the American, French, and Haitian revolutions. The age saw violent slave trading, human trafficking on a global scale. The reactions against monarchical and aristocratic power helped fuel the revolutionary responses against it throughout the century. The period is also known as the 'century of lights' or the 'century of reason'. In continental Europe, philosophers dreamed of a brighter age. For some, this dream turned into a reality with the French Revolution of 1789, though this was later compromised by the excesses of the 'Reign of Terror'.

At first, many monarchies of Europe embraced Enlightenment ideals, but in the wake of the French Revolution they feared loss of power and formed broad coalitions for counter-revolution. The Ottoman Empire experienced an unprecedented period of peace and economic



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expansion, taking part in no European wars from 1740 to 1768. As a consequence the Empire did not share in Europe's military improvements during the Seven Years War (1756–1763), causing its military to fall behind and suffer defeats against Russia in the second half of the century.

In Europe, French troops entered the Dutch Republic, which had been reformed into the Batavian Republic. In response, Great Britain launched operations against the Dutch Empire to capture bases that they could use in their fight against the French Navy. The Invasion of the Cape Colony by the British military resulted in the Battle of Muizenberg, launched in 1795, against the Dutch Batavian Troops. The battle was decisively won by the British.

During this period the famous Scots Brigade arrived in September 1796. Scottish Lodge 121 Union (Marjoribanks Regiment) was constituted in 1764 but was erased in 1809.

The 22nd Regiment, which arrived in May 1800 and left for India in 1802, possessed a Scottish Lodge Moriah, Wedderburns No 132. These ambulatory Lodges preceded the formation of Lodge Southern Cross.

It has been argued that regulated Freemasonry in Scotland is older than in any other part of the British Isles. The connection between the craft of stonemasonry and modern Freemasonry can be readily researched in Scotland. This direct connection can be traced from the oldest Masonic written records in the world, which are the property of the Grand Lodge of Scotland in Edinburgh. The oldest records held by the Grand Lodge of Scotland are minutes of Lodge Aitcheson's Haven which commenced on 9 January 1599. The minutes of meetings of the Lodge of Edinburgh (Mary's Chapel) No.1 also date from 1599. Lodge Mother Kilwinning is No. 0 on the Roll of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, and is reputed to be the oldest lodge not only in Scotland, but the

world. It is styled 'Mother Lodge of Scotland,' attributing its origins to the 12th century, and is often called Mother Kilwinning.

Kilwinning Lodge in Scotland

In 1583 in Scotland, William Schaw was appointed by King James VI of Scotland, then a Kingdom independent of England, as Master of the Work and Warden General. (Note: King James VI did not become King of England until 1603). In 1598, he issued the first of the now famous Schaw Statutes which set out the duties to the Lodge of all members, and to the public. It also imposed penalties for unsatisfactory work and inadequate safety during work. His statute required all Lodges to keep written records and meet on certain dates. This laid the foundations for future fixed permanent Lodges as they are today



The second Schaw Statute bears the date December 28th, 1599. It was written particularly for the Lodge of Kilwinning, now known as the Mother Kilwinning Lodge No. 0 (Scottish Constitution).

William Schaw

It would appear from the tenor and the contents of this document that the Lodge of Kilwinning had pleaded certain privileges and "ancient



liberties" which the Statutes of 1598 had not taken into account.

Archibald Barclay was delegated to lay the matter before the King, at Holyrood House in Edinburgh. The King being absent from town, the Warden General (William Schaw) heard the delegate's presentation of the matter and issued thirteen additional ordinances for the particular benefit of the Kilwinning Craft.

In a postscript he explained that the settlement of other claims, not mentioned, would be referred to the King "when occasion may be offered".

The most interesting aspects of the second statute are that the memory of Brethren should be tested, that gloves need to be purchased, and that there is a banquet ("Harmony") to be paid for. These two statutes only ever applied in Scotland, and the requirement to keep written records is why there is so much more early information about Masonry in the pre-Grand Lodge era in Scotland than there is in England.



At the meeting in Edinburgh on 30 November 1736 when Grand Lodge was formed, the Lodge had three representatives, namely, Captain Arthur Forbes of Pittencreeff (Master), Bailie Charles Chalmers, and Henry Finlay (Wardens). It was held, of course, in the original province of Fife when officially consecrated in 1745. Interesting notes bearing on its antiquity are contained in a booklet issued in connection with the opening of their new Hall in Priory Lane, a lodge room in excellent taste, which was consecrated by the P.G.M., the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, on 17 December 1920. From the information available, the secretary informs us that the date of the present Charter is 1766, that an early meeting place was in the Spire Tavern in 1814, and that the first Right Worshipful Master was Lieut. Charles Durie.

In essence the history of the formation of the Grand Lodge of Scotland highlights the difference between Scottish Freemasonry and other Grand Lodges, as the independence of Scottish Lodges is jealously guarded, and demonstrated by the numbering of the existing ancient Lodges.

The British occupation continued until the Peace of Amiens was declared in 1802, when the Cape Colony was returned to the Dutch. In 1806, during the Napoleonic Wars, a second British invasion reoccupied the Cape Colony after the Battle of Blaauwberg. It remained a British colony until the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Once again Lodges attached to Regiments visited the Cape, providing a Military presence, following the border wars with the Xhosa nation.

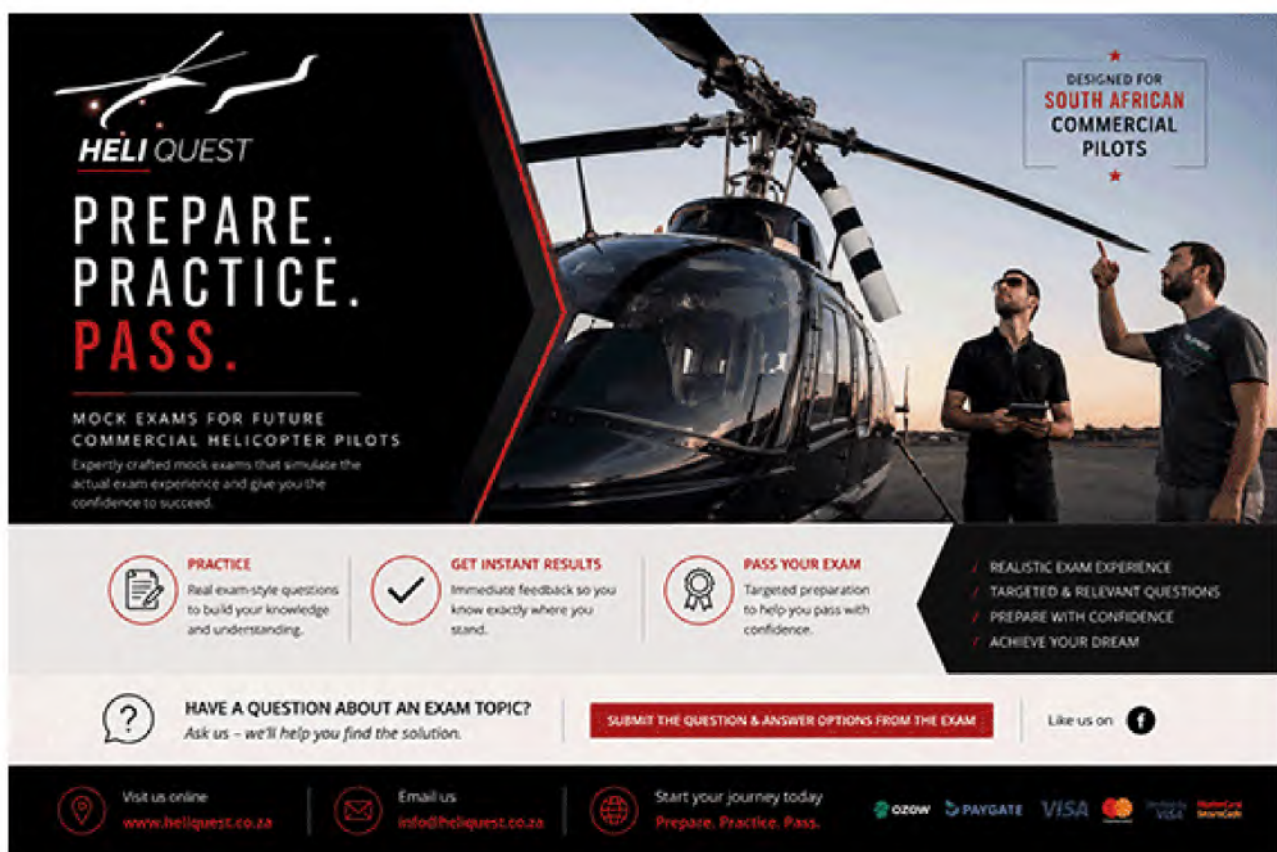
The foundations for Scottish Freemasonry were laid with the birth of John Saunders. He was initiated into Lodge de Goede Hoop on 23 March 1853, a young man 25 years old. The son of a former school master, Robert Saunders was taught at the “Classical and Commercial Academy” founded by Thomas Pringle and John Fairbairn. Pringle and Fairburn had fallen foul of the governor Lord Charles Somerset over articles which appeared in the newly established Commercial Advertiser. This led to a libel case which was resolved in London in 1827. This incensed the Governor, and in revenge he forced the closure of the school.

John, at 21 years of age, was involved with the Anti-Convict League being appointed by John Fairbairn who was also the wine merchant with Aaron de Pass. The league was established when the British Government wanted to proclaim the Cape a penal colony. Charles Adderley, 1st Baron Norton, undersecretary of the State for the Colonies, supported and took up the cause. He sent the awaiting ships, full of prisoners, down south to Australia. In gratitude the historical Heerengracht was re-named Adderley Street, the top half being now known as Government Avenue.

John lived with his family in Sea Point, in a home in Queen’s Road called Bellwood, purchased from John Fairbairn. Some years later the home was sold, and Robert Saunders moved to a cottage at Botany Bay. His neighbour, flamboyant Judge Menzies, one day with a good south easter blowing, duly bewigged and in full judicial dress, stepped down to the rocks and with due ceremony, while his gowns billowed about in the breeze, renamed them Saunders Rock, which name remains to this day.

John Saunders rose to the rank of Director of Ceremonies but being unable to speak Dutch he progressed no further. He was however granted dispensation by the Deputy Grand Master of the Netherlands Constitution, authorising him to confer degrees in English as Lodge de Goede Hoop had many English-speaking members within its ranks. This enabled those English-speaking members to take full advantage of the Masonic Club which served as the social hub at that time. A difficulty arose when many of the Brethren, mostly military, had to move away from the colony to find their Lodge certificates were in Dutch and were not accepted in other parts of the Empire.

...To be continued



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Masonic History

The Silent Spread of Freemasonry in South Africa

Freemasonry in South Africa is a story of grand architecture, military movements, and a "center of union" for diverse cultures. While often shrouded in mystery, its history on the continent is as old as many of South Africa's modern cities, acting as a quiet mirror to centuries of social and political change. Many Cities and Town have Masonic Lodges, where Freemasons meet. We will also be publishing articles on Freemasonry in Africa, and explore Freemasonry in these countries, Nigeria, Botswana, Ghana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia, to mention a few, plus make contact with some Freemasons in those countries, The Craft Connection aims to "connect" Freemasons across the continent.

“While often shrouded in mystery, its history on the continent is as old as many of South Africa's modern cities ”

The 1772 Spark: Africa's First Lodge

The journey began on 24 April 1772, when Abraham van der Weijden, a captain sailing for the East Indies, arrived at the Cape of Good Hope. Under authority from the Grand Orient of the Netherlands, he issued a warrant just ten days later to found Africa's first lodge...



Masonic History

Lodge De Goede Hoop

- **Architectural Legacy:** Designed by French Freemason and renowned architect Louis Michel Thibault, the lodge building still stands today in Cape Town.
- **Early Social Hub:** In its early years, the lodge offered a library, billiards, and even a small golf course—the only one of its kind in the region at the time.

The Spread: From the Cape to the Copperbelt

Following the Dutch introduction, Freemasonry followed the paths of trade, military campaigns, and colonial expansion.

British Influence: The first permanent English involvement began in 1811 with the formation of the British Lodge in Cape Town.

British Lodge was established under the “Moderns” Grand Lodge of England as the first permanent English Masonic lodge in the territory

- **Warrant Date:** 9 August 1811.
- **Significance:** It marked the first permanent involvement of the United Grand Lodge of England in South Africa.
- **Origins:** Founded by English-speaking Freemasons who previously belonged to the Dutch-chartered Lodge De Goede Hoop.
- **Centenary:** The lodge celebrated its centenary on 17 June 1911 and its bi-centenary on 9 August 2011.

Early Cape Town Lodges

• **Cape of Good Hope Lodge**

(1812): Founded by the "Antients" (a rival branch of English Freemasonry at the time), this lodge was established just one year after British Lodge. It reflected the competition between the "Moderns" and "Antients" Grand Lodges in England, which eventually merged in 1813 to form the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE).

Masonic History

- Albany Lodge (Grahamstown)

While British Lodge held the fort in Cape Town, the arrival of the 1820 Settlers in the Eastern Cape led to a surge in Masonic activity in frontier towns like Grahamstown.

The Expansion into the Interior

As the century progressed, the "Craft" followed the development of infrastructure and the discovery of minerals:

- Natal (1850s): English lodges began appearing in Durban and Pietermaritzburg as the colony of Natal grew.
- The Diamond Fields (1870s): The discovery of diamonds in Kimberley brought a massive influx of men from across the globe, leading to the rapid founding of multiple lodges to serve the diverse mining community.

We will be doing a follow-up article on Freemasonry in Kimberley, and the surrounding area, in future issues of The Craft Connection.

- **The Transvaal (1878–1887):** The first English lodge in the Transvaal, Transvaal Lodge No. 1747 was consecrated in Pretoria in 1878. This was followed by the gold rush in Johannesburg, where the Johannesburg Lodge No. 2313 was founded in 1890.



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Unique Characteristics of SA Lodges

Unlike many other colonies, South African Freemasonry was characterized by "Sister Constitutions". It was common for an English lodge to share a building or even hold joint ceremonies with Dutch, Scottish, or Irish lodges, creating a rare cross-cultural space during the colonial era.

- **Northern Expansion for the Scots:** As settlers and prospectors moved inland, new lodges followed. The Lodge Golden Thistle (Scottish Constitution) became the first to be chartered in Johannesburg in 1887, followed by the Transvaal Lodge in Pretoria.
- **Shared Authority:** as mentioned, South Africa is one of the few places where lodges under English (United Grand Lodge of England), Scottish (Grand Lodge of Scotland), Irish (Grand Lodge of Ireland), and South African (Grand Lodge of South Africa) constitutions have historically worked side-by-side.

Today, there are a few thousand members in South Africa, from various religions and cultures, South African Freemasonry continues its tradition of "Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth," focusing on charitable works and personal growth. Making Good Men Better.

• **Notable Members**

The fraternity has counted many influential figures in South African history as members, here are a few, and in future issues of Craft Connection we will discuss more:

- Cecil John Rhodes
- General Louis Botha (1st Prime Minister of South Africa)
- President Johannes Brand (4th State President of the Orange Free State)
- Harry Oppenheimer (Business leader)



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