



## The Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of Scotland

William Ramsay McGhee, OStJ, D.L., Grand Master Mason

Brethren,

12<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Last Saturday, I was privileged to chair a very interesting and productive meeting with the majority of our District Grand Masters. In all our Districts the true spirit of Freemasonry is being shown in so many ways in sometimes difficult and challenging circumstances. In most countries there are strict restrictions in place – only in Hong Kong and New Zealand are our Lodges operating physically while in Kenya and Jamaica outdoor meetings are being carried out but with social distancing in place. As is the case here at home, the great tenets of Brotherly Love and Relief are being amply demonstrated by our Brethren throughout the world. While space precludes listing all that is happening, but to give you a flavour of what is happening in the Districts, I have noted just a few of the initiatives –

In India where they have been experiencing 5000 deaths per day, our District Grand Lodge has dispersed PPE equipment to the value of 2,000,000 Rupees (approx. £20k).

Several Districts are donating i-pads and i-phones to children to enable them to home school.

Our District in Zambia has been giving much needed support to a Mission Hospital.

In Lebanon where the Brethren are coping not only with Covid-19, the aftermath of the blast and a serious economical crisis, they have started a “Jobs Workshop” to assist those who have been made redundant or lost businesses – something I have asked the Strategy Group to look at as we will no doubt see mass redundancies and business loss here and in many of our Districts as a longer-term result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the midst of all of this, many Districts and Provinces are engaging in a wide range of Masonic Education projects which is equally encouraging.

All Provincial and District Grand Masters have been asked to seek the opinion of the Brethren on a number of topics but more especially, the five major issues emanating from the recent survey. When your Province arranges to collect such information, please participate – your opinion will count.

As you will read in the SCFS report, the total Identifiable monetary value of contributions recorded within the group has now risen to a magnificent £843,386. What an effort by Scottish Freemasons throughout the world – in excess of £20,000 per week to assist those less fortunate – the lesson of the North East corner is very much to the fore – congratulations.

### SCFS

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Scottish.Constitution.Freemasonry.Supports/>

- Membership of the group from Lodges working under, or recognised by, the Grand Lodge of Scotland has risen over the last week to 4616 Brethren.
- The number of posts recorded within the group has risen to 642 submitted by 255 group members.



- These updated contributions can now be attributed as to being made on behalf of 301 Lodges.
- We are delighted to report that, as from this week, contributions have been recorded from Lodges within all 32 Provinces, 21 of our Districts, Superintendencies or from Lodges under the direct supervision of Grand Lodge.
- Last week the group was fast approaching a total identifiable monetary value of contributions of £600,000. However once again Bro. Kevin Taggart, IPM, has secured on behalf of his Mother Lodge, Lodge Buchan St. John, No. 636, 3 full articulated trailers of foodstuffs, clothes, toys, and household goods. The value of the goods received is valued in excess of £250,000. Donations from this windfall entitled “Lodge Buchan St. John, No. 636 - National COVID-19 Care Initiative” to make significant donations to the 2 Masonic Homes and are in the process of being shared with Lodges and Provinces with which Lodge Buchan St. John has an association. This in turn will be distributed to many worthwhile groups and organisations throughout the country.
- The total Identifiable monetary value of contributions recorded within the group has now risen to a magnificent £843,386.

### SCFS Overseas Report

- With the inclusion of the new members which we have welcomed from our Lodges overseas this week, our Overseas Membership has now risen to **1334** Brethren - nearly 30% of our total membership.
- These new members joined us from their Lodges in ... Bahamas, Belgium, Central South Africa, Eastern Province of the Cape of Good Hope, India, Lebanon, Middle East, Western Australia, Zambia
- The largest increase in membership was from the *District of the Middle East* with the most Brethren joining from an individual Lodge coming from **Lodge Ratanakosin, No. 1833**, based in Bangkok in the Middle East.
- Our International Constitution Members (ICMs) viewing the SCFS page has now passed through the targeted milestone of 300, with the addition of **26** new ICMs joining the group bringing our total to **322**. This week Brethren joined from the Grand Lodge of South Africa, Grand Lodge of Japan, National United Grand Lodges of Bulgaria, Grand Lodge of Manitoba, Grand Lodge of Texas, Grand Lodge of Ireland, UGLE (England, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Thailand), Grand Lodge of Victoria, Grand Lodge of Ohio, The Norwegian Order of Freemasons.
- We are delighted to note an increase in the number of our ICMs who are being extremely proactive in inviting their fellow Brethren to join this group .. a reflection of the quality of the posts which Brethren are submitting for publication.
- A very special welcome is extended to **Brother Charles (Chad) Ward, Lodge Washington, No. 17, in the Grand Lodge of Ohio**, who has become our *300th International Constitution Member*. Many congratulations.
- In addition, very warm welcomes were extended to **Brother Bharat V Epur** (*Past Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of India*) and to **Brother Stan Barclay** (*Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba*).

Finally, as always, please stay safe and look after each other.

*Ramsay McGhee*

Grand Master Mason

