

THE COMMUNIQUE

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From the Grand Master ...

Brethren:

Recently I was honoured to be your representative at the United Grand Lodge of England's celebration of 300 years of the formation of Grand Lodge.

It was a once in a lifetime experience, one hundred and thirty-six Grand Masters from all over the world gathered for three days of celebration in London, England.

The first event was the Deputy Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England welcoming dinner guests at the Grand Connaught Room where over five hundred invited Masons and their companions enjoy a champagne reception follow by an excellent dinner. Dinner music was provided by a military band in the balcony.

The entrance of the Deputy Grand Master and his Lady was announced by two trumpeters who led the entourage to the two empty seats at the table where Gloria and I were seated. To say the least we were very impressed.

The next morning the Grand Masters and their guests assembled in the Grand Temple of the Freemason's Hall on Queen Street to be greeted by H.R.H. the Duke of Kent at the Grand Master's reception. Each Grand Master had a few moments with H.R.H., he asked me if there were any plans for the 300th Anniversary in Ontario and I was able to reply that a Gala Ball was planned in Toronto in November.

That evening, more than 400 invited guests were taken by coach to the mansion of the Lord Mayor of London for a champagne reception. The room that we assembled in was breath taking and much time was spent taking pictures. The Lord Mayor, with only three more days left in office, gave a welcome speech which soon identified him as a Brother. It was truly a magical evening and the perfect ending to an amazing day

In the late afternoon of the third day, through evening traffic and from five hotels, the Grand Masters & Masons were taken by coach to Royal Albert Hall for the premier event of the Tercentenary Celebrations. The first balcony of Royal Albert Hall is designate as the Grand Balcony and the Grand Masters were seated in the first row of the balcony boxes to watch the evenings events unfold while the remaining four thousand Mason took their seats on the floor and the other balconies. Our Ladies and other invited guests took in the Royal Albert production at the Freemasons Hall, displayed on a giant screen, and then dinner next door at the Grand Connaught room. The great celebration began with Grand Lodge being opened in a

private room and then called off and the procession of all Metropolitan, Provincial and District Grand Masters entered the Hall while the M.W. Grand Master H.R.H the Duke of Kent entered the Queen's Royal Albert box.

Then began the theatrical and musical celebration titled "Bringing Light To The World" starring Sir Derek Jacobi whose theatre work as King Lear; film work in Murder on the Orient Express and the Hunchback of Notre Dame; as well as television work, is well known.

Jim Daniel, this year's Prestonian Lecturer, when speaking with the show producers, described in these words the vision for the play, "We would like to send our members home astonished and delighted and with even greater pride in their membership". In my opinion they accomplished their vision and much more.

Once the play was over then began the pomp and circumstance, with the entrance of the Grand Master, the Duke of Kent to the gold Masters Chair. The Grand Master welcome all and then followed two well know hymns; I vow to thee my country" and Guide me O thou great Jehovah

The Soane Ark which contained the Great Lights and the Wren Maul was destroy in a fire. In an impressive ceremony, the Grand Chaplain blessed and received the Great Lights and Wren Maul into a new Ark built to the exact dimensions of the original Soane Ark The ceremony concluded with the singing of the hymn Jerusalem and two verses of God Save the Queen The Grand Masters were once again on a coach to the Battersea Evolution which is a spectacular building which seated two thousand Mason's for dinner. I was privileged to sit at one of the four tables designated as a head table, my seat mates were the UGLE Assistant Grand Master, the Grand Master of Cuba, the Grand Master of Virginia and the Grand Master of Luxembourg. The dinner was excellent, the speeches were minimal and the general feeling was a bit sad that this well planned, once in a life time event was now over.

Gloria and I were very blessed to be in a position to make these wonderful memories as we watch history unfold. To the United Grand Lodge of England and the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario we say thank you.

From Gloria and I, we wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and prosperous and Happy New Year.

***Paul Todd
Grand Master***

From the Deputy ...

Brethren,

In most religions the quest for knowledge is expressed in terms of light: seeking enlightenment. And this season abounds with festivals of light, despite or perhaps because, it is the darkest time of the year (in the Northern Hemisphere anyway.)

Bodhi Day commemorates the day that Siddhartha Gautama obtained enlightenment and became the first Buddha.

Christmas is the Christian celebration of the birth of the "light of the world". Trees and houses are lit and candles form an integral part of many church services.

Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, celebrates the time when there was only enough oil to light the temple for one night, but it lasted for eight. Jews light the candles on the Menorah to remember this miracle.

Milad un-Nabi is a celebration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammed. It is a quiet day as it also marks his death. While the major focus is on the Prophet's life and teaching, in some countries the streets and mosques are illuminated at night.

Hindus celebrate Diwali with prayers, gifts and lights. Millions of lamps shine from houses across India during this festival. Diwali is also important to Jains as the end of the year and as a commemoration of enlightenment and nirvana.

Lohri is an official festival in the Punjab. It involves big bonfires and lots of food. It is celebrated by Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims and Christians.

In Japan, huge bonfires burn on Mount Fuji each December 22nd.

Fires were lit to mark the Scandinavian festival of Juul – hence the Yule log.

A Kinora with seven candles is lit to remind us of the seven principles of Kwanzaa.

The Zuni and Hopi people of the Southwest U.S.A. observe Soyal with fasting, prayer and ceremonial dancing.

Saturnalia in ancient Rome was celebrated with gifts of imitation fruit, dolls and candles.

Yalda, which is still observed in Iran as a secular festival, had its roots the triumph of Mithra over darkness.

The Winter Solstice is one of only four times a year that access to Stonehenge is allowed. Neo-Druids gather to watch the midwinter sun rise perfectly between the two upright stones of the Great Trilithon.

Freemasonry, although not a religion, celebrates enlightenment, and symbols of light abound – from the question posed to the initiate at the altar, to the sun in splendour on the Grand Master's apron. Many Lodges hold their Installations during this season of darkness and light.

One of the hallmarks of Freemasonry is our inclusion of men of many faiths. It is one of our greatest strengths.

In this season which is so special to all of us, Jill and I wish you all the best for the holy days.

***David J. Cameron
Deputy Grand Master***

From the desk of the Grand Secretary ...

On behalf of your office staff – Gail Nickerson, Stacey Birks and Kathy White and myself, we thank those transacting Masonic business throughout the year, for your courteous dealings and extend to all, our best wishes for a very happy, healthy and safe holiday.

