

THE COMMUNIQUE

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From the Grand Master ...

Here's your pipe, again. It deserves better treatment than it's had. There's a procedure, a ritual, in all things.

- Rudyard Kipling, "In the Interests of the Brethren"

Brethren,

Three chance encounters introduce us to W. Bro. Burges. A tobacconist, he is a Mason and, like Kipling, has lost his son in World War I.

We are taken to an informal meeting of his lodge which they held regularly for the benefit of soldiers stationed in London:

Now a Lodge of Instruction is mainly a parade-ground for Ritual. It cannot initiate or confer degrees, but is limited to rehearsals and lectures. Worshipful Brother Burges, resplendent in Solomon's Chair... briefly told the Visiting Brethren how welcome they were and always would be, and asked them to vote what ceremony should be rendered for their instruction.

When the decision was announced he wanted to know whether any Visiting Brothers would take the duties of Lodge Officers. They protested bashfully that they were too rusty. 'The very reason why,' said Brother Burges...

When the amateurs, rather red and hot, had finished, they demanded an exhibition-working of their bungled ceremony by Regular Brethren of the Lodge. Then I realised for the first time what word-and-gesture-perfect Ritual can be brought to mean.

This short story, found in the collection, *Debits and Credits*, showcases the healing power of attending lodge with the reassuring familiarity of our Masonic ritual.

Bro. Kipling's son, John, enlisted in 1914 at the age of 17. On his eighteenth birthday he was posted to France and a few weeks later was involved in the Battle of Loos, called "the Big Push". John was reported wounded and missing. For years, his

father hoped against hope that he was not among the reported 59,000 British casualties, but he did not return. To this day, they continue to find remains from that battle. A grave which may have been his was identified in 1994, long after his father had passed.

Rudyard Kipling started to write stories about the war and authored a two-volume history of the Irish Guards, his son's regiment. He also devoted himself to the War Graves Commission. This body, now called the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, took on the monumental task of identifying the graves of the fallen, a task never before attempted on so large a scale. More than a million burials are now commemorated at military and civilian sites in more than 150 countries and territories.

The War Graves Commission had its headquarters at Saint-Omer, France and it was there, in 1922, that the Builders of the Silent Cities Lodge was consecrated. Kipling was a founding member and the name was suggested by him. Numbered 12 on the register of the Grande Loge Nationale Française, it is now based in Lille. When the Commission was moved to London, another lodge of the same name was formed under the United Grand Lodge of England, numbered 4948.

Kipling suggested the line "*Their name liveth for evermore*" as an inscription for war cemetery memorials. He also suggested "*Known to God*" for tombstones of soldiers unable to be identified, and it is from a Kipling poem that we get the phrase "*Lest we forget*".

David J. Cameron
Grand Master

Learn more:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

<https://www.cwgc.org/>

Jaffa, Richard; Man and Mason - Rudyard Kipling, AuthorHouse UK Ltd, Milton Keynes, 2011

Read the whole short story:

<http://www.telelib.com/authors/K/KiplingRudyard/prose/DebitsandCredits/interestsbrethren.html>

From the Deputy ...

My Brethren:

It has been about a year and a half now since your Grand Lodge created a GoToMeeting account for each District to assist the Lodges in keeping in contact with their membership. The access information was sent to each District Deputy Grand Master who was charged with providing this to each of the Lodges in their respective Districts. The intent was so that every Lodge could host a monthly meeting on their regular meeting night to communicate with their membership, cover any business that was permissible, provide some Masonic Education and generally to take an account of the health of their membership and Lodge.

Another great advantage of this tool being used by several Lodges and Districts is to keep in touch with the many interested men who have inquired about Freemasonry either via our Grand Lodge web site, the BeAFreemason.org or the old-fashioned appeal to a current member. Many of our Masonic education videoconferences have been of such a nature that these interested men have been invited to get a feeling of the events and fellowship that is being shared during this time and get to know some of the Brethren they may potentially share membership with.

The reason I mention this again is that, with us receiving the okay to return to Lodge as of November 1st, there may be some things that we have adopted during this COVID-19 break, that we may want to keep – such as Lodge videoconferences for Masonic Education and fellowship. Please realize that these options are still very viable and useful going forward during this period of returning to normal. Remember, that not all our Brethren will feel comfortable in returning, whether it be over concern for their own health or solidarity with their older more susceptible members or those who are not double vaccinated for whatever reason. And not all our Lodges will or are required by Grand Lodge to return to their regular in-Lodge meetings. Please remember that this option of meeting via videoconference with all your members and frequent visitors is still an option that may be very beneficial to the membership during this transition period.

Remember that some of the Lodges that were making use of monthly videoconferences on a regular basis were reporting better attendance than when they were meeting in Lodge. The members who were not physically able to get to their Lodge building due to their health condition or where they were living, had once again been enjoying the benefits of membership. And don't forget what a great tool our video meetings were for being able to stay in touch with potential members by keeping their interest stoked until such time as they can be formally introduced to the Lodge room. This may be the biggest reason to keep your Lodge videoconference going at least until we can return to Degree Work.

The Seminars and Workshops Committee of your Grand Lodge is continuing to be the hub of information where lecturers and presentation seekers will go to find each other. They are facilitating the connection of the two parties who are seeking/offering the same thing to arrange a successful meeting/lecture.

Most of us know of a brother who we all enjoy listening to because he has something to quench our thirst for Masonic education. The problem being is that he is mostly known only to your Lodge/District. Would that brother like to offer his education to a greater audience such as other Masons throughout Ontario? Is your Lodge or District trying to organize an event in your area, but you don't know anyone who has a lecture you wish to bring to your area?

With the ability to host an event electronically, new doors have opened and geographical barriers have become a problem of the past. This is an opportunity for new lecturers and Lodge/District Chairman to bring something to our Grand Jurisdiction.

[New Lecturers](#) – If you have something to offer and are willing to bring your lecture to others you may never have to opportunity to meet, then please click on [this link, https://forms.gle/fR1wKwW8paWGeT2x8](https://forms.gle/fR1wKwW8paWGeT2x8) to tell us what you have to offer. If you have multiple lectures to offer, please fill out a separate form for each lecture. Masonic rank doesn't matter. If you are part of a Grand Lodge Committee who has something to share, please let us know that as well. This is a great opportunity for budding Lecturers.

[Lecture Seekers](#)– If you are looking for a lecturer, Lodge or District level, then please click on this link, <https://forms.gle/Hg2cDuHzVo68XXuF7> to tell us what you are looking for. If you are seeking multiple lectures, please fill out a separate form for each request. If you are seeking a speaker from a Grand Lodge Committee, please let us know that as well.

If you have any questions or wish to have your event posted on the Grand Lodge calendar to share with all Masons, please contact the Committee directly at Masoniclectures@gmail.com with all the details.

So many of the lessons we learn from the Ritual of our Craft are even more important in times of crisis. To those Lodges who are currently keeping their members and prospects engaged – your payoff will come when the restrictions are lifted and your Lodge is re-opened for business as it used to be!

*Thomas W. Hogeboom
Deputy Grand Master*