

Minutes of the Southport Group Meeting held at the Masonic Hall on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2010. The meeting was opened at 7.30pm by the Group Vice Chairman, W.Bro. C.W. Paton.

1) Respect to departed merit:

The meeting stood in silent respect to the several brethren who had passed to the Grand Lodge above since the last meeting.

2) Apologies:

W.Bro B.S. Henshaw, PAGDC, Grp Chairman  
W.Bro A.G. Shuttleworth, P.Pr.J.G.W.  
W.Bro N. Rowbotham, P.Pr.DGSupt Wks.  
W.Bro C.S. Lee, P.Pr.S.G.D.  
W.Bro. J.P. Williams, P.Pr.S.G.D.

3) Minutes:

The minutes of the Group Meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2009 having been previously circulated were confirmed and signed.

4) Matters Arising: None.

5) To Receive Reports:

■ **Group Mentor:**

**W. Bro. D.W. Bradbury**

I, together with Bro. Peter Martin and our Group Chairman, attended the Provincial Mentoring Conference in January. The conference was attended by representatives from all the Groups in the Province and the Provincial Grand Master had asked four groups to give a presentation; Southport was one of those Groups.

Bro. Peter Martin and I presented a paper to the conference, detailing the work of the Three Degrees Club and its place in the mentoring scheme. Bro Martin finished the presentation with his experiences of inter-Lodge visits with new Lodge members in the Group. The paper was very well accepted and over lunch many positive comments and questions were asked. A copy of the paper is now available on the Group Website.

A lot of information was gleaned from the other Groups attending, and we have now produced a series of booklets to supplement the information given in Three Degree's packs. These are, a 'Welcome to Candidates', to be given after Lodge Committee acceptance and before initiation. A welcome to Initiates within the Group and an explanation of each of the three degree ceremonies. They are now ready and will be available to Lodges at our next Lodge Mentors meeting in April.

Lodge Mentors are being kept busy, with a very satisfactory influx of initiates over the year, totalling almost 40.

■ **Group Charity Steward 2010 Festival:**

**W.Bro. N.W. Jones**

This will be the last Group Charity Steward's report before the conclusion of the 2010 festival and may I put on record my sincere thanks to all those Brethren who have assisted W.Bro. Robert Wright and myself over the last five years.

At the Appeals Committee meeting last Friday at Wellington Hotel in Leyland, we were informed that the Festival total stood at

£4,818,828 with monies still to be added and it is hoped the magical but unmentionable amount we have all subconsciously had in our minds will be achieved.

Individual Southport Group donations as at 17<sup>th</sup> March totalled £219,609 including tax relief or about £277.29 per Brother over the five year period.

The last date for receipt of 2010 monies is 14<sup>th</sup> April. However, should any donations be received after that date they can be sent direct to the Provincial Grand Charity Steward' but to reach him no later than 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2010.

Of our 26 Lodges, 6 have achieved Gold patronage £4000+, 5 have achieved Grand Patron status £2400+ and 9 Lodges at Patron status. Also 7 of our 12 Chapters are Patrons of the 2010.

On an individual basis we have 12 Grand Patrons £1200+, 51 Patrons £600+, 120 Vice Patrons £300+ and 149 members £100. The Southport Group continue to donate to the festival despite far exceeding the Gold patronage with the total donated to date being £10,078 and I would wish to register a special vote of thanks for their wonderful efforts.

The Provincial Group Charity Steward was of the opinion that whilst the Jewel can be worn by Brethren "in perpetuity" it should be worn throughout this Masonic year and then each Brother should decide if he wished to continue to wear it.

The West Lancashire Freemason's Charity met on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2010 and decided to increase the maximum net income allowed to qualify for relief from £161 p.w. to £175 p.w for single people and from £226 to £250 for couples. This is the surplus income you may have after deductions of essential expenses such as housing, attendance allowance, disability allowance, council tax, water rates and a certain amount of savings.

■ **Masonic Children's Party:**

**W.Bro. I.L. Howarth**

At the 36<sup>th</sup> Children's Christmas Party the Scarborough Dining room once again resounded to the shrieks of young voices. Entertainment was provided by Mr Styx who mixed music and magic, keeping both the young and old enthralled. A McDonald's meal followed and the afternoon was completed with a visit from Father Christmas and his helpers the Group Vice Chairman and Group Secretary.

Thanks go to Julie and all her staff, to all the brethren who assisted in any way and to those Lodges and Chapters whose donations enabled the event to take place, unfortunately, six Lodges failed to subscribe. The meticulous planning by David Southworth and Gordon Herod meant that the party went off without a hitch and the next party date will be 5<sup>th</sup> December 2010.

■ **Social Club:**

**W.Bro. G. Jones**

The attendances for the season which closed on the 6<sup>th</sup> March were down on the previous year, perhaps due to the poor weather conditions which also forced the cancellation of the January Social. However, the finances are sound despite the season showing a loss

of £245, the deficit being met from our reserves. It is our intention to increase publicity by using the Group website and the Sandgrunder and we will certainly continue with the socials next season. The Club provides at a reasonable cost, a three course meal and different entertainment at each social and is open to all Masons, their wives, partners, family and friends. Starting in October, we usually meet on the first Saturday in the month with the exception of January 2011 which will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday.

■ **Friends of Tithebarn:**

**W.Bro. R.A. Trees**

Times have been pretty hard this last season for the Southport Group Friends of Tithebarn. This, I think, is because of the big push for the 2010 Festival and rightly so. We were lucky to have had the usual support of the Lodges, Chapters and Brethren albeit in a low key manner. We were very fortunate to have the support of W.Bro. Dougie Drysdale of Perfect Ashlar Lodge 5246 and his offer to donate the proceeds of his "computer initiative" to the Tithebarn for the coming season. This raised the magnificent sum of £700 without which, we could not have reached our target of £3,000 as has been our custom over the last four years. We will be ever thankful to Dougie for his generosity. It gives me great pleasure to thank W.Bro. Alan Sainter, for his direct donation of £1,000 to the Friends of Tithebarn. He has always been generous in the extreme to the charities.

W.Bro Tony Larkin, Almoner of Ainsdale Lodge 5884, with W.Bro Bryan Henshaw's blessing, has agreed to take on the office of secretary of the Southport Group "Friends of Tithebarn" and we thank him for accepting the job.

We will be holding a race night for the Tithebarn in November and we hope that the Group will give us their usual full support.

■ **Carol Service:**

**W. Bro. C.S. Lee: Read by W. Bro P. G. Stock**

By kind permission of the Churchwardens, the Southport Masonic Group, their families and friends were able to enjoy another successful Carol Service at Emmanuel Parish Church on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

The event was well-attended, with numbers recovering somewhat after the previous year's widespread illness. The generous Charity collection was divided equally between Emmanuel Parish Church and the 2010 Festival.

To judge from the number of Brethren and their families who remained for refreshments and a chance to talk and socialise, the event was again popular and enjoyable. The social aspect of the occasion is of great importance and is above all, a part of the celebration of the Season and its message of peace and goodwill, as well as being a unique spectacle for the Group.

Sincere thanks are due to all those who contributed to making the event so successful and enjoyable, not least all those Brethren and Companions, their families and friends who attended; the very special atmosphere generated by a full congregation in such a

large venue cannot be underestimated. Even so, Emmanuel is capable of accommodating as many people again. Particular thanks are due firstly to all the readers; secondly, to W.Bro. Brian Skinner and his Team of Stewards; and thirdly, to W.Bro. Ian Beecham, the D.C., who ensured that the service progressed smoothly and with dignity.

As Emmanuel is currently in Interregnum following the sad and sudden death of the Rev. Canon Colin Pope, by kind permission of the Churchwardens and Parochial Church Council the next Group Carol Service will take place at Emmanuel Parish Church on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2010.

■ **Year Book Editor 18<sup>th</sup> Report:**  
**W. Bro. K.S. Milne**

The Year Book is a document which, if totally accurate, is accepted by members of the Group without comment. If, however, the rank of a brother is incorrectly recorded or if there are inaccuracies in the index of the book, then there are phone calls or emails highlighting the errors! I have offered solutions in the past to help me produce an accurate edition, but traditions in Freemasonry seem to mean that change is not acceptable.

Let me remind all Group Reps what would make not only my life so much easier, but also that of John Milnes, Mike Copland, Phil Stock, Eric Morris etc. Summonses need to contain accurate details of current lodge membership. All lodges seem to be very proud to list all their past masters, most of whom are dead and buried. I could, if asked, produce a totally accurate booklet entitled Southport's Dead Past Masters. I can guarantee no errors! What I cannot always establish is the accurate list of membership of lodges which still are reluctant to include this information on summonses. If 75% of lodges and 80% of Chapters can manage it, why can't the others? I appreciate that it is easy for a small lodge such as my own to find a space and I do understand when secretaries say they haven't room. I just suggest they take a look at the summons for Southport Lodge. All members, 61 of them, are listed, in order of seniority, on the back page. Dead Past Masters are neatly listed at the edges of the inside pages, still leaving room for the list of officers and the agenda.

I don't like to think of my report as merely a string of grumbles, far from it. I want to express my thanks to every secretary and scribe who struggle with all the demands placed upon them. I appreciate the prompt way in which they deal with my requests for information and I am grateful to them all. The end result is a document produced for the good of the Group and by the collective efforts of the Group. All I do ask is that you make the part I have to play a little easier.

■ **Sandgrunder:**  
**W. Bro. J.H. Harris**

The Spring Sandgrunder was published on schedule last week and appears to have been well received. As the editor, I am proud of the content and with the presentation. This is the result of devoted dedication of my team W. Bro. John V. Porter, W. Bro. Peter T. Wall and Bro. Paul Hardman to whom I owe my

sincere gratitude. The magazine is, I hope, a true reflection of the various personalities and the various activities of this vibrant group. I consider the Sandgrunder, in conjunction with the Group web-page to be our 'shop-window' and I believe we, the team, have made overall improvement. The increase from 40 to 48 pages, the inclusion of eight colour pages, the improvement in the paper and the improvement in the print has cost considerably more. Additional finance has been raised by W. Bro. Peter T. Wall in increased advertising with very little evidence of the fact, indeed, I am not aware of any reader noticing the difference. The total advertising revenue is £1,350. With a run of 500 I would hope that I could raise £300 per issue at £1 per copy, making £600 for the Spring and the Autumn issues; giving a total of £1,950. The cost of the print run is about £900 making an annual total of £1,800, leaving me an overall surplus of £150. However, life is not a bowl of cherries. The 'Honesty Box' does not always return the necessary £300 per issue. We have in the past maximised at £347 but generally it is below the £300 mark. I do request and indeed will welcome comments and will listen to past experience on this matter and I am open to constructive criticism. However, I hesitate to place any further responsibility on Lodge Secretaries or Scribes E. This current issue arrangements were made with the printer to reduce the Sandgrunder to pdf format which was successfully completed at a cost of £20. This has two prime benefits; it can be electronically transmitted throughout the world and secondly it can be archived. The Sandgrunder is available to forward to Province, to other groups, to other Publicity Officers and of course to friends and Brethren resident elsewhere throughout the world - in fact limitless. Another bonus is that our advertisers can enjoy that extra circulation, perhaps especially the two hotels featured. It will shortly be available on the Group web-page to download and if any Brother is considering down-loading a copy simply to save a pound coin please think again. There are 48 pages! More good news is that the last two copies are also available to convert to pdf, thereby I can announce that all issues since this team came into office will be properly archived. I look forward to a secure future for the Sandgrunder. With Peter, Paul and John on my team, I fear no evil. The Sandgrunder is in good heart.

■ **Publicity Officer:**  
**Bro. P.R. Hardman**

Again, this has been a busy season and all stories covered can be viewed on the Provincial and Group web sites as well as the new edition of the Sandgrunder. With regard to future planning and development, work has progressed in line with the Provincial Grand Master's directives. It is his wish to open up Freemasonry within the community at large, thus enabling the general public to become more empathetic toward our organisation and for the organization to become more attractive to younger, potential new candidates. With this in mind I have embarked on Operation Charlie Horse

Stories are told in such a way that the charity or organisation benefit from the publicity and potentially generate more income; and Freemasonry in general is to be seen as a major benefactor within the community and NOT just looking after its own. It becomes a win/win situation and heightens the profile of both Organisation and Freemasonry. Also in line with the PGM's wishes, I am very conscious of the new drive for membership and member retention so that, over the coming seasons, I shall be working closely with the new Group Membership Officer and the Provincial Team to see how best we can use publicity as a tool for their endeavours.

Internally, I am in the process of developing an idea called the Southport Deacon - carrying all messages and communications. This will take the form of an encased broadsheet to be viewed and read publically in our Hall.

I am acutely aware that many brethren miss out on the e-mail news and that the notice boards do not cover every aspect of that news. This will need careful thought and cooperation from several sides and work is still in its infancy and ongoing.

■ **Masonic Hall Foundation:**  
**W. Bro. T. Rimmer**

Thanks are due to all the Lodges, Chapters, Side Degrees and Individuals who continue to support us in such a regular and generous manner.

Since the commencement of this Masonic season we have received donations totalling £14,718.00. This includes the magnificent sum of £4,800.00 donated at the Masters' & First Principal's Festival last week.

That is the good news brethren. The bad news is that we have in the same period spent £60,282.00. However, more good news is, we have the money to spend and we still have over £89,000.00 in the bank.

The expenditure quoted relates to the completion of the window contract, air conditioning in the Hannay Temple and the continuation of the stonework contract.

Air conditioning is to be installed in the Scarbrough temple during the close season and some remedial work will be carried out on the main roof during the summer. The remaining stonework repairs to the Lord Street elevation and the front of the Maddocks temple will commence in September. It is anticipated that the cost of all the above works will be approximately £50,000.00.

May I remind you again about 2 ways in which you can support the foundation; by joining the 250 club for just £12.00 with annual prize money totalling £700.00 and by purchasing an "I support my hall" lapel badge, available from behind the bar at £2.00 each.

I would like to thank my committee - Alyn Rimmer, Neil Latham, Jim Stanley, Colin Jenkins and Robert Wright for all the hard work they put in behind the scenes.

■ **Three Degrees Club:**  
**W. Bro. G Wilcock**

Current membership stands at approx. 90 with a similar number of "Friends of the Three Degrees Club" - ex members who have been

removed from the membership list (having been members for 3 years) who will be kept informed of and encouraged to participate in our activities. In fact, these ex members are the brethren we hope to recruit as future officers of the Three Degrees Club. We have had 25 Initiates this season already with 4 balloted for and including one initiated last week.

We must again offer our appreciation to Lodge Secretaries and Mentors, for their cooperation in ensuring that every Initiate receives a Three Degrees Club Welcome Pack, a vital part of our operation. Despite being non-profit making, we have again given money to Charity (Children's Christmas Party). At a recent committee meeting we decided to present something tangible for use in the Masonic Hall - a Masonic Clock (in fact 2 were purchased) to be displayed in the Lounge and Hannay Dining Room. They were presented to the Group Chairman at the Masters' and First Principal's Festival.

We are continuing to enjoy our social activities and a Masked Ball was held in November 2009, which proved a great success at which the skills and ideas of the "Dream Team" were evident throughout the evening. The date booked for our Spring Social coincided with the Group Ball and it was suggested that we assist the organisers of the Ball by giving it a theme, thus a "Spectacular Black and White Ball" was agreed.

*Some positives that have come out of the Three Degrees Club:*

- Bro. Paul Kevan assists W.Bro. John Fisher as Assistant Curator and Treasurer.
- Bro. Paul Hardman brings his graphic design skills to bear as Group Publicity Officer.
- Bro. Peter Martin assists W.Bro. David Bradbury as Assistant Group Mentor.
- W.Bro. Phil Baines of Formby Lodge is our first member to receive Provincial Honours.

After five years of operation, there are to be a few changes. I am stepping down as Chairman, to make way for a more youthful successor, hopefully full of new ideas and Bro. Mike Foster of Starkie Lodge is joining the committee.

Our efforts are not for our benefit but, for the benefit of our newly Initiated Masonic Brethren and ultimately for the benefit of each Lodge in particular and Freemasonry in general.

*A presentation was made to W.Bro. G. Wilcock in appreciation of his work with the Three Degree Club.*

#### ■ Computer Society:

##### W.Bro. E. Bulcock

The computer society continues to attract new members and is open to all masons and companions together with members of their families of any age group. At our monthly meetings we give presentations and advice in understandable language, on various subjects and topics together with general discussions with regard to individual's computer problems. These subjects have involved; Back to Basics, Web Security, Basic Publishing, Receiving and Sending emails and a very interesting programme for all Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries and Scribe E's where you can print your Summons, menu programme and

place cards as well as your seating plans. This in itself is important with great potential savings on *external printing*.

We continue to assist children, students and widows with revamped, professionally cleaned computers *free of charge* plus basic training and assistance where necessary. So we are always looking for any surplus computers from our fraternity to further this very useful cause.

#### ■ Royal Arch Lead:

##### W.Bro. I.R. Beecham

The role of Royal Arch Lead has now been running for just over twelve months. In that time a Royal Arch Contact has been appointed in each Lodge in the Southport Group.

I have been requested to provide information to the Deputy Grand Superintendent, E Comp Steven P.J. Reid (*Copies of his letter available*). In addition to the above, the Grand Superintendent circulated details of an initiative based on his Local Church, that being "Back to Chapter". The idea is to encourage the return of Companions who, for whatever reason, stopped attending their own Chapter. Details were circulated by E. Comp C.W. Paton to each Chapter and all Royal Arch Contacts and I can report that I have received very little in the way of response to this initiative.

It was decided at the inaugural meeting of Royal Arch Lead/Contacts that we would hold yearly meetings thereafter. As a result, on Friday 5th March, I arranged an Anniversary Meeting at the Masonic Hall. This was attended by E.Comp. C.D.H. Hamilton, Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals, E. Comp. C.W. Paton, Vice Chairman of the Southport Group of Lodges and Chapters, together with Five Royal Arch Contacts and I received ten apologies.

Various topics were discussed in relation to Royal Arch but generally there were no concerns regarding the role of Royal Arch Contact. It was thought that there was now more information available to help Craft Masons decide if they wished to join the Royal Arch without putting undue pressure on them to do so.

I arranged the printing of over 100 pamphlets entitled "This is the Royal Arch - Completing Your Journey". I am happy to report that all those leaflets have been taken and I am negotiating the printing of further copies.

There have been 10 new Exaltees this season with more in the pipeline and this is on a par with previous years. I think it is the responsibility of all Masons to help those in the Craft to a better understanding of Royal Arch Masonry and help in pointing them in the right direction, should they wish to develop their career further.

#### ■ Asst.Pr.G.M:

##### W.Bro. J.V. Moore, M.B.E.

Now that the 2010 Festival is coming to a close, donations can be given to the W.L.F.C. who have suffered slightly in favour of the Festival. Being involved with the committee covering the code of practice for Masonic Halls, he praised Trevor Rimmer and his team

for its management planning, resulting in a superb Masonic Hall and remarked that it is the envy of many. The new chef to date has supplied great food. The Group has a great Magazine and web page and a superb Group Team. He confessed that he was honoured to be associated with Southport Group. A special mention of Alan Sainter who has now given over £49,000 to charity.

He congratulated Paul Hardman, the new Group Publicity Officer for all his hard work over the summer months.

He also recommended regular visits to the Provincial website and in particular "Matts Blog" which gives a good impression of how a young man at University is enjoying his Freemasonry; this could be a useful recruitment tool.

#### ■ Asst to the Pr. Grand Principals:

##### E.Comp. C.D.H. Hamilton

Thanking Ian Beecham for his comprehensive report there was nothing he wanted to add except there is a Chapter in the Group looking to amalgamate with a stronger chapter.

Being a Trustee of the W.L.F.C; the Charity is willing to consider giving matched funding up to £5,000 to organisations with a project in mind. Full details and an application form can be downloaded from the W.L.F.C. web site. Overall there are few requests from this fund.

#### ■ Vice Chairman's Remarks:

##### W. Bro. C.W. Paton

Thanking the Asst.Pr.G.M; W.Bro. J.V. Moore M.B.E. and Asst. to the Pr. Grand Principals: E.Comp. C.D.H. Hamilton, he extended a sincere thank you to all those brethren who gave reports, the Group Secretary, W.Bro. P.G. Stock for preparing the meeting and W. Bro. John Porter for recording the minutes.

He pointed out the new portrait on the wall in the Hannay Dining Room and the new Bowls Tournament Trophy kindly donated by W. Bro. Ray Jeffs.

#### ■ Any Other Business:

\*W.Bro. W.M. Cox informed the brethren and companions that the Southport Group Bowling Tournament would be held at Formby Conservative Club on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2010 and the New Trophy would be presented to the winner of the pairs. He also asked for more support this year.

\*W.Bro. Phil Stock, Group Secretary, gave a vote of thanks to W.Bro. Charles Paton, Vice Chairman, for chairing the meeting.

Date of next meeting **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2010.**

The meeting having no further business closed at 8.50pm.