



Orsett Masonic Centre Newsletter

Issue 1

Provincial Grand Master Visits Orsett



R.W. Bro John Web Provincial Grand Master for the Province of Essex visited Orsett Masonic Centre on 20th May 2009 to commemorate the completion of the recent refurbishment of the centre. During his address the P.G.M made reference to the many fine changes to Orsett Masonic centre over the years, which had been made possible by the commitment of all those involved.

He is pictured above in the dining room unveiling a commemorative plaque of his visit.

Chairman's Note (Jeffrey Conway)



Welcome to the first addition of what I hope will be a regular newsletter. At the moment, we have decided not to send the newsletter to each of the seven hundred of you that meet at

Orsett but to leave them by the bar for you to pick up. If we receive feedback that there is a demand for everyone to have their own individual copy, we will be pleased to amend the way this aspect is dealt with in the future.

I am writing this to you on the morning following the highly successful visit from the Provincial Grand Master to acknowledge officially the refurbishment of the Centre. The visit was a tremendous success and seemed to be enjoyed by all those who attended.

In this newsletter you will see a list of all the building works that have been done in

the past year or so, along with a list of work still to be done. Quite a lot of the work that is done is not always seen e.g. electrical wiring, and work on the roof. Just because you may not be able to see with your eyes any improvements or alterations, it does not mean that your directors are sitting doing nothing.

As you must all find with your own homes, there is constantly work that needs to be done. All of us on the Board are determined that the building is kept in a good state of repair and condition. To this end we are all vigilant. Indeed, whilst I was showing the visiting Heads of Orders in Essex around yesterday lunchtime, I noticed at the top of the stairs, just outside the Tyler's room, some damp. It was almost certainly due to a problem with the flashings on the roof (and there is branches of a tree that overhang the roof more or less there). This will be attended to in the summer shutdown.

I hope to see as many of you as possible at the AGM (at least all those of you who are shareholders). We are going to update the Articles of Association (mainly by removing the upper age limit of seventy five years to act as a director, and allowing for the service of documents on shareholders by e-mail). To that end, Chas Ager will be contacting Lodge secretaries, Scribes etc to ask for e-mail addresses. At the moment, every time we write to the shareholders, it costs us about £500 in postage.

I would like to thank all of my fellow directors for the time and sheer hard work they all put in. I hope you will all agree with me, the result is there for us all to see.

Editor's Note (Terry Sheern)



As this is the first addition of the new Orsett Masonic Centre News Letter I thought it prudent to let you know about your board of directors and how your board conducts its business on your behalf.

The board currently has 15 members
Jeffrey Conway (Chair)



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Ray Ellis (Deputy Chair) (Chair Bar & Entertainment Sub Group)
Chas Ager (Company Secretary)
Richard Bowyer
Ken Burkey
Mark Evans
Sydney Gane
Steve Mansfield (Chair Building Sub Group)
Clive Purdy (Chair Finance Sub Group)
Roger Richardson
Gary Rose
Terry Sheern (Newsletter editor)
Doug Short
John Tratt
Marc Watts

The board meets as a whole group regularly to approve works and make decisions. However it has decided to form three sub groups to manage on their behalf on a day-to-day basis. The three sub groups are Finance, Bar & Entertainment and Building. Each Board member is a member of at least one sub group.

The sub groups are responsible for making proposals, obtaining costings and overseeing any approved works or items on behalf of the full Board.

By structuring ourselves in this way we believe it reduces the "Too many Cooks" syndrome and ensures accountability. If you have any ideas for the board to consider please forward them to the appropriate Sub Group Chair (Notes can be left for them behind the bar)

It is also our intention that each Sub Group Chair will give a short overview of their world in each subsequent newsletter. Lastly if any member has any ideas for inclusion in future News Letters please let me know. Thank you
Email terrysheern@aol.com
Telephone 01702218153
Mobile 07802475268

Bar & Entertainment Sub Group (Ray Ellis)



The first thing I must do as Chairman of Bar and Entertainment Sub Group is say a big

thank you to all the members and their guest for the continued use and support of the Bar and the hall facilities.

Your actions (and healthy drinking habit) have been the main contributing factor in enabling our committee to carry out refurbishment of the Bar area and to keep prices down, even though there has been four increases in Alcohol duty during the 18 months the Group has been formed.

When I was asked to join the Board it was always my aim to make OMH a place where the members would want to come not only for their meetings but also as a social venue. With the appointment of Jackie as Bar Manager, a new Premises licence and some negotiation with the Breweries I was confident that the Bar would do well. With it making a profit (all of which gets put back into the Hall) our Group set about formulating a refurbishment programme.

I was less confident when I put the Budget forward to the Finance committee (blood from a stone springs to mind), but as with all the Board members they want the best for OMH and funds were secured, although it was rumoured that both the Chairman and Clive were placed on medication after signing the cheque.

With the refurbishment work done, continued support of the Bar, bookings for social functions continuing to grow OMH's future as one of the best Masonic Centres in Essex is on good foundations.

Ps. A big thank you to Jackie and the bar staff for their excellent work.

Finance Sub Group (Clive Purdy)



The Finance Sub Group is, as you would expect in charge of the financial aspects of running the Hall. From the reports elsewhere in this newsletter you will see that a great deal of work

has been undertaken on the building and the bar. All of this work has to be paid for and the Hall does not undertake any work that it cannot afford.



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We initially achieved this by a combination of increasing the Lodge rents to £10 per head for one year and obtaining a loan facility from the Essex Provincial Building Fund for up front finance for essential works. These works made such a difference to the Hall and its income that we were able to re appraise our funding levels. In particular the Bar under the guidance of Ray Ellis and the management of Jackie Firmin has been transformed. As members will remember it was only 2 years ago that the bar was being subsidised out of other income. The Bar is now profitable and making a very positive contribution to the Hall funds.

The consequences of this improved financial position is that we did not need to draw down all the facility obtained from the Essex Provincial Building Fund and were able to reduce Lodge Rents to £8.50 per head. Rents are not being increased for the next Masonic year and whilst nothing can be guaranteed it is hoped that they will not need to rise in the foreseeable future. We are also looking to pay off the Building Fund Loan as soon as possible so that the Hall is debt free.

The Hall is now in a secure financial position and able to meet the commitment to maintain it in first class condition. This could not have been achieved without the support of the members as being a members only organisation the money can only come out of our pockets in one way or another.

Buildings Sub Group (Steve Mansfield)



As you are aware it has been a busy period of late and we have undertaken a considerable number of items listed on the business plan.

The board of directors wished to improve the image of the centre as well as bringing it up to date in respect of the relevant current legislation.

Works completed have been as follows: -

1. Refurbishment of the Gents Toilet.
2. Installation of fire alarm system.
3. Installation of air conditioning system in place of gas heaters etc.
4. Upgrading to the emergency lighting system.
5. Upgrading of the fire extinguishers.
6. Installation of a burglar alarm system.
7. Provision of banner storage area.
8. Provision of new and upgrading of existing storage cupboards, (All who meet at the centre now have a storage cupboard)
9. Refurbishment of the Bar Lounge Area, inclusive of new carpet, lighting etc.
10. Refurbishment of the Bar and the improvement of the storage of goods within the cold room, and bar and provision of hot water washing facilities for staff.
11. Provision of an office inclusive of a computer system.
12. Replacement of seating to the temple and the dining room.
13. Provision of a facility for the Rose Croix meetings.
14. Replacement of candles with battery type to the main temple and to other orders. (Still ongoing)
15. Improvement of main entrance walkway externally to assist in easier access to the building.
16. Installation of decking and the renewal of manhole covers to front entrance area.
17. Major repairs to manholes and drainage adjacent to property, where problems were occurring on a regular basis.
18. Improvements to front area with provision of a storage shed and external lighting.
19. Refurbishment of dining room floor inclusive of regular maintenance programme.
20. Renewal of the Stair Lift.

Future Works

The following are works currently identified as needing improvement etc.



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1. Landscaping to the front grassed area, inclusive of water irrigation system.
2. Provision of a Hearing loop system and PA system inclusive of a CD player facility.
3. Redecoration of dining room ceiling and black boxing areas.
4. Redecoration of internal staircase to temple.
5. Cyclical redecoration internal / external programme on a five year cycle.
6. Renewal of dining room lighting.
7. Renewal of entrance hallway light fittings.
8. Provision of a fire safe.
9. Renewal of roof felting to above gent's toilet and storage cupboard areas.
10. Deep clean of the Kitchen (Three year cycle)

In addition to the above we have now improved the cleaning schedule of the building and have engaged a Contractor to undertake the works. Currently also we are looking at renewal of freezer to the kitchen and also to the replacement of crockery etc

All who meet at the Orsett Centre can now be even more proud to say that they meet here.

Secretaries Note (Chas Ager)



Communications

My first objective as the Company Secretary was to improve the communications between the Directors and all who use the Orsett Centre.

With the support of the Board of Directors I have achieved this by, placing relevant information on notice boards located within the entrance hallway, and communicating where necessary via e-mail to all Secretaries, Scribe E's and Recorders etc. and in addition to the Secretaries group via their chairman.

Information provided, has been on insurance matters, annual servicing of

items and bookings of meetings and socials at the centre.

I would welcome comments on improving matters further from all. My mailbox is located within the entrance hallway. (The box is the one on the right as facing the glass notice board.)

Risk Assessments etc

Risk assessments have been undertaken and continually updated on both fire and general matters, and my thanks is extended to all who ensure that the fire evacuation procedure is read at the commencement of all meetings. Please note that I have not received a reply from all as to who is to be listed as the Fire Marshall's at meetings. Where there is no reply this will be taken as the Secretary, Recorder etc and the assistant to these positions.

Bookings

I am pleased to report that the use of the centre has increased considerably in respect of the booking of Lodge Socials. In addition there has been bookings for christenings, birthday parties on Sundays and thanks is extended to the Bar staff for being available on those days.

Annual General Meeting

Improvements have been made to the share register listing those who have moved and deceased, thus reducing the costs of advising on dates etc of the A.G.M. To all shareholders please advise me if you move and to all Secretaries please advise of the death of a member, so that a check can be undertaken as to whether that brother was a shareholder or not.

Future Items

To prepare a register listing all entertainments used by the various Lodges, in order for this to be shared by all for future social occasions.

To promote the purchase of shares by Lodges and individuals.