

Twelve Talk

19.09.22

Issue 152

Meetings 2022-23

- 06.09.22
Passing
- * 20.09.22
Entering
- * 04.10.22
Passing
- * 18.10.22
AGM and Nomination and
Election (Members Only)
- * 01.11.22
Passing
- *15.11.22
Annual Installation (615 pm)
- *06.12.22
Annual Divine Service
- *20.12.22
No meeting

- Saturday 25.02.23
Burns Supper (630 for 7pm)



Lodge Greenock Kilwinning No XII
The Saloon of the Town Hall, Greenock
Regular Meetings – 7.30pm 1st and 3rd Tuesdays – September to April
Summer Meeting – 1st Thursday in June
Burns Supper – Last Saturday in February

RWM Bro Brian McFadyen 47 Renshaw Road Bishopton PA7 8HL (07810008075)
Secretary Bro Ken McDougall PM 6 Stirling Drive Gourock PA19 1AH (07810270787)
Treasurer Bro David Stevenson 5 Broomberry Drive Gourock PA19 1JY (07887904910)

Queen Elizabeth II
21st April 1926 – 8th September 2022



As I wrote the editorial for the last *Twelve Talk*, I could never have imagined that the topic for this, the next edition and just 2 weeks later, would be the passing to her rest and reward of our beloved Queen. Queen Elizabeth II, the Queen of Scots or just The Queen – even our Queen – whatever way you thought of her, she was the Head of State and so much more besides.

I think the shock we have all experienced was magnified by the fact that, for most of us, she had always been there. The person who came on the radio or TV and provided strength and succour when we were in times of challenge as a nation; the person who worked tirelessly in all our interests with some of the tasks being difficult beyond belief, like visiting Aberfan or Dunblane after the tragedies in these places.

We had just celebrated her Platinum Jubilee. For this Lodge, it was a special evening with a Past Masters' Degree – an Entering – and then a talk from the Lord Lyon King of Arms himself, Past Grand Master Bro Joe Morrow, about his role and responsibilities. Little did those in attendance know what lay ahead.

I felt a wee bit concerned when I heard that the Queen's health challenges were going to make her journeying to London to meet the new Prime Minister, to formally invite the formation of a government, impossible; Liz

Truss would travel to Balmoral instead. Two short days later, the news came out that her doctors were concerned, and that family members were travelling to Balmoral to be with her. At this point we too became very concerned. A few short hours later, she was gone. After my initial shock had subsided, I realised that, foolishly, I had just assumed that she would just keep going on.

In the White family, Christmas Day has always revolved round Her Majesty. We had our Christmas meal early, more at lunchtime than dinner time. The reason was that by 3 o'clock we had to be all seated around the TV to view and hear the Christmas message. There was no question of anyone being anywhere else. In fact, the suggestion would never have been made.

In 2021, in her last Christmas Message, she reflected on the great loss of Prince Philip, whilst pointing out that for those who remain, life goes on: she said, "Prince Philip was always mindful of this sense of passing the baton"; she pointed out that her forthcoming Platinum Jubilee would be a chance to look back, but also "to look ahead with confidence"; she said, "they (children) teach us all a lesson – just as the Christmas story does – that in the birth of a child, there is a new dawn with endless potential."

Looking back, it now seems that aspects of the Queen's final Christmas Message were prophetic. It is a wee while since King Charles III was born, but there is no doubt that the baton has been handed to him. We should look ahead to his Reign with confidence, for he has served a long apprenticeship under the most skilled of journeywomen and will have learned from her knowledge, skills, understanding, diplomacy and expertise. There has been a new dawn with endless potential. Let us look forward to seeing that fulfilled under his guidance. In our sadness at the passing of our much-loved Queen, let us remember the joy of a new beginning.

The Queen is dead! Long live The King!

Provost Bro Andrew S. McKenzie PM Lodge Crawfurdsburn Greenock No 1121

Our Provost in Inverclyde, Drew McKenzie served 2 terms as an Independent Councillor, before becoming Provost earlier this year. He is also very well known to us as a Past Master of Lodge Crawfurdsburn. He has been very prominent, leading the mourning and remembrance for Queen Elizabeth on our behalf and has done an excellent job, discharging all his tasks with the required dignity and decorum. As Masons, we can be very proud to have Bro. Drew as our Provost particularly in these sad and demanding times.

The Proclamation of King Charles III Clyde Square, Greenock Sunday 11th September 2022



It was a simple, but moving ceremony, witnessed by a crowd of hundreds at the front of the Municipal Buildings in Clyde Square. Opened by the Lord Lieutenant of Renfrewshire, Colonel Peter McCarthy, Provost Bro McKenzie had the role of reading the proclamation and calling for three cheers for the King. The crowd responded enthusiastically.

The Craft was well represented by the local lodges at the ceremony. Members of No. XII that I saw in attendances were Bros. Iain White PM, Cameron White, David Stevenson, Cllr. David Wilson HM, Alexander Galbraith PSGMM HM and James Watson HM. The Provincial Grand



Master Bro. Robin McIntyre and the Depute, Bro. John Black, were also present. We were invited to the Service of Commemoration in the adjacent Wellpark Mid Kirk, the Town Church, by Rev. William Boyle, its Interim Moderator.

It was a lovely service, in which Rev. Boyle spoke of the Queen as we remember her and her service to the Country and the Commonwealth which she put at the forefront of her life.

The Lying in State St. Giles Cathedral Sunday 11th September 2022



At least two members of No XII attended the Queen's lying-in-state at St Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh. They queued for between 4 and 5 hours to pay their respects. Bro. Alan D Beck PM visited with his wife Polly and Bro. Cameron White (left, while in the queue) with his Mum, Gail. Cameron made the decision to go at 0930 in the evening! He and Gail drove to Glasgow, parked the car and took one of the all-night trains through to the Capital. Having him on hand here at home, I did a wee interview.

What made you travel to Edinburgh in the middle of the night?
Although I had been at the services in Old Gourock and Ashton and Wellpark Mid Kirk, this was the only chance to pay my respects in person.

What did you think when you saw the queue in Edinburgh?
I couldn't believe how many people were there. In fact, we struggled to find the end of the queue, so many were there to honour the Queen. It was what she deserved.

How long did you wait?
When we joined, we were told that it would be five-and-a-half to 6 hours. Nobody left the queue. It didn't matter how long it would take. In fact, it was just over 4 hours.

What was it like in St. Giles?
It was surreal. There was a heavy atmosphere. Although there were so many people, there was complete silence.

How did you feel physically afterwards?

I was tired, my feet were sore and I had 4 blisters on my heels!

When did you get home?

We had left at 1030pm and came back through the door at 720am.

How difficult was it to stay up all night?

The best answer for this question, I heard from a woman interviewed on Sky TV. She said, "It was not difficult at all. When I think of her 70 years of service as Queen right up to her final hours, it was no hardship at all."

Despite all of this, Bro. Cameron was at his desk at his summer job in Henderson and Co. at 9am!

Bro. Joseph J Morrow

Our newest Honorary Member, Past Grand Master Bro. Joseph J. Morrow, has had a central role in events over the last week because of being the Lord Lyon King of Arms. He is shown below.



Bottom right, reading the Proclamation of the new King at the Mercat Cross in Edinburgh

Below and bottom right, he is next to England's Garter King of Arms, with the combined Scots and English Heralds behind them at Westminster Hall.



and I saw him today on TV at the funeral service in Westminster Abbey, as did several of our members, given the chat on WhatsApp.

(Thanks to Past Master Alan D. Beck for the images and commentary)

The Provost's Reflections



Our final piece takes us back to Provost Bro. Drew McKenzie PM as he gives a very personal insight into his attendance at the Thanksgiving Service for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth in Edinburgh, at my request.

On arrival in Edinburgh, we made our way to the City Chambers adjacent to St Giles. There was a registration desk, then a system that led us through various grand rooms and eventually out the door and across the Royal Mile.

During the wait, however, I was delighted to be able to have a long conversation with the Grand Master Mason who regaled me with stories of his recent travels. He has basically combined three years of overseas commitments, due to Covid, into one year. It

was a tremendous amount of work on behalf of the Scottish Craft. He asked kindly after several brethren from Renfrewshire West and asked me to pass on his best regards to all.

The provosts were seated in the east of St Giles Cathedral, led there by an Archer. A front row seat! Her Majesty was to lie fifteen feet away, her head towards us. Her casket draped with the Royal Standard of Scotland. The Crown of Scotland placed on top. A white wreath interspersed with floral significance.

The young soldiers, with strained pride on their faces, had militarily manoeuvred her on to the narrow plinth. The coffin heavier than one might expect. The Royal Family took their places, their medals resplendent. The King gave out a new aura. Princess Anne looked tired. We had the Queen's four children. No grandchildren. They had lost their Queen and their Mother. We shared their grief on both levels.

For two hours we had been seated before the service started. We talked with our neighbours. I learned about the Orkney Islands. The organ started at two-thirty. The choir sang. The chatter stopped. The music soared. The female voices reverberated around the high roof and touched our souls.

I didn't expect to see the Prime Minister. Her sharp features faced the King. She was to my left. Gordon Brown looked slim. He shook hands with John Swinney and Alister Jack. Nicola Sturgeon hid under her broad brimmed hat. She read well from the Book of Ecclesiastes. Turn! Turn! Turn! Every participant gently delighted. The Moderator delivered the eulogy.

Sitting there, closer to the Queen than I ever was in life, I thought of the diminutive frailty that occupied the casket. That knowledge. That life. That renown. How was she dressed? Was there jewellery or trinket? The hands that she had greeted. Her fifteen Prime Ministers. Obama, Mandela, Churchill. The most famous woman in the world. The Queen. Now immortal.

There were few tears. There was respect but most of all there was love. Love for friends who had lost their Mother. Love for someone that had always been there – whose influence has seeped into us all. Has seeped into and inspired a nation. It was all very personal.

And then it was over and along with his siblings we sang God Save the King.

The Royal Party left but as we also vacated our seats, almost everyone in that eastern end of the High Kirk, in our own time, took a step towards the casket and bowed ... quite spontaneously and without anticipation. Not just simple nods of the head but contemplative gestures of very genuine thanks. And thus ended the greatest privilege of my life.

At the reception later at the Scottish Parliament I had the honour of meeting the Queen Consort and on behalf of the people of Inverclyde I wished her and rest of the Royal Family every strength for the week that lay ahead. She held my hand throughout.

AS McKenzie

As a mark of respect, all other items have been held over to the next edition of Twelve Talk.

Iain White PM
19.09.22

Views expressed by individuals within *Twelve Talk* do not necessarily represent the views of Lodge Greenock Kilwinning No XII. Unless otherwise stated, Bro Iain White PM is the author of all material.