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I.G.L.D. ramblings with Past President Brother Eric Warner.

First I must thank all those who have been continually asking after my health and given me support during my triple bypass experience. It gives me great satisfaction to report that I have had a fantastic recovery. Except for slightly high blood pressure, I feel that I have fully recovered. I am back into full walking and cycling, mowing lawns and have dug over the vegetable garden. I am feeling on top of the world except after hard!!? work. I have been so very, very lucky.

On the other hand, it is with sadness that I record the death of three of our IGLD members. Two of them were foundation members in Past Grand President (Canterbury) Brother Allan Moore and Past District President Sister Clem Gallagher. The other one was Past District President Brother Barry Clark. In 1971, Brother Moore helped set up the first IGLD Jurisdiction in New Zealand and became the first President of the Branch. The following year, the New Zealand branch was divided into three, corresponding with the three Grand Lodge Jurisdictions. For his efforts in promoting IGLD he received the World Congress Jewel.

Sister Gallagher attended the formation meeting in Wellington of the North Island Jurisdiction in February 1973 and was elected a Bard. She was the last surviving foundation member. She used to recall that having travelled by car from Hamilton and attending the meeting, not even a cup of tea was provided. So different to our present two day gatherings. In recent years she had been a fairly regular attendee of our meetings. The last, being the one held in conjunction with the Aramoho Lodge Centennial held in February. At her funeral, a group of Lodge members in regalia formed a Guard of Honour as her coffin was brought into the chapel. District President Sister Helen Warner spoke on Sister Gallagher's involvement with Druidism.

Brother Barry Clark was a Druid for about sixty years. In 1984 he was invited to join our Jurisdiction and for years, he was our most northern member. In October 1988 it was decided to hold an IGLD meeting in Whangarei, the first to be held north of Auckland and also the only time. With members having to travel so far, Brother Barry was the instigator of additional activities being held to that of normally only a meeting. On the Saturday, the local Whangarei Lodge held a social evening in their Lodge rooms for the visiting IGLD members. For the Sunday Brother Barry organised a visit to the Marsden Point Oil Refinery where members were given an exceptionally interesting behind the scenes tour of the complex. Visits were also made to the Whangarei Falls and Mount Parahaki.

Unfortunately we have lost three of our very active members which we can ill afford. Our sympathy goes out to both Sisters Betty and Kahu as well as the Gallagher Family.

Due to sickness and family commitments, our Labour Weekend meeting had one of the smallest attendances that we have had for a long time. But for those who were able to enjoy the Nelson hospitality, the weekend was very social and most enjoyable. In the absence of our sick President Brother Morrie Clark, Sister Barbara Wait very capably chaired the meeting and installed three of the present Officers who had been unable to attend our last meeting.

During "Good and Welfare", it was mentioned that three Druid member's details appear on the "Old Friends" web site. This could be an interesting way of making contact or keeping in touch with other Druid members across the country. It is an interesting site, very good for finding out what has happened to your old school friends, what they are now up to and where they are presently living.

Another piece of information to come forward was that taken from the minutes of the 1938 World IGLD Congress held in Hull, England. Druids from New Zealand were present. Brother F. Ramsbottom greeted the brethren with a Maori greeting "Tena Koutou" (Brother Ramsbottom was North Island Grand President 1945-47 and was from the Star of Egmont Lodge). Congress minutes read – "Brother F. Ramsbottom of New Zealand on behalf of the Maori Druids handed to the International President a beautiful wooden shield, carved and inlaid as a token of their respect and esteem for IGLD. The shield is to remain in the custody of IGL and to be exhibited whenever it was possible, when official International meetings were taking place and further it should be on exhibition at general meetings of affiliated Orders as may be found practical as the symbol of the unity of various sections of Druidism". One wonders what became of the shield as it has certainly not appeared at the last few World IGLD Congresses. Someone said it is rumoured that it may be among some Druid memorabilia in England.

During the afternoon tea break, a birthday cake was produced (with a musical candle) to celebrate an important milestone in Sister Helen Warner's life.

Full meeting minutes will be sent to members by our Secretary.

P.T.O.

Members stayed on at the Maitai Lodge Rooms where they were joined by several members and friends of Maitai Lodge for a BBQ dinner and social evening. The Lodge Rooms are certainly the envy of visiting members.

Sunday, a small group visited the 5h Founders Heritage Park to where several Nelson historical buildings have been transferred forming quite a village complex. All have within, interesting historical and museum displays. The entire group took the opportunity of a 1km train ride travelling in a 1903 second class carriage. As some will guess, I particularly enjoyed the visit and was the last to leave the complex. It was then once again back to the Maitai Lodge Rooms with IGLD members again being hosted by local Lodge members and friends for dinner and another enjoyable social evening. So concluded another weekend of wonderful Nelson hospitality. For those from the North Island using the ferry to cross Cook Strait, the sea was nice and calm. No ten hour trip like the trip last year during that furious storm.

Our next meeting will be held in Carterton which will be a new venue for us all. One of the activities will be a visit to the replica of Stonehenge which has become quite a tourist attraction in the region. I have not heard if there will be a Druid parade (in regalia) through the complex. It may not be appreciated but what publicity we would gain. I did read in a recent newspaper though, where Britain's Chief Druid Philip Ca Gomm and a small band of locals held a ceremony there to mark the autumn equinox. I have been assured that they were not members of either the UAOD or AOD Orders.

It was in the 1600s that antiquary John Aubrey first suggested that stone circles were Druidical temples, and ever since it has been popularly believed that Stonehenge was build and used by the Druids. This belief is certainly false. The earliest recordings about the Druids are those recorded by the classical writers like Julius Cesar. By that time the stones of Stonehenge had been standing for two thousand years and were probably already in ruins. It may be however, that the Druids inherited the knowledge and observations of natural events, astronomy included, of the builders of Stonehenge, handed down over the centuries by word of mouth. We are led to believe that the Druids lore was enshrined in a series of interminable verses which a novice might take up to twenty years to learn by heart. During the past three hundred years various Druidic groups particularly those of the Neo-Pagan affiliations have used Stonehenge for various ceremonial celebrations. This has usually been in connection with the periods of Solstice or Equinox. In August 1905 (Lughnasadh – harvest-time) the Ancient Order of Druids held "The March of the Druids" at Stonehenge. During the ceremony, 256 new members were initiated. Stonehenge continues as a focus for Druidic ritual, especially on Midsummer Day. I have previously mentioned how I met one such group when I last visited Stonehenge three years ago.

In a bit of reminiscing, who remembers our October meeting of ten years ago? Held in Hamilton, Sister McLay was President and it was perhaps a record attendance by members. The "Great Quiz" was held with the winning team being D. Thomas, A. Warner, J. Lowndes and Laurel?? Breakfast at the Warners. The mystery car tour to the Mormon Temple, Air Port, Mystery Creek, Karapiro Lake, Vauxhall car rally, Red Church Craft Centre and the Robinson's private sporting museum. Remember the sports quiz during Devonshire tea time won by the team of Val, Jim, Barry and Eric? Finally a visit to the beautiful Hamilton Gardens complex.

The World centennial celebrations of our Order will be held in Munich, Germany next August. It appears that New Zealand will be represented by a small group. Still not too late for any member wishing to make the trip. I am sure it will be an experience never to be forgotten.

While on the subject of centennials, I'm pleased to hear that Grand Lodge is organising a dinner in conjunction with their next annual conference in March, to mark the one hundred years since the North Island Grand Lodge came into existence. Could be a few Australians in attendance.

Along with Sister Helen, we wish you all a merry Christmas as we look back on a year of satisfaction and forward to a New Year of successful achievements for our Order. Looking forward to meeting many of you at Carterton.

Yours fraternally in UPC

Eric Warner – Past President

I have learnt how to burn off a few hundred calories by engaging in strenuous activities that do not require physical exercise by. Jumping to conclusions. Climbing the wall. Passing the buck. Beating around the bush. Dragging my heels. Running around in circles. Wading through the paperwork. Balancing the books. Jumping on the bandwagon. Bending over backwards. Hitting the nail on the head. Swallowing my pride. Making mountains out of molehills. Throwing my weight around and tooting my own horn. I feel exhausted already. Cheers.