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**30<sup>th</sup> October 2006**

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

Due to sickness following a trip to Australia, our new President Sister Barbara Wait was unable to attend our Labour Weekend meeting in Nelson. So, it was our matriarch and Past President Sister Dolly Dyer who took over the reins for the official meeting. Once again, Maitai Lodge members provided outstanding hospitality to all visitors, especially those from the North Island. The meeting was held in the small Maitai Lodge building, the envy of many visiting members. Having opened only eighteen months ago, the rooms contain over one hundred years of their Lodge's memorabilia. It is a credit to the Nelson members who worked so hard to bring the complex into being.

Detailed minutes of the Saturday meeting have been circulated to all members, so only highlights will be mentioned here. One new member Sister Rae Cuthbert was initiated into our Order. Along with her husband Brother Barry, she attended the Australasian Congress held in Bumbury last year. Present at the meeting also, was our World International Grand Vice President Brother Raymond Britton from Christchurch. He had recently returned from attending an International Executive meeting in Germany on which he reported. This resulted in several questions being asked and created quite a discussion. A break for afternoon tea, saw Past President Sister Helen Warner presented with a cake on the top of which was a lighted candle playing the tune "Happy Birthday". The cake was shared among members. The meeting also saw two milestones reached with Sister Dolly Dyer and Brother Bruce Ayers both having now attended their 40<sup>th</sup> meetings. Thirteen members have now passed the thirty mark. Brother Ernie McLay still heads the field with 52.

Following the meeting, Maitai Lodge hosted members to an enjoyable BBQ dinner and evening social. That plentiful supply of scallops could not have been more delicious. During the evening, Grand Lodge Executive Officers made an official appearance. Grand President Sister Sylvia McLay presented our secretary Brother Bob Stewart with the prestigious Merit Certificate for his services to Druidism. Brother Stewart joined the Druids about twenty-six years ago and has been a member of IGLD for a little over three years. He is a Past District President and is presently the Deputy Grand Guardian to Grand Lodge. Within his home Lodge, he has been an extremely active member and is well known for supplying firewood to older Lodge members and pensioners. He attended the last IGL World Congress held in Norway two years ago.

Sunday morning, members travelled in a couple of mini busses over to the Wairau Valley to view a private display of collectables, away out in the country as guests of Frances and Brian Powell. Brother Powell is the present Arch Druid of Mistletoe Lodge in Blenheim. Family ancestors were original settlers of the farm that has now seen seven generations. One gets the feeling that during all these years, nothing in the way of household items or farm equipment has ever been discarded as rubbish. In addition, purchases and gifts are continually adding to this very large collection from the era of the horse to that of the motor. Most items are displayed in a disused shearing shed and the upper rooms of the house. One of the pleasing aspects was that most of the items could be touched or handled. Various items prompted memories, and those in attendance related several reminiscing stories and experiences. One of our members in particular was very envious of the collection of various axes. Reckons they would have fitted in well with his own collection. Members were guests of the Powell's for a sumptuous lunch.

Returning to the Maitai Lodge rooms, members settled for a dinner of good old fish and chips with frills. Entertainment was in the form of various card and lounge games ending with a few games of housie. On the night, I had possibly more than my share of good luck, so had to take quite a bit of flack. Thus ended another enjoyable gathering of our Order.

A few of the North Island members stayed over for another day or two enjoying the Nelson hospitality. Once again, that stretch of water between the North and South Islands was not very friendly to the Hamilton delegation on their return trip. The normal three and a half hour journey extended to ten hours. Nine metre swells and up to 100kmh, winds prevented the ferry entering Wellington harbour so shelter had to be taken in heavy seas in South Island bays near Blenheim. However, despite the discomfort, they said it was better on the ship, than sitting in a car for hours on the Picton wharf because of a cancelled sailing. It is believed three of our members were seen on the TV news trying to make headway across one of the ferry lounges.

In my last Rambles, I asked if anyone could help me out with information on a Brother Walter Neate, the only New Zealander to have been a World IGLD Grand President. The response from both overseas and New Zealand was outstanding which I appreciated very much. A member of Pioneer Lodge No 1 in Christchurch, Brother Neate was P.T.O.

Grand President of the Canterbury Jurisdiction roundabout the 1914 period. To commemorate his term, he presented a handsome shield for competition amongst Lodges in introducing new members, the Lodge introducing the most, holding the shield for twelve months. He made the last personal presentation to the winning Lodge in 1950.

The first IGLD Congress following the Second World War was held in Malmo Sweden in August 1949. The previous Congress had been held eleven years earlier in England. Brother Neate attended Malmo as an official representative of the Canterbury Jurisdiction. It should be noted that at the time, there was no IGLD branch in New Zealand, as we know it today. During the Conference, he was elected the International Grand President, an honour never to come to New Zealand before or since. Minutes record that he be recommended as a member of the Swedish High Arch Chapter together with Brother F. Ramsbottom of the North Island Grand Lodge. I may be wrong, but I understand that a Canterbury Past Grand President Brother F Talbot also received the honorary rank of International Grand Guardian. Unfortunately, Brother Neate never saw out his term as Grand President. He died in January 1951.

Some have said that they have been unable to get into the IGLD web site. The address is:- [www.igld.org](http://www.igld.org)  
Once in, you will see that there are many sites you can open. Unfortunately for us, several are not in English.  
New Zealand:- When you first go into [www.igld.org](http://www.igld.org) click onto "Nations" on the left. Then on the left, click into "New Zealand". Surprise, surprise??

Here's introducing another couple of our members, Sister Rae and Brother Barry Cuthbert. Barry joined Maitai Lodge back in 1972 and became their Arch Druid in 1980. Years of shift work with the Fire Brigade were not conducive for him advancing to higher office. However, a recent shift of employment to the Nelson Hospital Stores has given him hours that are more regular and he is now nearing the end of his term as President of the Southern District. He joined IGLD in 1984 and has endeavoured to support functions whenever they have been held in the South Island. For several years, Sister Rae has been a night nurse with the Nelson Hospital A and E Department. For quite a period, the two provided home-life for foster children and more recently have hosted overseas students. The pair support Volunteer Services. One being helping a trust with their therapeutic pool. Another service is helping with meals on wheels. For a bit of relaxation they take part in tennis, badminton and darts.

Next March, the biannual Australia/New Zealand Congress will be held in Echuca, Victoria. So far, fourteen of our members will be attending which I think would be a record to meetings in Australia. I am sure the Congress organisers will be happy with New Zealand's response. Anyone who would like to attend but have not yet put his or her name forward should contact our secretary immediately.

Moreover, do not forget our organisation's centennial Congress to be held in Germany in August 2008. Let us hope New Zealand is well represented. On the other hand, should we not be thinking how we are going to celebrate this important occasion here at home? Make your ideas known to other members.

Talking about centennials, remember that our next February meeting in Wanganui will be in association with the centennial celebrations of Aramoho Lodge No 61. Members must book in for the Centennial Dinner.

I have just been in touch with Sister Barbara Wait and she told me that she has recovered her health although is still on antibiotics. She along with Sister Helen and me wish you all a merry Christmas and that we can now look back on a year of satisfaction and forward to a New Year of successful achievements for our Order.

Yours fraternally in UPC

Eric Warner – Past President

If nature has made you a giver, your hands are borne open, and so is your heart. And though there may be times when your hands are empty, your heart is always full, and you can give things out of that.

Frances Hodgson Burnett. "A Little Princess".