



The Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of Scotland

William Ramsay McGhee, MSTJ, D.L., Grand Master Mason

Brethren

I hope and trust that this latest update finds all of you well and coping with the extraordinary circumstances we find ourselves in.

Since my last update I have been made aware of two Brethren, one at home and one in one of our Districts who have died as a direct result of coronavirus. I extend to the families of the Brethren my sincere condolences and indeed the condolences of the entire Scottish Craft at this incredibly sad time when they cannot even be with their loved ones in their final hours.

I know and appreciate that it is a most sensitive subject, but could I ask Lodge Secretaries, with all due discretion, to record all the names of those Brethren or close relatives of Brethren who are called to the Grand Lodge above as a result of coronavirus and, at some point before the first Grand Lodge Communication, submit all names to me in order that I can pay due respect with a special In Memoriam service prior to the meeting proper.

As I mentioned in a previous update, we have three key staff all of whom are working from home but who can be contacted, if necessary, on the following numbers

Dawn Oliff - 07464 683630, Sue Williams 07881 440272 and Andrew Paterson 07782 217772. Emails to Sue at pa@grandlodgescotland.org will also be picked up and forwarded to the correct person.

However, could I stress that the remainder of the staff are all on Furlough Leave and therefore cannot issue certificates, diplomas, update the database or any other duties that effectively involve being physically in Grand Lodge.

Could I also stress that during these unprecedented times we are experiencing, I have suspended Law 122 – i.e. a Lodge shall be deemed to be inactive if it fails to hold three consecutive Regular Meetings. We may find that we'll need to suspend more than three consecutive meetings.

I am truly amazed and delighted that our Provinces, Districts and Lodges are constantly displaying tremendous initiative in the many community-based activities they are involved in throughout the world. Sincere thanks Brethren your actions portray Freemasonry and in particular Scottish Freemasonry in the best possible light.

Our Brethren in Lodge Rising Star of Western India No 342 are arranging to have 50 masks sent to me for use by our Brethren on front-line duties. One Lodge that I have been told about is doing a daily "Roll Call" of its members just to make sure everyone is safe and well – another great idea. In Glasgow we have *Mason 77 – community4Masons* through which they are providing all sorts of aid to the most vulnerable. If you have any initiative, you'd like me to tell the other Brethren about, please forward details to me and I'll happily reproduce them here. This truly Scottish Freemasonry at work everywhere.

My last appeal to complete our survey has been well received – we now have 5455 responses – thank you. The link onto the survey is - <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/scottishmasonicsurvey2020>

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Amid the chaos that is coronavirus, I am looking forward, this Saturday, to a Zoom meeting with all our District Grand Masters around the world. They too are suffering the consequences of coronavirus and it will be good to touch base with them all. I hope to repeat the exercise with our Provincial Grand Masters soon.

After my last update, Brother Jim Ferguson of Lodge Airdrie St John got in touch with a warning about our insurance policies – their insurers advised that they would not be able to make a claim under Business Interruption as Covid-19 was not a known disease at the time the policy was taken out. However, they could claim for events that had to be cancelled with resultant loss of income.

If you haven't already done so, now is an opportune time to check your insurance policies and where necessary have them brought up to date.

For those who regularly subscribe to the Ashlar Magazine, the latest edition has been completed but the printer has been obliged to shut down on a temporary basis due to the coronavirus. Therefore, the March edition will not now be available until June at the earliest. The Grand Lodge Year-book is in the same position.

We have been warned that the next two or three weeks are going to be crucial in defeating this virus so please take heed of all the Government advice – I fully appreciate that it is not easy – but we need to pull through together. The Masonic websites and Facebook pages are a great source of inspiration, advice, fun, and most of all hope for the future – please take part in all the fun activities like posting photographs of your favourite beach, favourite Craft moment, favourite car or whatever.

Finally, I read a very interesting article asking – “Why is God allowing this to happen?” The response was quite thought provoking – “I believe God is deeply saddened by what is happening but for years now we have been asking God to get out of our schools, out of our Governments, out of our lives. Being the gentleman he is, he has backed away at our request”. Maybe this crisis will bring many back to realise that we need God's blessing in all that we do?

Please take care of yourselves – stay safe.

Kindest regards to you all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ramsay McGhee', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ramsay McGhee
Grand Master Mason