

Resident and Non Resident Brethren Lodge Niederrhein

Dear Brethren

Singapore, Townsville, Sydney, San Francisco and Osnabruck!

I understand that Monday night was a great success and that the WM and officers carried out their duties very professionally. Congratulations to you all. Our thoughts and prayers are with Frank and his family – he is a great man, Mason and member of Niederrhein. Welcome too to our new Joiner, Dennis T. I am sorry that I was not there but in an aeroplane!

We are back from our marvellous holiday of a life time taking in Singapore, Oz and San Francisco. And now I am off to Osnabruck for the week-end for the Thistle and Saltire Installation! As many of you know we decided to visit my daughter and grandson in Queensland, stopping off in my old stamping ground of Singapore and finishing off with my life time dream of going to San Francisco.

Well brethren, Freemasonry was part of the trip too. On arrival in Singapore- despite a 28 year gap since I lived there- we were met by Tommy and Mei C and Edward L. We were taken to our hotel, followed by a nostalgic visit to the Masonic Club. My how majestic it still is with the beautiful fully furnished and equipped temple, with the bar and restaurant open to wives, friends and families as it was during my time. There was a meeting of St Andrews Scottish Lodge going on whilst we were in the bar but afterwards we had a conducted tour and you will glean from the photos, which will be sent later, some of the joy that one experiences when carrying out Masonic duties in Singapore. The cosmopolitan aspect of the Lodges of course mirrors this outstanding country where decency, tolerance and equality have made it one of the most pleasant places to live, work, play or like us be a welcome tourist. Tommy, Mei and Edie looked after us like we were Royalty showing us developments since my time and it was a little difficult for me to leave this place again- Oh Tiger beer, fantastic food, the cleanliness, the beautiful scents, Chinatown, Little India, the Orchids. Ingrid fell a little in love with the place too. But above all seeing once again the way Freemasonry works in Singapore with the various Lodges from the English, Scottish and Irish Constitutions plus of course the Royal Arch, Royal Order of Scotland and other Orders you might appreciate that there is Masonic activity six days a week. In high technological Singapore people have no problem of mentioning that they are Masons, it is, as it should be, an honour and a privilege to be a member.

And so we travelled to Australia. First we went to Townsville and then off to my daughter in Bluewater which is about 45 minutes away. To her 2 acre garden with many of the exotic Australian animals including kangaroos/wallabies, possums, cockatoos and other beautiful birds plus snakes, spiders, cane toads, geckos and even frogs in the toilet. Robert, Emily and Glyn have their own two dogs and a horse and a swimming pool. All this comes at the price of a very small house in Europe. With all this nature at our doorstep, we were reluctant to go further a field but we did enjoy many of the other pleasures of Queensland.

We met up with Beau and Sandy S and had a great barbeque at their lovely house in Townsville. Beau had arranged for me to give a lecture on Lodge Niederrhein and Freemasonry in Germany at the Balmoral Lodge in Townsville part of the U GL of Queensland. I had received the necessary clearance via our Grand Secretary and theirs and was delighted and honoured to accept the invitation. Unfortunately the candidate for the evening had been rushed to hospital that evening so the brethren carried out a demonstration first degree which I found very interesting. This lodge carries out ritual according to the Scottish ritual but Queensland style.

I gave my lecture and to my surprise was presented with a lovely certificate which I will cherish. A copy of this certificate will be sent for you all to view in due course. I found the harmony and friendliness of the Australian brethren very encouraging.

Beau S has decided to stay in Townsville, he looks very well and content. He passes his greetings to you all and gave us a fantastic Aboriginal crafted gift plus one for his dear friends Brad and Uschi. And so to a tearful good-bye to my family- my grandson having decided that I was better at cricket than he (we had just won the Ashes, remember) was upset but we assured them we will return. We spent two pleasant nights in Sydney- I was not allowed by Ingrid to visit the Masonic centre but I have a photograph from the outside!

Our final destination was San Francisco. I have wanted to go to the coolest place on the planet since I was child and yes it was the piece de resistance, the icing on the cake and both Ingrid and the writer

have left our hearts in this great place. Everyone should visit there at least once in their life. We flew back poorer but wiser, happy but sad. There was plenty of time to read on our lengthy flights- much Masonic reading and dear Cedric was there to meet us at Düsseldorf airport. Thank you for your help Cedric.

As I mentioned earlier in due course brethren I will send you copies of photos of the Masonic centres.

So brethren, I am ready to support our Worshipful Master Martin P at Niederrhein and our Grand Lodge in the new Masonic year. I must pack as I am off to Osnabruck with Peter M.

Kind regards

As ever

S&F

David