

Masonic tenants of the Dunedin Masonic Hall Coy Ltd facility 43 Manor Place, Dunedin, as at January 2011.

Before I commence on the list it may be of interest to look back at the Masonic community of the late 1950s when masonry in Dunedin could boast some 6000 members across the four constitutions as has been related to me by Bro Jack Mowat RH and PM of Lodge Aurora #155. This following list was extracted from the minutes of an Otago Provincial meeting of all constitutions at a briefing meeting held on Saturday evening September 13, 1958 for the Southern Masonic Association which was the co-ordinating body for the Masonic Cottage Complex which was ultimately established in Maryhill Terrace. There were some 200 masons present at that meeting.

The town lodges in attendance being

Otago #7, Hiram #46, St. John #84 (Mosgiel), Maori #105, Otago Kil #143, Oceanic #154, Haremai #155, Ionic #191, Morning Star #192, Waverley #226, Taharangi #235, Services #237, Koputai #239, St. Clair #246, Roslyn #250, Achilles #310, Macandrew #343, Amity #354, St. Kilda #362, Otago #844 EC, Dunedin #931 EC, Port Chalmers Marine #942 EC, St. Patrick #468 IC, Otago Kil #417 SC, St. Andrew #432 SC, Celtic #477 SC, Cargill Kil #632 SC, St. John Kil #662 SC, Peninsula Kil #696 SC.

The country lodges being Waitaki #11, Clutha #14, Palmerston #26, Ngapara #68, St. Thomas Kil #83 (Kaitangata), Dunstan #103, Manuherikia Kil #109, Kurow #164, Owaka #180, Strath Taieri #199, Karitane # 221, Oamaru #260, Outram #375, St. George #1128 EC (Lawrence), St John #461 SC (Milton).

The absentees being Hercules #36, Lodge of Ophir #85 (Queenstown), Arrow Kil #96, Mt Ida #97, Cromwell Kil #98, St. Bathans #126 (Omakau), Teviot #148 , and Wanaka #277 . (There were some 52 Installations a year to attend in those days).

The DMHC Ltd was created in 1931 and operated out of the Moray Place facility which it had purchased from the Jewish Church community of Dunedin and had had fitted out for Masonic purposes. In 1993 the DMHC Ltd had relocated here to 43 Manor Place having purchased the purpose built Dunedin City Corporation Transport Department office building complex from the Dunedin City Council Property Section. The building was used thus the top Floor was the General Manager's Office, Board Room, the Administration Office and team of clerks plus the small tea room which we later used as a committee room. F2 / L3 was Drivers Smoko area F1 / L2 was the money counting area, Senior Drivers office and Drivers' locker room with the DCC Staff Social Room complex which was available for use by the other DCC Departments . The Ground Floor had the boiler room (we decommissioned this system and removed it) the lift entrance and the balance of the floor was garage space which saw the GMC 6x6 Breakdown Rescue lorry stationed here plus no doubt the GM's car along with other senior staff members vehicles.

We Masons then worked a major refit of the building starting with the F2 / L3 lodge room and refractory and locker room using volunteer labour except for specialist tasks. The Top Floor, F3/L4, was then reworked to be a meeting room with divider door and kitchen for both public hire and Installation Suppers. The Masonic Library was placed on this floor after a start in the below floor locker room. The large lodge room was created from the converted garage which necessitated the installation of the structural beam to replace the large support column that had been there for the then eye watering sum of \$ 40 000 (CPI adjusted to Q4, 2010 is \$ 61 200). Prior to that work the building had to have the white asbestos removed from the under the metal stair treads and concrete ceilings which had been a feature of this age of building circa 1970s for sound deadening purposes!!! Specialist contractors attended to this work for the princely sum of \$16 000 (CPI adjusted to Q4, 2010 is \$24 500). The F1 / L2 floor was leased to the Masonic Club which later became the Combined Services Club for their exclusive use. This facility was available for Masonic hire at the grace and favour of the Club who were always available. The exclusive lease finished in 2008 with the Club retaining their dedicated bar and storage room.

In Dec 2009 the small meeting room of the Top Floor was let to the Senior Net computer club. In February 2010 the balance of the floor was let to a Buddhist Church. This action has seen Installation Suppers move to the 'Club Floor' with good success. The Cub Bar is available for hire for those Lodges that organise the service in good time.

The lodge buildings extent in Dunedin in 1990 were

- the Hiram building in Hillside Road, home to Lodge Hiram #46
- the Oceanic building in Prince Albert Street, St Kilda home to Lodges Musselburgh #154 (formed from the amalgamation of Oceanic #154 and St. Clair #246) Lodge Aurora #155 (formed from Haremai #155 plus Koputai #239 and St. Kilda #362) ,
- The Ionic building in Green Island home to the United Lodge of Otago #448, being Otago Kil #143 plus Ionic #191 plus Taharangi #235 plus Service #237.
- the Shore Street Masonic Hall Coy with members Waverley #226 and Macandrew #343 as their other members Taharangi #235 and Koputai # 239 had left to join their respective amalgamations.
- The Roslyn facility on City Road which housed both Lodge Roslyn #250 and their tenant Lodge Morning – Star #192 that had come over from Haig Street some years previously.
- Lodge Maori #105 on Ravensbourne Road
- Port Chalmers Marine #942 EC with Cargill Kil #632 SC, Wickcliffe Terrace, Port Chalmers being made out of Port Chalmers breccia stone
- Peninsula Kilwinning #696 at Portobello
- The Moray Place facility which housed Achilles-Amity #310, Otago Kil #417 SC, St Andrew #432 SC, Celtic #477 SC, St John Kil #662 SC, St Patrick #468 IC and Dunedin #931 EC.
- Lodge St John #, Gordon Rd of Mosgiel

being 10 in total.

The opening of 43 Manor Place saw the Hiram building sold and it is now a liquor sales outlet and the upstairs refractory was the home of a dance school for some years. The Ionic facility was converted into medical rooms for the Green Island Health Practice. The Roslyn facility was converted into a private residence. Moray Place became and is still the Temple Gallery which has seen it become both a residence and art gallery. In 2010 the Waverley complex was sold and has been converted into a Dance School Studio and the Musselburgh facility was sold and is scheduled to be converted into a private residence and it is rumoured to eventually contain a small hair dressing salon business. Lodge Maori #105 sold their facility in the mid 1990s and it became the residence and gallery of an artist. They relocated to the Waverley facility and in due course went into dormancy with many of their departing brethren subsequently joining Waverley #226. Many Lodge Musselburgh # 154 members have joined Hiram #46 as had Lodge Achilles-Amity #310 in 2004 after their closing. Port Chalmers Marine #942 EC sold their facility in late 2004 and came to Manor Place and re-invented themselves as a day-light lodge. This action followed the unsuccessful labours of Lodge Macandrew #343 in 2000 / 2 and they also were ultimately unsuccessful here at Manor Place. #942 operated here from 5 February 2005 to 27 October 2005 with the closing meeting being an evening meeting. The #942 model was a late morning meeting followed by a light luncheon whereas #343 had been an afternoon meeting. #942 has relocated to Napier as a dining lodge following the lead of Dunedin #931 which is now in Blenheim operating also as a dining lodge. Cargill Kilwinning #632 SC has relocated from Port Chalmers to the Ferrymead Historic Park in Christchurch where the Lodge Sumner building had been relocated to and operates as a working lodge. The Otago Lodge #844 EC went into dormancy in the late 1980s.

The roll call of shareholder Master Mason lodges of the DMHC Ltd here in Manor Place as at January 2011 was thus;

Hiram #46, Mt Ida #97, Aurora #155, Research Lodge of Otago #161 with their Library and extensive allied artefacts collection, Roslyn Morning – Star #192, United Lodge of Otago #448, Otago Kil #417 SC, Celtic # 477 SC, St John Kil #662 SC, St Patrick #468 IC which was gifted the #942 parcel, plus DGL English holding their own parcel plus #844 plus #931, DGL Scottish holding their own parcel plus St Andrew #342.

The tenant lodge is Lodge Waverley #226.

The other shareholders are RACs Celtic #42 NZ which was gifted the Otago #7 NZ parcel, Kilwinning Otago #116 RACSC which includes the Kilwinning St John #603 parcel, DGRAC SC, along with the orders Celtic Cryptic Council #42, Dunedin Rose Croix #417, Preceptory of Otago #1 (Knight Templar's), Sphinx Rose Croix #23 and Zealandia Sovereign Council #10 SC.

The other tenants that have joined during the course of 2010 were NZRAC Maori #28 and the Royal Order of Scotland. Other order existing tenants being Dunedin Conclave of the Red Cross of Constantine #176 and Otakou Conclave #2 of the Secret Monitors. Interestingly shareholders that did not work in the building but have since "arrived" being RAC SC Kilwinning Otago #116 with Kilwinning St. John #603 and the Otago Preceptory #1 Knight Templar's.

A general feeling amongst the supporters and initiators of the establishment of this complex was that it should be the home of Dunedin Freemasonry. Other masons did not concur and their facilities were able to remain in operation for another 14 years until their falling membership has seen them close their doors and in general terms come here. The Dunedin Masonic complexes are now Manor Place, Portobello and Mosgiel being 3 out of the 10.

The future is interesting. My prediction is that masonry will happily survive here in this complex for at least another 5 years. I think some of the existing users are on the knife edge of operation in that they are recycling their members through the officer roles as in general terms we are not recruiting. Waverley #226 is an interesting case in point where they have been strong recruiters in recent times to then see many of their new members leave Dunedin for other centres in NZ due to promotional opportunities. Similarly the United Lodge of Otago #448 has been very busy working younger men who have then left Dunedin for work opportunities once their studies have been completed. Both cases are examples of 'for the good of Freemasonry in general rather than for the lodge in particular'.

I hold the view that the DMHC Ltd will leave this facility for at least a two storey facility that is purpose built meaning the facility will concur with the current building regulations so that it will be of a good earthquake proof nature. The model elsewhere is to generate an income stream off the ground floor. A prominent example of this system in NZ is the Irish Constitution with their Lodges being the beneficiaries from their commercial property in Auckland.

The occurrence of the 'peak oil' regime will need to see our new facility adjacent to or on a defined bus route. I think such a move will occur in 10 years time due principally to the contraction of the membership. The contrary view may be equally as valid in that the DMHC Ltd may choose to lease out another floor as Masonic space becomes surplus to requirements. I would opine that Dunedin will see 2, possibly 3 MM lodges NZC beside 1 Scottish and I hope St Patrick #468 of the IC. I watch this space with interest. The corollary to this is that as travel returns to be the preserve of the wealthy there may be an influx of members who are looking for activities close to home and in unsettled times organisations will be the key for settled and secure communities.

My closing footnote for this ramble and so possible future papers are

- why did the shareholders RACSCs #116 and #603 and KT's #1 never set up camp here? Was it that the cost structure of the DMHC Ltd precluded their support or was the lodge room layout not suitable or was it as simple as that those members wished to see the retention of other facilities here in town for the hoped for expansion of the craft? That is they went to both Waverley and the Oceanic facilities to support them and provide the retention of different venues. I note here a conversation I have had with Bro Warner Gardiner PDGDC SC SI who saw the concept of say 3 or 4x lodge rooms be placed strategically in the city being east, central, south or west. This concept was discounted at the time of the Moray Place relocation discussions in the early 1980s which resulted in the central model as has been fulfilled here in Manor Place. (I have subsequently been informed the 'off-site' move was for financial reasons).
- The relocation of lodges Cargill Kilwinning #632 SC to Christchurch became both protracted and acrimonious and it took some 8 years to resolve the ruffled feathers. In contrast the shift of both the Dunedin Lodge #931 EC to Blenheim and later the Port Chalmers Marine Lodge #942 EC to Napier were on the face of it amicable by comparison.

Disclaimer: The asides are mine and in no way reflect or indicate DMHC Ltd policy of which I have been an Acting Secretary as well as being a current Director.

I acknowledge the help from VW Bro EWG (Gifford) Brown P Asst DGM EC for details pertaining to #942, WBro David Russell Dist GSec SC for details pertaining to some of the other orders, the 'Blue' Book that was published at the time of this facility's consecration, Mr Chaz Forsyth for assistance with the CPI translations using the Reserve Bank of NZ calculator on that website. I would also remind you of the Laytham booklet of photographs of lodge buildings of Otago of all constitutions that is held in our library collection.

I thank you for your attention.

Barry Simpson PM #448 and JW #161.

Footnote: Our Editor W Bro Grant Watson commented to me after this presentation that he can vividly remember when he was the WM of Waverley #226 the Manor Place Establishment Committee Roadshow arrived at Waverley one evening canvassing for support for the proposed facility by way of taking up occupancy and money by purchasing shares in the facility. The presentation was listened to but sadly for the Establishment Committee the delivery and method of address was such that at times the audience felt both hectored and lectured at. Later when Waverley reflected upon the issue of relocation they chose to retain their independence. I understand that there were other instances of strong personalities 'in a hurry' so to speak to get as many lodges in the town here which at the time proved counterproductive. Diplomacy is the art of the possible. Messages have to be presented in the correct way particularly when one is dealing with a volunteer movement.



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Bro Barry Simpson has asked that the following be appended to his talk: **Masonic Tenants of the Dunedin Masonic Hall Coy Ltd facility**

Bro Olly Laytham approached me at the Hall Coy AGM with the following which he suggests is additional facts that should be of interest and so placed on the record.

“ The initial meetings of some of the lodges in the Manor Place building occurred before the small lodge room was commissioned. This was actioned by setting out a temporary lodge layout in the general office area of the top floor F3/L4. This temporary facility operated for some 3 months. Lodge Aurora led the way with this style of operation. In fact they were so adventurous they had one meeting in the unfinished lodge room and they used workman's sawhorses for the WM's and Warden's pedestals!

The United Lodge of Otago #448 supplied the Lodge Ionic furniture, crockery and portable kitchen joinery for consideration of shares. This furniture clothed the 'little lodge room' and the crockery and kitchen joinery were used on the top floor. The Moray Place facility supplied the Ground Floor lodge furniture. Keynote pieces being the WM's and Wardens' chairs plus the Secretary and Treasurer Desk. The decision was made to have these pieces dip stripped as they had a black patina. The stripping exposed the fact that these pieces were fabricated from oak much to the delight of many of the workers and users. Bro Olly did note somewhat wryly that there were some brothers who expressed horror at the change of the colour scheme for these pieces. From this comment I suggest the tan colour scheme arose from the oak hue for that room. There is a background piece of information relating to these chairs from a man who was an apprentice who worked in the team that fabricated these pieces during the Great Depression of 1928 to 1935 that hangs on the crush area wall beside the exit doors and that had been printed in the Star Midweeker newspaper.

The 'lodge' chairs on the little lodge room floor refectory originated from the RAC facility at Moray Place.

Barry Simpson