District Grand Lodge of India S.C.
&
Grand Chapter of U.S.R.A.F.I.C.

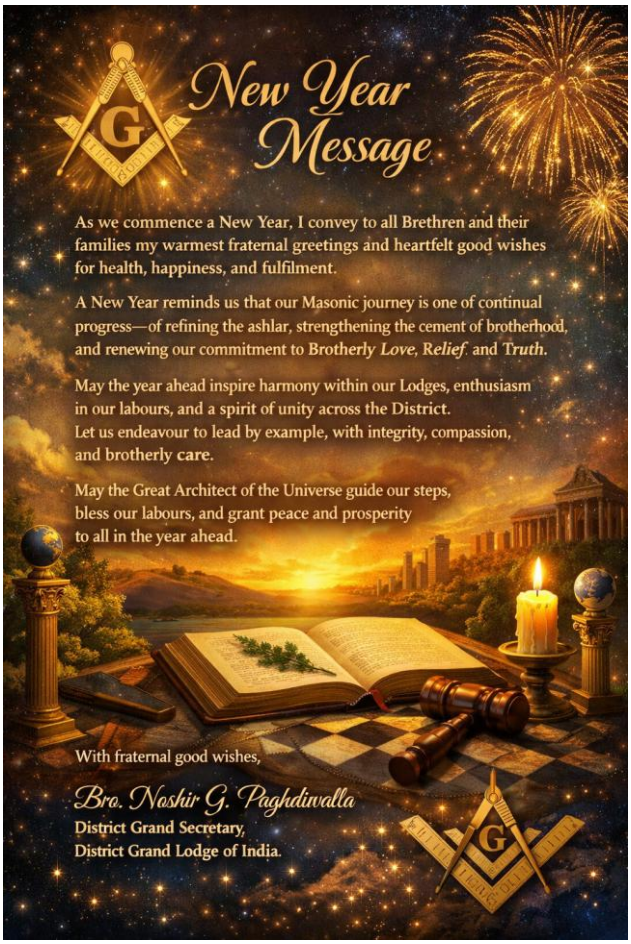
NEWSLETTER

VOLUME VI : ISSUE 1
JANUARY 2026

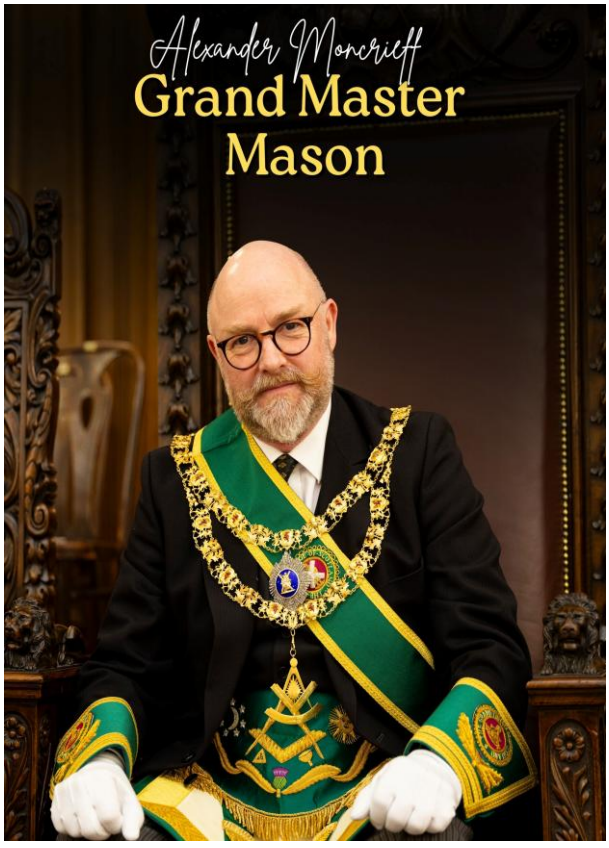
Edited by Bro./M.E.C. Noshir Godrej Paghdiwalla, D.S.M.,
Past Depute District Grand Master & District Grand Secretary
Hon. Grand Secretary (Scot.)
Past Depute Grand Superintendent & Grand Scribe Ezra
Hon First Grand Standard Bearer (Scot.)

This Newsletter is only meant to convey the news and events under the jurisdiction of the Scottish District, but is not its official periodical. The views expressed herein are solely that of the Editor, and not necessarily that of the Scottish District.

HAPPY 2026



Congratulations to Brother Alexander C.G. Moncrieff, on being installed as the Grand Master Mason of the Grand Lodge of Scotland on November 27, 2025.



In a moment resplendent with dignity, heritage, and the solemn majesty of our Ancient Craft, the Grand Lodge of Scotland has proclaimed the appointment of **Most Worshipful Brother Alexander Moncreiff** as **Grand Master Mason of Scotland**, investing him with the highest honour that Scottish Freemasonry can bestow.

Brother Moncreiff - Most Worshipful Grand Master Mason ascends to this exalted office bearing a record of devoted service and distinguished leadership. Prior to his elevation, he served with exemplary grace as Depute Grand Master, offering wise counsel and steadfast commitment to the governance of the Craft.

His Masonic journey is deeply rooted in his mother lodge, the venerable Lodge Scoon & Perth No. 3**,** one of the oldest and most storied lodges in the world. There he served with marked distinction as Master**,** guiding its labours with insight, harmony, and reverence for its profound traditions.

Initiated into Citizen Lodge No. 2911 (E.C.) in the year 1997, he rose to become **its** Master in 2005. His commitment to the wider brotherhood led him to affiliate with Lodge Scoon & Perth No. 3 in 2009, where he was honoured to serve as Master from 2016 to 2018, and again in 2019**.** His affiliation with Lodge Sir Robert Moray in 2015 further reflects the breadth of his intellectual and Masonic interests.

On the international stage, Brother Moncreiff has rendered devoted service as:

- Past Substitute Grand Master (2022–23)
- Grand Junior Warden of the United Grand Lodge of England
- Proxy District Grand Master for Lodges under the direct supervision of Grand Lodge and under Superintendencies abroad
- Representative to the National Grand Lodge of Poland

Beyond the Craft, he is also distinguished as a member of the Royal Company of Archers, the King's Bodyguard in Scotland — a unique honour in which he participated at **the** Coronation Service of His Majesty the King in 2023, symbolising both loyalty and tradition.

GRAND LODGE OFFICE BEARERS.

His leadership, breadth of experience, and noble bearing promise to guide the Craft in Scotland into a new era of harmony, vision, and enlightened service.

May the Great Architect of the Universe continue to shower His richest blessings upon our newly installed Grand Master Mason.

E D I T O R I A L

Can the impact of 'Artificial Intelligence' on Freemasonry be undermined?

Upon reading an article on Artificial Intelligence penned by our then Rt. Wor. D.G.M., a very thoughtful question cropped up in my mind. In this age and times, Artificial Intelligence is rapidly reshaping many aspects of human life. Yet, when it comes to something like **Speculative Freemasonry** which is symbolically, spiritually, philosophically and literarily rich, will its influence will be quite nuanced?

In the ever-turning wheel of Time, the Craft has long stood as a bastion of Light amidst the encroaching shadows of ignorance. However, now upon the horizon of the 21st century, a new and potent force arises — **Artificial Intelligence**. Like a newly-hewn stone, it awaits the touch of the Master's chisel, ready to be shaped either toward the edifice of enlightenment or into the ruins of arrogance. The question thus stands before the fraternity: "***Can Artificial Intelligence impact Freemasonry in the future"?***

Freemasonry, that ancient and honourable order founded upon moral geometry and divine reason, has ever embraced the tools of progress while holding steadfast to the immutable landmarks of Truth. From the quill to the printing press, from candlelight to electricity, from parchment to pixel — each age has presented new instruments through which the Great Work might proceed. Artificial Intelligence, then, may be seen not as a threat, but as another implement upon the trestle-board of human advancement.

Let us remember that Masonry is founded upon the inner labour of the heart and conscience. No engine or mechanics of man's devising, however subtle, can perform the work of squaring our actions, levelling our passions, or pluming our conduct before the G.A.O.T.U. The Rough Ashlar must ever be wrought by the individual Brother himself, by the exercise of his free will, guided by the Light he has received.

Freemasonry, as we know, is built on ritual, symbolism, moral instruction, fellowship, and the cultivation of wisdom – all deeply human things. At first thought, AI is not likely to replace these, but it can influence *how* Freemasons learn, interact, and apply the teachings of our venerated Order. Freemasonry's esoteric knowledge may require greater safeguarding in the digital age. AI could both help protect rituals (through encryption and verification) or risk exposing them if mishandled. Future generations could access teachings in interactive, immersive formats.

In the speculative Lodge of tomorrow, AI may assist the brethren in preserving ritual, transmitting the sacred mysteries with precision unclouded by forgetfulness or error. It may serve as a digital Tyler, guarding the portals of the virtual temple against the uninitiated. Through data and insight, it might help lodges flourish—strengthening fellowship, coordinating labour, and illuminating the hidden patterns that bind brother to brother in the mystic chain of fraternity.

Here are some possible **future impacts of AI on Freemasonry.** It may serve as a "Masonic research assistant," helping Brethren better understand symbolism, allegory, and historical context. Real-time translation and intelligent networking could make global Masonic communication more seamless. Perhaps arguably, the Craft may need new digital landmarks or safeguards to preserve its integrity in an AI-driven world.

However, true moral growth—shaping character "ashlars" from rough to smooth—requires human conscience and free will. AI cannot substitute this inner labour. **In essence,** AI will likely become a tool for education, preservation, and connection within Freemasonry, but it cannot replace the human, spiritual, and initiative heart of the Craft. The working tools of a Mason are symbolic of personal transformation; AI may provide new "operative tools," but the speculative work of self-improvement will always rest with the individual Brother.

In every age of human history, new instruments have been placed into the hands of men. The plumb, the square, and the level, in the days of yore, were mighty innovations that not only advanced the operative craftsman's work but also came to embody lessons of eternal worth for the speculative Masons.

Therefore, while we may employ these modern instruments in our labours, let us never mistake them for labour itself. For, Masonry is not in the mere words of ritual, nor in the outward symbols, but in the living practice of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. Brethren, the future may bring us wonders beyond imagination, yet the landmarks of the Craft remain immovable.

Today, we find ourselves confronted with another such instrument – one not of stone or steel, but of thought and calculation – that which the world calls *Artificial Intelligence.* If I may pause to reflect: what bearing may such a power have upon the practice of our antient Craft, and upon those timeless principles that guide our steps in the Masonic way?

What it *can* do is support preparation, study, and contemplation—but the essence of Freemasonry remains in the inner journey of the candidate, which no machine can replace. While ritual must remain human-led, AI could help in learning and rehearsing ritual, ensuring accuracy in wording, gestures, and symbolism.

This would be unlike the custom sometimes practised by ignoring the literary beauty of our Masonic texts and reducing the ceremony to a storytelling session.

Yet, as in ages past, so today, new tools may aid us in our studies. Artificial Intelligence may gather and preserve the treasures of Masonic knowledge, opening to the earnest seeker a library broader than any ever assembled. It may serve the Brother as a guide to ritual instruction, as a lantern to illuminate forgotten histories, and as a bridge linking Brethren across lands and tongues. In this sense, it may be as a faithful Tyler, standing ready to admit the sincere and exclude the unwanted.

Advanced visualisation tools might allow Masons to "experience" allegories in new ways—such as walking through a digital Temple of Solomon. AI can digitise, catalogue, and analyse centuries of Masonic texts, tracing connections between different rites, rituals, and traditions. AI cannot replicate the **Light** of initiation, the transformative moment of moral awakening. AI could act as a mirror for self-reflection, offering philosophical prompts or exploring ethical dilemmas in a Masonic context.

AI-powered platforms may help connect Brethren across jurisdictions, languages, and traditions. But let us be vigilant, for every tool may be misused. Just as the compass may design both a temple and a prison, so may this new intelligence preserve or profane. It cannot distinguish virtue from vice, nor can it confer Light where darkness reigns. The Mysteries of our Craft — the initiating experience, the fraternal bond, and the moral transformation — shall hopefully remain forever beyond its reach.

Yet, Brethren, we must be vigilant. For as the rough ashlar must be perfected by the hand guided by conscience, so too must the use of such intelligence be tempered by wisdom. No machine, however vast its memory or subtle its logic, can grasp the ineffable Light of the Spirit, nor can it replace the living warmth of brotherly love that flows from heart to heart. The Great Architect's plan is written not in code, but in the living soul of Man.

Thus, let AI become our servant, not our Master—an operative tool employed in speculative work. Let it help us build not merely smarter lodges, but *wiser* ones; not merely efficient systems, but *enlightened* ones. If governed by virtue, Artificial Intelligence may yet become a fellow worker in the quarry of Truth—another instrument in the hands of the Grand Artificer, aiding humanity in the eternal labour of perfecting the Temple not made with hands.

And so, as we gaze upon this new dawn, let us recall that all knowledge—be it wrought by mind or machine—is but a reflection of that greater Light which has ever guided the Craft. May we wield it with prudence, and may it, in turn, illuminate our path toward the ineffable East.

A Century and a Quarter of Light:
The Quasquicentennial Celebration of Lodge Cataract No. 909, Belgaum

Amidst an atmosphere suffused with solemn dignity and fraternal joy, on Saturday, the 8th of November 2025, Lodge Cataract No. 909 celebrated the resplendent milestone of its Quasquicentennial Anniversary — a glorious commemoration of 125 years of steadfast devotion to the service of the Craft.

The evening, radiant with symbolism and harmony, marked not merely the passage of years, but the perpetuation of a noble legacy — a legacy woven with the threads of dedication, fidelity, and brotherly love.

The gathering of Brethren after the celebration

The Quasquicentennial celebration was graced by a Deputation from the District Grand Lodge of India S.C., which performed an impressive and inspiring Rededication Ceremony, rekindling the spiritual flame first kindled by the Founders in the closing years of the nineteenth century.

With reverence and grace, the ceremonial workings evoked the solemn grandeur of Masonic tradition — the steady rhythm of timeless ritual, the resonant words of consecration, and the deep sense of continuity that binds past, present, and future into one unbroken chain of Light.

The entry of the District Deputation

Enjoying fellowship in the open air dinner that followed

The Masonic Temple at Belgaum, reflected the pride and spirit of the brethren who have, over the decades, upheld the banner of Lodge Cataract No. 909 with unwavering zeal. The very air seemed charged with the echoes of history — of meetings held in fellowship, of labours nobly done, and of benevolence quietly bestowed. As the excellent Masonic literature of Rededication unfolded, one could almost sense the presence of those illustrious brethren who, long since passed to the Grand Lodge Above, must surely have looked down with fraternal pride upon their successors continuing the sacred trust entrusted to their care.

The Rededication Ceremony, conducted with precision and dignity, served as both a renewal **of** vows and a reaffirmation of purpose — a reminder that while time may move ever onward, the principles of Freemasonry remain eternal and unchanging. The brethren witnessed with emotion the symbolic acts that rededicated the Lodge to the service of God, of the Craft, and of Humanity — a moment of spiritual reflection as profound as it was uplifting.

Following the ceremony, the Lodge was enlivened by an atmosphere of warm fellowship and joyous celebration in a gala dinner in the evening held amidst green lawns and resplendent lighting, where lilting music resonated from a live orchestra and reminiscences of the past intertwined with aspirations for the future.

As Lodge Cataract No. 909 now steps with renewed strength and purpose into its next century of labour, it stands as a shining beacon within the District — a living testament to the enduring relevance of Masonic ideals, to the strength of fraternal unity, and to the timeless pursuit of Light.

May its columns continue to stand firm upon the foundation of Faith, Hope, and Charity; may its altar ever be hallowed by the spirit of brotherhood; and may the Light that was rekindled on this momentous occasion continue to illuminate its path for generations yet unborn.

Thus was celebrated, in grandeur and grace, the Quasquicentennial Anniversary of Lodge Cataract No. 909 — not as an end, but as a renewal of a glorious journey, begun 125 years ago and destined to shine yet brighter in the centuries to come.

Kudos on accomplishments of our Brethren

We are delighted to announce that our **Bro. Jawahar Vadlamani of Lodge Universal Peace at Hyderabad** has been appointed by Rotary Club to serve on the 2026 Taipei Convention Committee for the rotary year 2025-26. He has been selected for this important role because of his skills, experience, and dedication, and in anticipation of him contributing to the Committee's success.

This prestigious appointment is a recognition of his dedication, expertise, and outstanding contributions and his participation will bring honour to our fraternity and we extend our warmest congratulations and best wishes to Bro Jawahar for a successful and enriching conference experience.

Bro. Rohinton Engineer, Past Master of Lodge Light of Iran -Udvada, and Chairman and Managing Director of Industrial Boilers Ltd. was the recipient of the 56th Export Award for Industry excellence.

He was felicitated by none other than Shri Piyush Goyal, the Hon'ble Minister for Commerce and Industry of the Government of India. A proud achievement indeed.

DIWALI DHAMAKA

The enthusiastic brethren of Lodge and Chapter Perseverance celebrated the onset of the festive season of light by organising a sparkling evening of joy, laughter, music & fellowship at the Goose & Gridiron housed within the premises of Freemasons Hall, Mumbai, on 11th oct 2025, 07:30 pm onwards

All attending the event with their loved ones across Constitutions experienced an unforgettable night filled with delicious food, vibrant music, fun games & festive cheer amid the celebration the triumph of light over darkness.

A SPLENDID AND UPLIFTING CEREMONY AT LODGE ZOROASTER NO. 800 S.C.

Installation of Bro. Neville M. Mistry as Worshipful Master

The Installation Meeting of Lodge Zoroaster No. 800 S.C.**,** held on Tuesday, 2nd December 2025, at the historic Masonic Temple, Mumbai, shone with all the splendour, solemnity, and timeless dignity that mark the finest traditions of Scottish Freemasonry. The Lodge, named after the revered Prophet Zarathushtra, was graced by a distinguished gathering of brethren from across the Mumbai based Lodges under the District Grand Lodge of India, as also from the Sister Constitutions in amity, whose presence added lustre to an already momentous occasion.

In the absence of the outgoing Master, the Lodge was opened in due and ancient form by **Bro. Dr. Vispi Marolia** – Past Master presiding in the Eastern Chair, after which the proceedings were placed in the capable and accomplished hands of the Installing Master, **Bro. Noshir G. Paghdiwalla**. With calm authority and an evident mastery of ritual, he conducted the Ceremony of Installation with eloquence, dignity, and an admirable attention to detail. His flawless delivery of the traditional charges lent the ceremony a sense of reverence that touched all present.

The Master-Elect, **Bro. Neville M. Mistry**, was then ceremonially inducted into the Chair of King Solomon with full honours, receiving the insignia and responsibilities of his high office. The installation was carried out with grace and precision, befitting the venerable heritage of Lodge Zoroaster, named after the Holy and revered Prophet "Zarathushtra".

The investiture of the Office-bearers followed, each Brother stepping forward to receive his charge with humility, dedication, and a visible sense of pride. The harmony, unity, and fraternal affection evident among the brethren reflected the enduring strength and vibrant spirit of the Lodge.

Adding further grandeur to the ceremony was the presence of District Grand Lodge Office-bearers led by **Bro. Asit Daru** - Past Depute DGM, who extended his warm felicitations to the newly installed Master, wishing him a

successful tenure and imploring him that his term be marked by commitment and earnest labour in the service of the Craft.

The evening culminated in a delightful Festive Board reminiscent of a Parsi wedding feast served on plantain leaves, where heartfelt toasts, gracious sentiments, and an atmosphere of cheerful brotherhood brought the celebrations to a close. The fellowship shared around the table resonated with the very essence of Masonic ideals.

Looking at his interest in Masonry evidenced in the past year, the District Grand Lodge of India conveys its hearty congratulations to **Bro. Neville M. Mistry**, Worshipful Master for the year 2025–26, together with the other Officers and Brethren of the Lodge, and offers its best wishes the team for a year filled with progress, harmony, and noble endeavour.

INSTALLATION AT LODGE CATARACT NO. 909, BELGAUM S.C.

Lodge Cataract no. 909 S.C. is perhaps the most active of our Lodges under the umbrella of the District, be it the initiatives taken in Charitable activities, meticulous performance of rituals, or adherence of other Masonic tenets.

On Saturday, 6th December 2025, **Bro. Mahesh Bhirangi** assumed charge of the Eastern Chair of the Lodge from **Bro. Rajesh Shingamakki** amid a vast gathering of enthusiastic Brethren of the Lodge when a well-rehearsed installation ceremony was witnessed by all present.

The District was represented by Bro. Gautam H. from Pune who led the team of District Officers and has since submitted an interesting report of the proceedings which were conducted by each allotted Brother performing his task without reference to the Ritual Book. We convey our appreciation to all the Brethren for their Masonic spirit.

A LEGACY REKINDLED

— 155 YEARS OF MASONIC PERSEVERANCE

Lodge Rising Sun No. 506, Mumbai, one of the oldest and once amongst the most distinguished Lodges under the Scottish Constitution, recently marked a significant milestone in its long and eventful journey. Founded 155 years ago, the Lodge has stood for generations as a beacon of Masonic Light, contributing meaningfully to the growth and strengthening of the Craft in its till recent years.

Like many historic institutions, the Lodge experienced a period of decline in the past few years, brought about primarily by dwindling membership due to either the relocation of brethren or their recall to the realms above. From its former position as a leading Lodge, it passed through difficult days when meetings were sparsely attended and its continued vitality appeared uncertain. Yet, true to the enduring spirit of Freemasonry, the Lodge did not fade into obscurity.

Its revival has been made possible largely through the untiring dedication, perseverance, and steadfast commitment of its senior most member, **Bro. Noshir G. Paghdiwalla**, who spared no effort in restoring the Lodge to active working. With patience, faith in the principles of the Craft, and an unwavering sense of duty, he continued to labour for the Lodge's revival even in the face of considerable challenges. His efforts stand as a living example of what individual devotion and Masonic loyalty can achieve.

The revival of Lodge Rising Sun No. 506 may fittingly be likened to the symbolism of the Rising Sun itself, which, after passing through the darkness of night, ascends once more in splendour to illuminate the day. Though the working tools lay for a time unused and the columns appeared weakened, the foundations were never lost. Through faithful labour, the Rough Ashlar has again been placed upon the trestle-board, and by patient application of the Square, the Level, and the Plumb Rule, the Lodge has begun its steady return to strength, balance, and uprightness. The rekindling of its Light stands as a testimony that when even one Brother remains steadfast at the altar of duty, the Flame of Freemasonry can never be extinguished.

A notable highlight in this journey of renewal was the Installation Meeting held on 23rd December 2025 - after a span of nearly four years - which was conducted with dignity and enthusiasm. The meeting was particularly heartening in that Brethren from several sister Lodges attended in strength, lending fraternal support and ensuring a commendable attendance. Their presence was a powerful expression of unity and brotherhood, reinforcing the truth that no Lodge stands alone within the wider Masonic family.

The Installation of **Bro. Ardeshir Sam Aga** at the hands of **Bro. Noshir Paghdiwalla** not only reaffirmed the Lodge's return to active working but also symbolised hope for its future. The warmth, fellowship, and collective goodwill witnessed on that evening clearly reflected the renewed confidence in Lodge Rising Sun No. 506 and its onward progress.

As the Lodge enters the next phase of its revival, earnest hopes are expressed that it will continue to grow in strength by augmenting its membership, attracting younger Brethren, and reclaiming its rightful place among the active and vibrant Lodges of the District. With continued guidance, collective effort, and the same spirit of dedication that has sustained it thus far, Lodge Rising Sun No. 506 may look forward to many more years of meaningful Masonic labour.

May the Great Architect of the Universe bless its endeavours and grant it continued Light, strength, and harmony and look with favour upon Lodge Rising Sun No. 506; May He strengthen its Officers in wisdom, its Brethren in unity, and its labours in purpose; May the **Three Great Lights** ever guide its workings, and the **Four Cardinal Virtues** adorn its members; And may the Lodge, now renewed in spirit and resolve, continue to rise in usefulness, harmony, and Masonic Light for generations yet to come.

WELCOME

We accord a warm welcome to Bro. William Semple _ Grand Secretary and Bro. James Bell – Past Depute Grand Master who are scheduled to visit our District Grand Lodge from 11th to 17th January 2026 and look forward to their guidance and co-operation during their stay.

VISIT US AT