

**GRAND LODGE A.F. & A.M. OF CANADA  
IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO**

**Fraternal Correspondence Committee**

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**GRAND LODGE of IRELAND**

Annual Report, Freemason's Hall, Dublin, December, 2011.

M.W. Bro. George Dunlop, Grand Master, emphasized that one of the major goals of the Grand Lodge of Ireland was to demonstrate to the public that **Freemasonry was not an inward-looking organization** or a threat to society, but rather a private body which cares for the welfare of mankind. Therefore, activities in the public place will be continued and expanded. Much credit and positive publicity has been gained by the Order through the Grand Master's Charity, planned on a five-year cycle during which Grand Lodge focuses on new recipients who need genuine assistance.

“Our **exposure** to society through **radio and television** is an avenue which **we must not ignore** as there are **many benefits** to gain. We cannot lock ourselves behind closed doors and expect to gain public trust, yet **we must educate** ourselves as to **what ‘Freemasonry is all about’**, and how we communicate as individuals and convince the public that we are a force for good. To this end therefore, our staff at Freemason's Hall again threw **open the doors** on the annual **Culture Evening Night** in Dublin in September. They were, once again, almost **swamped** by the huge crowds **curious** about both our wonderful headquarters and our Order.

I also had the privilege of a radio interview which was heard by many, including Masons and non-Masons, for which I received much commendation. Freemasonry in Ireland must maintain as well as raise its standards, in the process of which we should all be committed advocates. If our **Order** is to **gain credence** in society, then we **must strive to meet** the following objectives:-

- Increase our membership by consolidation and growth.
- Improve our image and public acceptability.
- As benefactors, practice effective outreach and in-reach to those in need.
- Identify problems rather than throw solutions.
- **Become more proactive** rather than reactive.

*“Believe in Freemasonry”*

At Tripartite meetings of the Grand Lodges of England, Scotland and Ireland we share problems and seek solutions. Harmonious working is vital for the well-being and future of our Order worldwide. **Freemasonry represents all that is good in life and society** generally could learn a great deal from us. My main priority is to foster a better public image, dispelling the myths and misconceptions about Freemasonry that have gained credence over the years and to reassure the public that we are not a sinister, secretive organization and that Freemasons are good, caring, responsible citizens, i.e. they have nothing to fear from Freemasonry. If we can all work together in a positive manner, totally committed, I am confident that Irish Freemasonry has a great future and that everyone has a part to play. There is no room for apathy.

One of the highlights of 2010 was the inaugural “Irish Freemasons of Ireland Young Musician of the Year Competition” which turned out to be a marvelous success. The second year of the competition will be held at Freemason’s Hall in October of 2011. The International Jury, representing England, Ireland, Italy and Austria has already been selected. The Music Colleges are currently holding auditions to decide who will represent them. The Final of the Competition will again be broadcast on Irish Radio and Television. We have received excellent publicity and feed-back from many high – profile and influential quarters outside the Order for this Competition.

The impact of the worldwide recession on employment and standards of living continued to be felt during the year. However, in our **125 year tradition of “Always Caring and Always Sharing,”** we have not allowed increases in the cost of living to prevent us from helping to feed, clothe and provide housing and nursing home expenses for those in need. We spent almost 800,000 Euros supporting some 434 recipients in their education expenses, and in the development of the talents some of them are blessed with, through the Masonic Benefit Funds for Boys and Girls.

Our Masonic Havens provide care for the elderly in sheltered housing in several locations. We will continue to provide these services, both for those with Masonic connections and also for the elderly in the general community.

**Our charitable ventures do not overshadow our commitment to maintaining excellence in all aspects of the activities of our Lodges.** I am encouraged by the **upward trend** in **attendance** at the Grand Lodge of Instruction, which clearly demonstrates that ritual, membership, care of new candidates, Degree work, the social aspects of festive boards and visiting other Lodges is still a very important part of Freemasonry. We consider it **essential** to request all Lodges to encourage their **incoming Officers**, particularly members taking a position for the first time, to **attend** these **classes** to give them the **confidence** to carry out their duties effectively and continue the long tradition of quality ritual within our Lodges.

Reports from the Provinces indicate that numbers are stable with most Lodges having new members, some having three or four waiting for their First Degree. A **net increase** in some areas, although small, is a **trend** that gives great **hope for the future**. Visits to the Lodges at their Installations show the obvious enthusiasm of the Brethren and high standards reflecting the excellent work of the Classes of Instruction.

This, combined with the commitment of our Brethren towards the Masonic Benevolent Institutions and our open policy towards the general public, demonstrates that Freemasonry is undergoing a gradual unmasking as a society of the highest ideals in the process of which we can all play a part.”