

Celebration of 50 years in Masonry for W. Bro. Ivan Deeth, P.Pr. SGW

In March 2016, W. Bro. Ivan Deeth achieved his golden anniversary – 50 years in Masonry. Ivan, fondly considered by the Brethren of Castellum Lodge No. 6710 as the ‘Grandfather of the Lodge’, was congratulated by all the Brethren at a special meeting to celebrate his life in Masonry and his unstinting work in the Lodge.

Ivan was initiated 50 years to the day of the special Castellum meeting on the 14th March 1966 aged 38 years. The declaration book records that Ivan George Deeth was a Police Officer residing in Weston Coyney and was proposed by Bro. T Mann and seconded by Bro. A Pointon. Ivan was Initiated by the then Master W. Bro. C T Ashton.

Things moved quite quickly for Ivan and W. Bro. Ashton was busy again on the 9th of May 1966 when Ivan was passed to the Second Degree. Ivan was Raised by the newly Installed Master, W. Bro. R S Beech on 12th December 1966.

1966 was certainly an auspicious year for the Lodge and saw the beginning of a wonderful Masonic career for Bro. Deeth. Ivan proved to be a brilliant ritualist working his way through all the offices with flair and undisguised enjoyment. His love of Masonry certainly rubbed off onto the other Brethren in those early years just as it does to the current Brethren of Castellum Lodge today. For many years Ivan has been, and still is, an inspiration to the younger and older Brethren alike. At the ripe old age of 88 Ivan is still an enthusiastic member of the lodge and works tirelessly in his current office of Almoner.

Installed as Master of Castellum, 12 years after his Initiation, in 1977 and again in 1978 Ivan loved his time as Master. In his years of office he Initiated, Passed and Raised another of our long term Brethren W. Bro. S Poole. Even now it is difficult to prise Ivan away from the Masters chair. He recently Presided over the Raising of one of our younger Brethren, Bro. Richard Barlow, an evening of absolutely wonderful Masonry greatly enjoyed by all the Brethren in attendance and one which will long be remembered in the annals of Castellum Lodge.

Ivan tells us that he needs to slow down and warns us that he will not be able to attend the Lodge as regularly as he would like, but there is little sign of that at the moment. Whilst Ivan may not be as sprightly as he once was, at the ripe old age of 88, he is still a great hard working Mason, always ready with advice for the younger Brethren, is still a great ritualist, can nip around the Lodge as Tyler and still makes his regular Almoners Report both enjoyable and informative.

The 50 years in Masonry Certificate was presented in Lodge by V. W. Bro. John Renaudon Asst. Prov. Grand Master, also a member of Castellum Lodge, in a moving little ceremony which demonstrated the mutual respect both men had for each other as Masons and which recognised the constant hard work and enthusiasm shown to Castellum Lodge and the Craft in general during Ivan’s many years in Masonry. The accolades continued in the Temple principally by W. Bro. Poole who spoke of his long association and memories of Ivan, Ivan initiated, passed and raised Bro. Stephan in consecutive meetings during his time as Master, and from W. Bro. Ken Bell, a friend of more than 67 years, who gave some rather interesting insights into Ivan’s formative years. Ken admitted that he and his twin brother first met Police Constable, Ivan Deeth at around 7 years of age and succeeded in giving him the run-around in Newcastle for the next ten years or so. Ken related some of their more amusing stories, some not quite fit enough for family reading but of course, nothing illegal.

The Festive Board proved to be an equally happy occasion as Ivan took his rightful place as the centre of attention on the top table. Toasts and congratulations continued unabated. After which Ivan gave a moving and heartfelt speech of thanks to the Brethren of the Lodge and Brother visitors for the wonderful evening they had given him – one that he would never forget.

During the Festive Board Ivan was presented with four, engraved, crystal whisky tumblers by W. Bro. Rowland Chambers on behalf of Ivans Chapter. Castellum's current Master W. Bro. T A Finnigan, on behalf of the Lodge, presented Ivan with a beautiful hand blown, cut glass, crystal decanter and a bottle of rather special 25 year old single malt whisky to fill it. The decanter, from one of the last glass blowers still working in Britain and was sourced by our new initiate Bro Trevor Wood. Ivan, who is partial to a wee dram, promised not to put the whisky in his tea in the morning!

With a total of 67 Brethren attending it really was a special night for Ivan and the Lodge – just about a full house - giving our Caterer, Kevin a real challenge which he met with aplomb. He and his staff serving 66 perfectly cooked medium rare steaks and of course, a lovingly prepared celebratory dish of fish and chips for Ivan.

We all congratulate Ivan on his 50 years in Masonry and wish him many more years to come.