

# Healesville Lodge No: 247 - November Meeting 2009

*Written by David Wells*

The Healesville Lodge had a non-ceremonial meeting on November 11<sup>th</sup> 2009 in order that they would be able to invite non-Masonic guests to what was a very special and enjoyable evening.

The guests included Teachers, Students and Parents from Healesville High School, representatives of the Healesville CFA, several of the sponsors who supported our Games Night back in September, as well as our families and friends.

The night started with myself presenting a brief overview of Freemasonry explaining how it is 'A journey through life'.

It was related in similar terms to the progress of a student's journey through, Primary, Secondary, and then Tertiary education. How they started in Prep not knowing anything and as they progressed through each stage of their school life they then developed and grew.

I then briefly spoke about the Rough and Smooth Ashlars and the journey to become better people, and finally touched on the collars, cuffs and aprons as well as the importance of the Warrant.

As a last comment Bro. Peter Noonan was asked to step forward to accompany me on the floor. I touched on the fact that Healesville Lodge is quite a young and progressive Lodge and introduced Peter as our incoming Master for 2010-2011. I also pointed out that Peter will be 27 years old going into the Chair as Master and that he was a prime example of our Lodge's future and of the growth and development that I had touched on earlier..



The next stage of the evening was the cheque presentations to the Healesville CFA. There was a brief explanation to the audience as to how the money was raised and then a cheque from the Healesville Lodge for \$4,200 was presented to Graham Bates (Captain of the Healesville CFA).

What Graham didn't know at this time was that there was a second cheque from the GL Board of Benevolence still to come. Prior to presenting the cheque I explained to the audience the significant contribution made by the Board of Benevolence and how supportive they have been to Healesville Lodge over the last three years.

When presented with the Board's cheque for \$3802, Graham looked totally stunned as he had just been presented with a grand sum of \$8,002 to assist with the purchase of a thermal imaging camera. Graham believes that this contribution should just about allow them now to place the order, (the camera being in the vicinity of \$20,000 in value).

The next part of the evening was the entertainment provided by the Healesville High School led by their music teacher Liz Bennett.

There were 20 students in the band which was absolutely brilliant and the quality of their music was excellent. They played six songs before receiving a rousing round of applause from everyone in the room.

The last of the six songs was the theme music from The Great Escape and I can only say that you would struggle to find a better version of this piece anywhere - it was magnificent.



By the way, in total we had 92 people present at the meeting attendance which is the largest attendance, including Installation Nights that I have ever seen in my time at Healesville Lodge.

Possibly 60% in attendance were non-Masonic guests so it was great that we were able to show them a little of ourselves on the night and judging by the amount of questions our members were asked in the South, a great deal of interest was shown in who we are, and what we do.



Liz Bennett and I met several weeks ago to discuss the evening and I mentioned how at a similar night last year the Badger Creek Primary School students finished off our night with Advance Australia Fair.

Liz was kind enough to have the students learn this piece of music so before we finished in the Lodge Room and headed for the South the whole audience stood up in the Lodge Room and sang Advance Australia Fair accompanied by the High School Band.

As you would expect, the children were cheered and clapped for their fine performance.



On entering the South we ensured that everyone was quickly organised with drinks then had a quick prayer from our Chaplain followed by a Loyal Toast before commencing to eat.

With a crowd of 92 it was a little hard to move around in the South but the members of Healesville Lodge spread out across the room and interacted with the parents and students as well as other guests to make them feel extremely welcome.

On my part I spent some time in particular with our visiting 'corporate sponsors' who took the time and interest to come along.

I also spent some time with Darren and Kate Wilson who Chris and I recently met in Chum Creek on behalf of G.L. for an assessment in regards to the Bushfire Relief Assistance. Darren and Kate had a great night with us and we are very hopeful in the not to distant future of having Darren approach us with a request to join us at Healesville Lodge. There may even be a 'glimmer of light' from one of our sponsors.



To wrap up the evening we invited everyone that was still with us to join us in a circle to finish the night off with Auld Lang Syne.

There would have still have been approximately 70 people there at this point and everyone joined in.

While not everyone knew the words, the visitors were more than happy to participate in the joining of the hands as us Lodge Crooners sang our little hearts out.

Also in the South there were two displays of photographs, general information, caps, polo shirts etc which our visitors spent a lot of time looking over. Healesville Lodge's display highlighted the many social and charitable activities that we have done over the last three years and the VMMA, which supported Healesville Lodge on the night, displayed similar material and highlighted the additional Masonic arm that their organisation has to offer prospective interested parties..

Without a doubt this would have been my most enjoyable night over 31 meetings as Master at Healesville and I believe that, from the feedback received, our visitors would all have gone home with a very positive outlook on not only our Lodge, but Freemasonry as a whole.

On behalf of the Healesville Lodge, I thank Grand Lodge and the Board of Benevolence for the great support they have given us in our efforts to advance Freemasonry in the Yarra Valley District.

Regards

David Wells  
W.M. Healesville Lodge No. 247.