

THE Bulletin

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE GRAND PRIORY OF AUSTRALASIA Edition 8 July 2022



Welcome to the Eighth Edition of the Grand Priory Bulletin which has been designed to keep the Members of the Order informed on matters before the Grand Priory Council.

The recent Grand Priory Council was held this July in Hobart to coincide with the Tasmanian Investiture.

This Council adheres to four guidelines consisting of Unity, Harmony, Good Governance, and Transparency. At this meeting in Hobart, difficult and complex items were discussed that have brought better outcomes for the future of the Order.

Tasmania was the **fourth Investiture this calendar year**, Victoria in February with the Aspirants of 2021, the June South Australian and Victorian Investitures, and the July Tasmanian Investiture.

A total of 28 new members joined the Order.

I am sure all the new Members will contribute to the Order in their own way, and I thank the three hard working Priors and their Administrative Councils for their recruitment of excellent Christian men and woman.

The extension to **New Zealand** is continuing to crystallise. Chevalier Professor Robert Love ONZM has accepted the invitation to be a Director of the New Zealand Foundation Ltd, joining our existing Director Chevalier Ross Blair from Auckland. Chevalier Robert was educated in New Zealand and he is an eminent professor in Dental Surgery at the Griffith University on the Gold Coast.

Our Prelate Chevalier the Reverend Canon David O'Neil visited Auckland in early June and met with prospective Aspirants. Chevalier Ross Blair has been recently confirmed as "NZ Group Leader" of the Order in New Zealand.

The next Petit Conseil Meeting will be held in Valetta, in Malta prior to the Sovereign Council on Saturday 29th October 2022. Those Members who are attending this meeting will be amazed how the history of the Order stamped the main Island of Malta and Gozo Island.

One of the many pleasures of being the Grand Prior is being able to endorse a promotion of a member who has given exemplary service to the Order.

At the Victorian Mornington Peninsula, and following the recommendation of Prior Barbara Abley, Vice Prior Chevalier Russell Jones was awarded the Gold Medal of Merit, in recognition of his important and enduring service to the Order. His contribution to the Victorian Priory has been outstanding.

As many members of the Order could not attend the Grand Chapter Meeting in Hobart on the 2nd June, the following was my report given on the day.

'It is an honour to present this Report to the Grand Priory Annual Grand Chapter Meeting held here in Hobart, and in doing so, to review the events for the financial year since the last Grand Priory Chapter Meeting held in Adelaide.

I bring Greetings and Best Wishes to all members of our Grand Priory from the Lieutenant Grand Master HE Bailiff Paul Borg OSJ.

The Grand Priory Council met in Hobart yesterday and dealt with many matters that will be reported in future editions of the Grand Priory Bulletin.



I am pleased to announce Chevalier John Emerson from the Victorian Priory has been appointed Grand Priory Treasurer, and Chevalier Peter Robertson will continue as the Charitable Foundation Treasurer. I wish to thank Chevalier Peter Robertson for his professional contribution whilst Treasurer of the Grand Priory.

Chevalier Alex Anderson and Bailiff Brian North have retired from the Council as of 30th June. Chevalier Alex was appointed to the Council in October 2016 and has contributed greatly, especially as Grand Priory Extension Co-Ordinator. Bailiff Brian has also given great service to the Council since he was appointed 12 years ago as Grand Priory Chancellor and was recently awarded the Grand Cross of Merit recognizing this contribution. The position of Chancellor is a senior position of the Grand Priory, collating membership information and direct dealings with Malta. Chancellor Bailiff Brian was also a member of the OSJ Foundation for over 10 years.

Thank you, Alex, and Brian, for your service to this Order.

Vice Chancellor Chevalier Graeme Gatley has been working closely with Bailiff Brian over the last 8 months and will now take over the responsibility of Grand Priory Chancellor. Dame Rosemary Brooks will continue as Extension Co-Ordinator and Minute Secretary.

Late last year Dame Mary Lewis also retired from the Council as Grand Priory Archivist since 2011. She was duly recognized for her contribution when awarded the Gold Medal of Merit for exemplary service to the Order. It is wonderful you are present today, Dame Mary, and once again giving support to the Priors.

Chevalier Baden Teague from the South Australian Priory has been elected to replace Dame Mary and will report to the Members of the Council on an annual basis.

I would like to acknowledge the Members of the Grand Priory Council who are present today, Deputy Grand Prior Richard Trigg, Grand Priory Treasurer John Emmerson, Foundation Treasurer Peter Robertson, Hospitaller Jan Synot, Extension Co-Ordinator and Minute Secretary Rosemary Brooks, Chamberlain Leonie Clyne who has done a wonderful job in arranging the regalia for the 19 Aspirants, and Councillor Elida Brereton. All three Priors are automatically elected to the Council when becoming a Prior.

All Members are a Director of the OSJ Australasia Company, which is incorporated under the Corporation Act 2001, and is limited by guarantee. The principal activities of the Company during this financial year were to raise funds for Christian and medical Charities.

The legal foundation of an extension in New Zealand is now complete with the successful registration of the Charitable Foundation.

The shareholders of the OSJ New Zealand Charitable Foundation Ltd met last month and by resolution approved the accounts for compliance for the New Zealand Company Office.

New Zealand Covid restrictions are now lifted, allowing the Prelate Chevalier the Reverend Canon David O'Neil to visit New Zealand in June, to speak with senior clergy and possible Aspirants.

Investitures held in 2021 were Victoria in February with 7 new Knights and Dames joining our Order who were Aspirants from the previous year including an ex member of the London based Order of Saint John, followed by the Tasmanian Priory Investiture in March with 6 Knights and Dames and South Australia also with 6 new Knights and Dames. Due to Covid restrictions the 2021 Victorian Aspirants could not be Invested until February this year

The Grand Priory is growing and is in a very healthy state. With the February Victorian Investiture this year of Members unable to be invested in 2021, and with the present Investitures, there will be an additional 28 new members welcomed into our Order this year.



Promotions are important to recognize members who have contributed to the Order, and I congratulate those Members who have been elevated in rank because of meritorious conduct and service to the Order over the last two years.

It was also pleasing to see three of our Members of the Order being recognized in the recent Queens Birthday Honours list for their service to the community.

Since my last report I have attended 12 Priory Administrative Council Meetings, either in person, or by Zoom which gave me a great understanding of the excellent work of the three Priors.

I have attended by WebeX technology four Petit Conseil Meetings in the last 12 months, the last being on Saturday 30th April. The next meeting will be held prior to the Sovereign Council to be held in Malta at the end of October this year. It is a privilege for our Grand Priory to be able to put matters of importance to this executive Council of our Order, and to hear the views of the Conventual Bailiffs and their Lieutenants.

The Directors of the OSJ Charitable Foundation Ltd have met 3 times and endorsed donations made this financial year, and to confirm a list of balances held on behalf of each Priory. At the Meeting of the Foundation yesterday Chevaliers Graeme Gatley and John Emerson were elected Directors of the Foundation as well as accepting Bailiff Emeritus Brian North retirement from the Board.

During the year \$55,301.00 was distributed by the Company and the Foundation to the ultimate beneficiaries

The charities that have been supported over the past year by the Tasmanian Priory consist of the Hobart Winter Appeal for Homeless, and Flu Vaccinations for those in need. The Victorian Priory donations were to the Victorian Association for the care and resettlement of Offenders, Operation Hospitaller which is providing respite for first respondents suffering PTSD, Geelong Christ Church Meals program and Ballarat support for violence sufferers and support for sick and destitute people. South Australia continues to generously support the Mary Potter Hospice Foundation this year with donations over the years exceeding \$500,000.

I extend a very big thank you to Treasurer Chevalier Peter Robertson for his work and attention to detail on the accounts of the Order's Charitable Foundation, and also those of the Grand Priory.

All members of the Order are to be commended for their generosity and hard work in raising these funds.

Further to adhering to our motto as hospitallers and after considerable due diligence the Council recently agreed to donate \$10,000 from General Funds to reimburse a nutrition program for cancer patients in our closest neighbour located in Lau, Papua New Guinea. Recently the Victorian Priory has approved an additional \$5,000 which will extend this assistance into next year. This will be drip fed over the coming months and will be reported in full at the 2023 Grand Chapter Meeting. Thank you, Grand Priory Hospitalier Dame Jan Synot, for introducing this project to the Council and completing the Council compliance requirements on the way forward.

The Bulletin was first published in March 2020 enabling members of the Order to be kept informed of important matters being dealt with by the Grand Priory Council. The eighth publication will be circulated in August, and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Editor, Dame Barbara Abley.

I would like to particularly thank Vice Grand Prior Chevalier Richard Trigg who is also the Grand Priory Governance Advisor and our three hard working and dedicated Priors who are the public face of our Order. To Secretary / new Chancellor Chevalier Graeme Gatley, and to all members of the Council, I thank you for your contribution and support, not only in your various portfolios, but also to the Order generally.

Our Prelate, Chevalier The Reverend Canon David O'Neill also needs our special thanks. He is our spiritual leader, conducting our Investitures, contributes to the Grand Priory Council and leads us in prayer.

I am pleased to report Archivist Emeritus Dame Mary Lewis has passed on to me a dubbing sword from past Prelate, Rt. Reverend Chevalier John Bayton AM GCSJ OMSJ CMSJ of OSJ Southern Australia. This sword was used on 24 November in 2007 at the Investiture and Inauguration of the Tasmanian Commandery at All Saints' Anglican Church, Hobart. The Inaugural Commander was then Chevalier Michael Kent AM.



Grand Prior's Report continues

The Grand Priory Council has decided to gift this historical dubbing sword to the Priory of Tasmania and will ask the Prelate at the completion of my report to again bless this sword.

I extend thanks to all Knights and Dames, Serving Sisters, and Serving Brothers of our Grand Priory for your contribution to the Order and for your support and assistance over the last 12 months.

I look forward to the Investiture and our continuing success in the forthcoming year'.

Bailiff David Wilckens OSJ

Grand Prior

July 2022



Grand Priory of Australasia Council 2 July 2022

Back row: L-R: Chevaliers Ed Gauden OAM KJSJ, John Emerson AM KGSJ, Alex Anderson OAM JP KJSJ,
Peter Robertson KJSJ, Anthony Woods CJSJ

Front row L-R: Dames Barbara Abley AM GCSJ, Jan Synot OAM CJSJ, Rosemary Brooks OAM DJSJ, HE
Grand Prior Bailiff David Wilckens OSJ, Chevalier the Reverend Canon David O'Neill KJSJ, Chevalier Richard
Trigg CJSJ, HE Bailiff Emeritus Brian North AO RFD OSJ, Dame Leonie Clyne OAM CGSJ,
Dame Elida Brereton DJSJ

Absent: Chevalier Graeme Gatley JP KJSJ; HE Chevalier Peter Herriman RFD CGSJ



The Russian Connection with the Order of St John

By Chevalier Dr Baden Teague KGSJ, July 2022 Grand Priory Archivist



Russia is in the news this year as the criminal invader of the Ukraine. We all condemn Putin's war on Russia's next-door neighbour. We all support the people and government of the Ukraine. With them we pray and work for a just solution and the return of Peace.

For over a century now Russia has had zero involvement with the Order of St John. That is, since the Lenin-led Russian Revolution that led to the establishment of Communism there. The Communists from 1917 disposed of the Czar, the old order, and suppressed the Christian Church including the then flourishing OSJ.

Our Order had been an important part of the Czar's responsibilities, was supported by the Russian Orthodox Church and played a key role in the education of children and young men in the old Russian aristocracy. The best school attended by the princes of Russia and of neighbouring countries, like Serbia, was governed by the OSJ and the staff wore our 'Cross of St John' (the Maltese Cross).

How did this come about? When did the Russian connection with the OSJ begin? To answer these questions, we need to go back to the 1790's decade when the OSJ still ruled Malta but the Order's tenure was thrown into jeopardy by the French Revolution. Led from Paris, the French revolutionaries attacked the established order by pillaging the properties of the nobility (including the homes from which many OSJ chevaliers had come) and the lands of the Church (including the castles which were bases for recruiting for the OSJ in Malta).

By 1798 the revolutionary French Government was altogether hostile to the OSJ.

The leader of the French Army was Napoleon who further subverted the 'revolution' to make it an Empire attacking the rest of the world. Napoleon assembled a vast fleet hoping to rule the Mediterranean by first conquering Egypt, the strategic key to not only 'the East' but also to Asia. In 1798, when Napoleon's fleet was on its way to Egypt (and to the Battle of the Nile which the British won), Napoleon attacked the OSJ-governed Malta. This meant two years of hated French capture until the British drove the French army out in 1800. This British relief of Malta, however, did not lead to the re-establishment of the OSJ there but rather to the beginning of Malta becoming a British colony ruled from London.

Now, as the 1790s decade developed, the OSJ Priory in Malta, led by the Grand Master, decided to respond to the threatening international pressures on the horizon. In 1797, the OSJ did not build an alliance with Britain or with the USA. Germany and Italy were not yet united: they became real nations about 70 years later. But Russia then presented itself as a potential ally that might well save Malta and thus save the OSJ as well.

The Malta Grand Priory proposed an agreement with Russia. Malta would provide Russia with the best naval base in the Mediterranean which would extend Russian defence well beyond the Black Sea ports of the Crimea. In return, Russia would guarantee the safe continuity of both the OSJ as an Order and the OSJ civilian rule in Malta. The gold seal on this OSJ-Russia deal was to make the Czar in St Petersburg the next Grand Master of the OSJ. Yes, Czar Paul 1st, 1798-1801, did become Grandmaster as did his successor Czars thereafter down to the end in 1917.





The Russian Connection with the Order of St John continued from previous page.

However, Malta never became a Russian military asset because that outcome was thwarted by the French and then the British.

It should not be overlooked that Russia was a major participant in the land-battles that defeated the French Empire. While the British General, the Duke of Wellington, was the overall leader of the allied armies that finally defeated Napoleon at Waterloo, the battle would not have been won without the Russian and the Prussian armies fighting so valiantly alongside the British troops.

Russia's connection with the OSJ was seen to be crucial to our Grand Priory in 1797. It is true that some traditional limitations had to be put aside. One was that the Russian Orthodox Church had never been part of the Order before, especially in the original support of the European Crusades in the Holy Land. Another was that the Czars married and would continue to marry despite all previous Grand Priors being celibate.

What in fact happened was that the Czars established two Grand Priories in St Petersburg, one for the traditional Catholic-and-Protestant continuing Order of knights and a second for the Russian aristocratic knights which newly were allowed to be an hereditary Order. The all-European Priory in St Petersburg fizzled out for lack of recruitment, while the Russian Priory, still authentically established, became an important educational asset forming the values of Russia's future Czarist leaders (and Serbia's future monarchs).

Following the death of the last Czar in 1917, the leadership of the OSJ was passed to the King of Serbia. Alexander 1st of Serbia had attended the St John school in St Petersburg. It was Alexander's son, King Peter 2nd of Serbia and Yugoslavia, who in the 1960s re-established the OSJ with our current Constitution. Our own Petit Conseil rightly insists that this authentic King Peter constitution (with its Brother-Gerard roots, its Papal establishment, its Maltese governance, its Russian authenticity, its Serbian Monarch's insignia, and its innovation to welcome men and women of all professions) be the basis of OSJ reconciliation now and everywhere.

In brief, this then is an account of the Russian connection with the Order of St John. Is it possible to pray not only for Peace in the Ukraine but also for the re-establishment of our Order of St John not only in Russia but also in the Ukraine?





SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PRIORY INVESTITURE
JUNE 4 2022 ADELAIDE



TASMANIAN
INVESTITURE
JULY 2 2022
HOBART





VICTORIAN PRIORY ANNUAL CHAPTER MEETING,
INVESTITURE AND CELEBRATORY LUNCHEON 25 JUNE 2022
Frankston, Mornington Peninsula





Grand Priory of Australasia
Grand Priory Council Calendar
October 2022 / July 2024

Month	Day	Event	Venue	Location
2022				
October	27 - 28	Petit Conseil	Malta	
	29	Sovereign Council	Malta	
November	18	Grand Priory Council meeting	NM& AFC	Adelaide
2023				
February	24	Grand Priory Council Meeting	Zoom	
April		Petit Conseil	Tba	Malta
June	2	Grand Priory Council Meeting	Tba	Melbourne
	3	Grand Priory Chapter Meeting	Tba	Melbourne
	3	Victorian Chapter Meeting & Investiture	Tba	Melbourne
	17	Tasmanian Chapter Meeting & Investiture	Tba	Hobart
	24	South Australian Chapter Meeting & Investiture	Christ Church, North Adelaide	Adelaide
October	20	Grand Priory Council Meeting	NM& AFC	Adelaide
2024				
February	16	Grand Priory Council Meeting		Hobart
April		Petit Conseil		Malta
June	14	Grand Priory Council Meeting	NM& AFC	Adelaide
	15	Grand Priory Chapter Meeting	Christ Church, North Adelaide	Adelaide
	15	South Australian Chapter Meeting & Investiture	Christ Church, North Adelaide	Adelaide
	22	Victorian Chapter Meeting & Investiture	Tba	Melbourne
July	6	Tasmanian Chapter Meeting & Investiture	Tba	Hobart