

Ladies, Rt W Brethren, W Brethren, Brethren All

It is my pleasure to welcome you all here today to this very special event being the celebration of W Bor F.G. Ireland's 90th birthday, on behalf of the Worshipful Master, Officers and Brethren of the Waitemata Lodge No. 689 on the register of the Grand Lodge of England.

In 2005 Waitemata Lodge celebrated its sesquicentenary and while, as far as most of us are aware, Graham has not been a member for all of that time, today's celebration is just as important to us.

We are blessed that we have a number of members who have very long service records and they represent the history and tradition of the lodge.

Graham is one of those.

His active participation in lodge affairs brings to us a traditional history of substance, standards and balance.

My first memory of Graham must be like the memory of many others. I was a young boy of just under 10 years when I met Father Christmas at a children's Christmas Party at Princes Street. He was the real thing, right down to the smell of drink on his breath.

A more recent memory is of a severe and focused ritualist and as a result many a candidate will have indelibly etched in their memories the obligations set out for them by W.Bro Graham.

His ritual is of such quality that there is often a quiet pause in lodge after he is finished as the Brethren wonder at what they have just witnessed.

It is therefore with great pride and reverence that I ask you all to stand and charge your glasses to join me in toasting a very committed Freemason, the birthday boy, W Bro Graham Ireland.

CN Hardy