

The Preston Group Dinner was held on Tuesday 22 February 2005 and the principal guest was V.W. Bro Tom Blackburn, P G Swd B, Deputy Provincial Grand Master.

Prior to the dinner the reigning Masters and First Principals were seated at six tables in groups of approximately five or six and the distinguished representatives took it in turn to visit each table in order to discuss any Masonic issues the Brethren/Companions wished to raise. The distinguished representatives this year were V W Bro T Blackburn, Deputy Provincial Grand Master, W R Seddon, Asst Provincial Grand Master, S Oldfield, Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals, I W Greenwood, Preston Group Chairman, R A Graham, Provincial Senior Grand Warden, E R Skidmore, Provincial Junior Grand Junior Warden. The two Directors of Ceremonies, P T Lundy and P Elmore, choreographed the whole proceedings.

The toast to the principal guest, V W Bro T Blackburn, was proposed by M R Threlfall, Master of Stanley Lodge, No 2600. V W Bro Blackburn responded in his own inimitable eloquence style. He spoke of the Grand and Provincial Grand Lodge and the speed with which they reacted to the recent Tsunami disaster. Donations were made through the Red Cross in aid of the Tsunami Appeal. He also made reference to the Alf Short Hospice Walk in June 2004, the funding of a display trailer for the Air Ambulance, the improvements in the care structure, which included the appointment of J S Thornber as Provincial Grand Charity Steward and the importance of Lodges and Chapters keeping Group Chairman informed of donations to non-Masonic charities. He suggested that perhaps these donations could be consolidated into a single event evening were all the donations would be presented on the same night.

V W Bro Blackburn touched on the retention work that was being done under the banner of the New Zealand Project and the splendid success of the lodges that had, and were planning, amalgamation.

His response encapsulated many of the brethren's thoughts on Freemasonry today and he expressed his views, and opinions, with great sincerity.

E. R. Skidmore, Provincial Junior Grand Warden, proposed the toast to the Preston Group of Lodges and Chapters and Ian Greenwood, Preston Group Chairman, responded. At the end of a very enjoyable evening Ian Greenwood presented V W Bro Blackburn with a token of the Group's appreciation of his attendance at the function.



V W Bro T Blackburn , Deputy Provincial Grand Master



W. R. Seddon ,  
Assistant Provincial Grand Master (right)



S Oldfield, Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals (right)



I W Greenwood,  
Group Chairman



R. A. Graham,  
Provincial Senior Grand Warden



E R Skidmore,  
Provincial Junior Grand Warden



Peter Elmore and Paul Lundy, Provincial Deputy Director of  
Ceremonies



I W Greenwood, Group Chairman and  
P J Hadfield, Vice Chairman



Presentation to V W Bro T Blackburn by W Bro I W Greenwood, Group Chairman.