

July 2017

The Belmont Albion Lodge No.45 Newsletter

Vision Statement: To prosper into the future.

Mission Statement: The Belmont Albion Lodge No 45 shall practice the principles of freemasonry in all ways, to enhance education, knowledge and car e for its members, attracting men of high quality, personal development and participation in our community.



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www.thebelmontalbionlodge.co.nz

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Views from the East

Unless you have been living under a rough ashlar for the last year, you would have seen a wonderfully simple initiative that is underway across the country.

"Speak Up for Freemasonry!" was launched by the Grand Master, MW Bro. Mark Winger at The Grand Installation. Its purpose is quite simple; to assist Freemasons to talk openly about Freemasonry in New Zealand – and in doing so, help to arrest the decline in numbers in the craft and improve the public understanding of what we all hold so near and dear.

Often we are asked about Freemasonry, and from my experience enquiries come from two main sources;

- individuals who have invested time into improving their appreciation of what the craft offers and are seeking further enlightenment,
- individuals who rely primarily on hearsay and the uninformed impressions and misconceptions of others.

I commend the Craft for embracing this campaign. However, I do also recognise that for many Brethren, its implementation can appear somewhat daunting at first glance. Purely from a personal perspective, this challenge has less to do with the secrets and mysteries of the Craft, and more to do with the sheer breadth of the subject matter.

I recently attended a District gathering where the discussion on how to approach the "Speak Up" campaign primarily seemed to focus on what to say if you were in a 2 minute elevator ride. This resulted in many contributors providing personal



examples of what they have used in the past, statements they have heard that appealed, and messages they have seen over the years that they would like to emulate. Often, when interest was piqued, requests were made to provide the content, and this was freely given.

As we approach our 300th anniversary and given the breadth of the subject matter to draw from, I would suggest that a more efficient approach is not to immediately launch into what you think Freemasonry offers. Rather take your time to understand the genesis of the enquiry from the person.

Welcome the approach. Thank the person for their interest. But then spend time better understanding their interest, their motivations and their reasons for wanting to know more about the Craft. This doesn't need to be an inquisition of the individual. Two or three cleverly posed questions on "What' and "Why" will uncover a wealth of new insights for you to build your response on.

I would respectfully suggest that having a standard "patter" is only truly useful if every enquiry is the same. Aim to build a genuine understanding of where the conversation needs to go for the person enquiring to gain the fullest understanding, and one that best fits their particular area of interest. As an aside, an added advantage of uncovering more information relevant to the person is that you will have time to structure your thoughts, or identify a more appropriate individual to help provide answers. T.G.A.O.T.U. gave us one mouth and two ears, possibly so we can listen twice as much as speaking. My suggestion, with this approach instead of the elevator pitch, is that by better understanding where the person's enquiry is coming from, you will be better able to offer a richer answer that fits squarely with them, and helps them understand what they are looking for and whether the Craft can provide a life-long answer.

Fraternally,

Sean Worshipful Master



From the Editor

Before I start my first editorial, I'd like to thank our previous editor Paul Copper sincerely for all his efforts in putting together a series of Newsletters with diverse and interesting content. Filling his shoes is a difficult task as he has set a very high standard and has had years of experience. Paul's enthusiasm for research and seeking knowledge is a masonic quality that we all have to strive for.

It was on the spur of a moment that I decided to take on a new challenge and volunteer as the new editor of Belmont Albion Lodge No.45 newsletter. I am looking forward to this responsibility as I see it as an opportunity to educate myself continuously and consistently and hopefully putting together editions that would satisfy a range of readers.

Coming from an academic background, I feel at ease with the technicalities of running a newsletter. The only difference being that when I am elected as an editor of a scientific journal I am expected to be the expert in the field. Here, though, I am just a newbie and having joined the craft less than a year ago, my masonic knowledge is very limited. However, I confidently volunteered for this responsibility, knowing that I have our Immediate Past Master W. Bro Russell Ward as a guide and mentor by my side. As a new mason, I really enjoyed reading Russell's "The Master's Voice" series. They were educational and informative. I hope that I can continue to include his thoughts and educational pieces in the upcoming issues.

In this edition, I have included two new sections: Seven Liberal Arts and Masonic Quotes. In every issue, I will write a piece related to these topics. I hope you enjoy them.

Lastly, I would like to invite and request you to send me pieces that you feel should be included in our newsletter. Stories, papers, birthdays, visits and anything newsworthy.

Ali S

Editor

Notes from the Director of Ceremonies

I would like to place on record our grateful thanks to Brother FLOYD for his brilliant organisation and hard work to deliver a sumptuous Philipino Feast last Tuesday. The style of the presentation staggered us to say the least. The numbers attending also blew us away. The word spread quickly after our W/Master ``went global`` and Brethren came from far and wide to experience this wonderful evening. They were not disappointed.

Mention also must be made of Sonny PABLO who assisted Floyd in the setup and later in the cleanup. Sonny also announced he would be returning to Belmont Albion after a short stint at Brown Bay Lodge. His reasons for returning are a change in his work hours - thus allowing him to attend on Tuesdays. We welcome Sonny back with open arms. Lovely to see our former member Robin BOURDOT visiting with Philipino brethren from Titirangi Mt Albert. Lovely to see our esteemed Brother Bob WRIGHT and wife Lynette also in attendance. All the way from Christchurch.

By the time this is published, Carlo de Guzman should be a father for the first time. Congratulation to Carlo and his lovely wife.

A special thanks to our hard-working Almoner **Wayne JONES** who was on hand to setup for the Filipino Feast. Where would we be without Wayne? A top man.

"Brown Lodge" - continues to thrive. Brethren meet at *Platters Restaurant/Cafe* at 2.00pm on a Friday for one hour. An average of 7 attend and enjoy a peaceful social hour in a majestic setting. Any brother free on a Friday afternoon would be very welcome. Our Immediate Past Master drives from Mahurangi most weeks. Amazing dedication to the cause. Its amazing how much Lodge business is discussed in an informal setting.

Table Lodge: The date for this fun evening is Thursday 27th July. You must book and pay your money quickly. Brethren I can assure you this is an eye opening and worthwhile experience. They don't come around very often, so I urge you to make the effort. Call Murray if you want guidance on how to register.

Our next working is a First Degree in August for **Ryan BOSHER.**

RW Bro Murray Morrissey

Out and about with the Secretory

We Welcome and thank Ali Seifudin for offering to take on the role as our new B/A Newsletter Editor and Our thanks to Paul Copper for a job well done as our previous Editor.

And so, we continue with By Law 27:

Members in Arrears

(1) Any brother whose annual subscription is in arrears for more than SIX months shall not be eligible to propose ,vote or speak on any subject,

(2) Any brother whose annual subscription is in arrears for more than TWELVE months may be struck off as prescribed by the 'Book of Constitution "

Dave Barr



Q&A with a Master Mason

In this section of the newsletter, we spotlight one of our knowledgeable Master Masons. How they joined the craft and why? What have they gained from Freemasonry? We listen to their memories and learn from their experience. Moreover, we ask them to answer several questions on Freemasonry and its impact around the word.

Would you mind to introduce yourself to our readers?

Richard Lumsden

Do you currently hold an office within the lodge?

I am currently the Lodge Treasurer and last year was Junior Warden



When did you first became familiar with freemasonry and when were you made a freemason?

My father joined Freemasonry (Lodge Epsom Arohanui) in the late 70s when he moved to Auckland. When Marcia and I moved here in the late 80s we would be invited to his Lodge family functions. However, I was very busy at work building a business and with a young family did not have the time for other activities. When Lodge of Enlightenment (a dining lodge) was formed, a friend of mine joined and he and my father (he was the Tyler for LoE) talked about the convenience of meeting only 5 times a year. That appealed to me as I was travelling overseas a lot and thus had limited ability to attend a 10 meeting a year type Lodge.

Where is your mother lodge and how long have you been a member of BA.45?

My mother Lodge is the Lodge of Enlightenment which is based on the North Shore. I have been a member of BA for about 5-6 years

What do you most like about Freemasonry?

The company and companionship of good people with similar values and outlook.

Tell us about your experience in BA.45. What works well here? And how can we improve?

With my military and business background, I enjoy a well-organised and well run Lodge and Refectory. The practice of dividing charges and ensuring that inexperienced masons are brought into the ritual early in their career and encouraged to stretch themselves. The ritual in BA is respected although I wish I joined Freemasonry earlier so my ritual could be crisper.

BA can improve (like most Lodges) by encouraging all members to participate fully in Lodge activities and in particularly the Refectory. Perhaps we should put more focus on how to make Refectory more relevant and engaging so that

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members want to stay and enjoy the camaraderie after the Regular Meeting.

I would also like to see us do some charitable work together as a group activity not only for the benefit of the recipients but also to the benefits to the Lodge and its members that accrues when we work together on a project.

For the readers who are not masons, how do you define Freemasonry?

The phrase making good men better is accurate but a mite trite and perhaps I would express it as an organisation of good men committed to improving themselves as constructive members of society in every aspect of their lives.

Is Freemasonry a religion?

No - it is a moral code that is universal regardless of one's own religious beliefs.

Do you think we do still need a brotherhood organisation in this day and age?

Probably more than ever in this ever increasingly socially dislocated age. Facebook is not real life!

What are the requirements to join Freemasonry?

Just, upright and free men, of mature age, sound judgement and strict morals.

How can someone join Freemasonry?

By expressing a desire to be a Freemason and after having been vetted by the appropriate members of his intended Lodge.

Why should a young man become a freemason?

As students, some of my classmates hated asking questions of Prof Johnson because he appeared obtuse. He would often answer by asking an even deeper question - obviously, a Mason. I'll try not to follow his lead although he was mostly trying to show us that there is often no easy answer.ⁱ

There are some *easy* answers to general Masonic questionsⁱⁱ and I have drawn on accepted texts by the respected authors J Fort Newton and Manly P Hall and others to assist me in my quest. However, the deeper we drill into the question "why Freemasonry when you are young", the more elusive succinct answers become; there has been a lot of ink spilt over the centuries trying to provide them. But my VSL provides guidance:

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. Matthew 7:7 Two benefits of Freemasonry are immediately apparent:

Benefits of membership of a universal brotherhood in which men help one another in a great variety of ways.

Benefits that can be derived from a study of the *philosophy* of Masonry.

The first set are available to those who attend Lodge meetings and participate in the work of the lodge. The second are much deeper and will only accrue after a concerted study and perhaps much frustration. The answers were deliberately concealed in the Ritual by its authors who knew much about the science of the soul as well as the ancient wisdom. The secrets have remained lost for generations and will remain lost until every man discovers them for himself. (Not many read the Ritual as a bedside reading book, but I recommend trying it.)

"Freemasonry is not a material thing: It deals with the whole man. ⁱⁱⁱIt is a science of the soul. The noblest tool of the Mason is his mind, but its value is measured by the use made of it" ^{iv}

Thus, we find that Freemasonry provides the opportunity for development. It provides the support, experience and skills to assist in that aim.

"When is a man a Mason? When he can look out over the rivers, the hills and the far horizon with a profound sense of his own littleness in the vast scheme of things. When he has learned to make friends and to keep them and, above all to be friends with himself, with his fellow-man. When he can look into a wayside puddle and see something beyond mud, and into the face of the most forlorn fellow-mortal and see something beyond sin. Such a man has found the only real secret of Masonry and the one which it is trying to give to all the world." v

The individual who secures membership in a Masonic lodge becomes the heir to a rich tradition so it seems to me that the younger you are when the journey starts, the better!

Russell Ward

¹ Adams D (1978) Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy London: Pan Books



¹ Freemasonry NZ (2017) Simple Answers to Leading Questions

 $^{^1}$ Perkins L F (1960) The Meaning of Freemasonry New York: Exposition Press Page 48 et seq

¹ Hall M (1931) The Lost Keys of Freemasonry or The Secret of Hiram Abiff Pages 23 -32

¹ Newton J Fort (1934) *The Builders A Story and Study of Masonry* London: Allen & Unwin. Page 2

From Persia to Burma, in search of Freemasonry

Bro Alan Thompson, visited **Iran** recently and has enjoyed his time in a land more ancient than the history! Alan, sent the below photo at the tomb of Cyrus the Great who is a familiar figure for most but more importantly for brethren in Royal Arch.



Most brethren should be familiar with Cyrus's Cylinder which is believed to be the first record of human rights in the history. The text on the Cylinder praises Cyrus, sets out his genealogy and portrays him as a king from a line of kings. The Cylinder's text has traditionally been seen by biblical scholars as corroborative evidence of Cyrus' policy of the repatriation of the Jewish people following their Babylonian captivity (an act that the Book of Ezra attributes to Cyrus), as the text refers to the restoration of cult sanctuaries and repatriation of deported peoples.



Alan also sent some information on masonry in **Burma (Myanmar)** which he researched prior to his visit there. Alan had hoped to find the old lodge rooms in Rangoon but without success. He believes that they are trying to restore the lodge back to Rangoon now that the political climate has changed.

"Although the District Grand Lodge of Burma was founded in 1868, the earliest lodge in Burma was Lodge Philanthropy, No. 542, which was warranted by the United Grand Lodge of England in 1847. This was later erased from the Roll in 1981. It was followed by Star of Burma Lodge, No. 614, which was warranted in 1853 and remained the oldest extant lodge in Burma. Scottish Freemasonry came to Burma in 1896 when Lodge Peace and Harmony, No. 834, was warranted by the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

In the 1950's there were sixteen lodges in Burma on the Roll of the United Grand Lodge of England, although this number had been reduced to nine by the mid-1980's. By that time, there were three lodges on the Roll of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. In 1984 the Ministry for Home and Religious Affairs for the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma introduced a requirement that certain organisations needed to obtain registration in order to continue but, at the same time, indicated that the District Grand Lodges and their constituent lodges would not be eligible to be registered and that the District Grand Lodge had to be dissolved by 15th November, 1984. From this time the English lodges that constitute the District have been in abeyance. The Scottish District Grand Lodge closed and its constituent lodges were erased in 1985.

With regard to the Rangoon and Ormond Iles Lodge, No. 1268, this was the result of the amalgamation of Rangoon Lodge, No. 1268, and Ormond Iles Lodge, No. 4270, which took place on 11th November, 1964. The combined Lodges transferred to the United Kingdom on 28th September, 1968, and now meet in London.

Belmont Albion Filipino night

In place of holding a Table Lodge this July, the WM called me and asked if it was possible to hold a Filipino night instead. I said most definitely, on the understanding that it would be for the brethren only. Our Filipino brethren of BA 45 would simply present 3-4 Filipino dishes for the tasting pleasure of our Lodge members. A week later though and after numerous and dare I say persistent requests, the decision was made to include partners and wives. Oh joy! All is good. The more the merrier. RSVP numbers soon ballooned to 42 and catering numbers had to be adjusted accordingly. To make the ambiance more enjoyable and festive we called upon Mon and Sor to regale us with their songs and music.

Then came the Filipino Night, and as brethren and guests arrived...I noted that more continued to trickle in, and then some more...and then a little but more...and... I stopped counting at 57 as concerns started setting in. Just before the Lodge was opened I approached RW Murray Morrissey and he gave me a knowing look and intonated to me in a low voice 'Floyd, I think we might be in a little bit of trouble here!' We were sweating bullets from there on, but the show needed to go on.



In lieu of an eloquent guest speaker who was to give a history of Freemasonry in the Philippines and to postulate as to why it is so popular among Filipinos, I gave a short introduction on the history, the origins and influences of the Filipino delicacies on offer instead, after all, it is always good to know what you will be eating beforehand! Once the feast commenced, we found out that our concerns were unfounded. Thanks to the generous donation of several dishes from Sonny Pablo and Ronald Venturina and their better halves Susan and Imelda, we were able to make sure that all the brethren and their guests were well and truly fed...just like a feast should.



Based on neatly picked bony remains of the Lechon (whole roast pig) I'd like to think that it was a hit with the crowd. The Kilawin (Raw King Fish ceviche) and the Lumpiang Shanghai (Deep fried spring rolls) were definitely favourites. There is but a few things better than enjoying a good plate of food other than it being accompanied by wine and good music and it is good we had them all that night. This combination even got several of our brethren taking to the floor and doing the waltz.

When our WM Sean Neely came back from his overseas holiday, he asked me if the night was successful. I am biased. I think the Master will need to ask the brethren for a more objective point of view... (Of course it was!).

...till the next Filipino Night.

Floyd Apoderado



It's time to do some gardening - Order of Free Gardeners

The Order of Free Gardeners is a fraternal organisation that is Scottish in its origin subsequently spreading to England, Ireland and further. The Order is believed to have been founded in the middle of the 17th Century, although the earliest formal record is the minute book from Haddington, in East Lothian, dated 1676. The records show fifteen rules called 'Interjunctions for the Fraternity of Gardeners of East Lothian'. The founding members appear not to have been gardeners by profession but farmers and landowners who practiced gardening for pleasure. Tailors, merchants and clerks were also members during this early period. They were unable to obtain the status of an incorporation, known as a guild in England, so modelled their Society on the Masons.

The group established in Haddington provided practical training, ethical development and supported the poor, widows and orphans. By 1849 the Gardeners Lodges had grown in number and a Grand Lodge was established. In 1859 a Grand Lodge meeting in Edinburgh has representatives from 100 Lodges in attendance including 3 from the USA.

In January 1726, there is the first record of 'initiation secrets' of the Order, this coming from an internal complaint that accused a member of defaming certain of its officers by reporting that they 'could not correctly give its words and signs'. In 1772 documents established that the fraternity of Free Gardeners had 'Words' and 'Secrets' and an 1848 document mentions teaching in the form of 'Signs, Grips and Secrets'. There are complete rituals of the Apprentice, Companion and Master Degrees dating from 1930 and minutes of the lodges show that the ritual of the order progressively developed so that by the end of the 19th Century a system of three grades similar, to those of the Masonic Blue Lodge, had been developed.



The 20th Century saw many members conscripted to fight in the two World Wars, not to return and the British National Insurance Act 1946 removed much of the need for mutual aid and by the year 2000 there remained but one Lodge of the Order of Gardeners in the United Kingdom, this in Bristol, although the researcher Robert L.D. Cooper reported Lodges surviving in the Antilles and Australia.

Those Brethren who have knowledge of Melbourne may be aware of a rock-band called 'Ancient Free Gardeners'. They allegedly took their name from a building, in Elizabeth Street, that still carries the name and logo of the Order of Free Gardeners.

Paul Copper

Source:- Kyne / Cooper / history shelf.org /Gow /et. al.

Do the scientists of our age find evidence of God in nature?

In the second-degree ceremony, we are told to extend our research into the hidden mysteries of nature and science. The description of these mysteries is open to speculation. Science is defined as "the intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behaviour of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment". So, one would think that as freemasons, we should study science to understand how nature works. On the other hand, having a belief in a higher being is a prerequisite for joining freemasonry. So, the author would speculate that we are directed to study science not only to understand how nature functions but, to realise and appreciate the force that created this world. It is important to note that most of our rituals were written in the 17th century when scientists were side-lined and when religions were the authority. We have a completely different society today. Religions are mostly side-lined, especially in the developed world where science and scientific evidence are used to inform decision makers. Yes, brothers, science rules today's world and yes there is good and bad science. Some may dispute that scientific evidence is used to justify decisions made by the authorities. While I agree that unfortunately, it's human nature to use anything to justify their action, I would prefer this to be science rather than religion. Science is focused and measured; its impacts are not deadly unless you are thinking of the atomic bomb! Religion on the other hand can be exploited to rule subordinates, to demoralise and diminish them. How many wars have we had because of science? How many wars have we had because of religion? The answer is obvious and I see less harm in science as a compass for social decision making than religion.

This is where it gets interesting. Have the bitter experiences of the past pushed us away from religion and God? Do our scientists still find evidence of God in nature and in their science?

My good friend who is a university professor in America had a good answer to this question: "The more I learn about nature and discover new things in my research, the more I become fascinated by the complexity and higher organisation in life that ascertains me that it cannot take place solely by chance! I have gained a new prospective and respect for the higher being that never had before simply through religious believes!".



My doctoral student, Sara, had similar thoughts which, as her mentor, is great to know. "Some people may think that nowadays they can explain so many things by science. We have a wide range of knowledge. We know how our cells works and we understand the chemical reactions between biomolecules that enables our cells to function. Some scientists may think that there is no necessity for a creator and if they are unable to explain the existence of something scientifically, they think that it doesn't exist. For me, it's completely the opposite. Studying science has made me to believe that there is a higher power and as I study more, this believe gets stronger as I see all biological processes are highly organised and incredibly complex and are too far from any process that can occur accidentally or randomly."

It is also important to limit our expectations from 'science' to realistic objectives. Sara had an interesting opinion on this: "We should also consider that science may never prove the presence of a creator, but it can never prove the lack of a creator either. So, if we are waiting for a day that a scientist can take a photo of the possible higher power or a creator and give it to us as an evidence, that day may never come. When asking for evidence, we should be clear as to what do we mean and what type of evidence are we looking for. If we are looking for something that cannot be explained by science, there are lots of things that are yet to be understood by human being. As a biologist who has been studying a wide range of disciplines, embryology is the wonderland where you can see all those complexities and the well organised processes in a right order and without even one mistake when you were created from two single cells to billions of cells".

In the world that we are living today in 2017, science has flourished where more than 90% of scientists that ever lived are alive today. The tragedy is that most are busy carrying out superficial research that is money driven. Academia has become a competitive environment where you have to sell your science to get funded. This has limited scientists' imagination as their research outcomes have to be measurable and positive. The corrupt peer reviewing process on the other hand, requires scientists to cite their work against the work of others. This has limited creativity and innovation as projects have become result-oriented. The scientists of today are too caught up with the bureaucracy and competition at work, they don't have time to rest and to be creative. Having said that, science has flourished into hundreds of disciplines and there are thousands of specialisations. So, it is expected that, every scientist chips away the problems and collectively we should see major progressions.

My final thoughts are going back to the questions I asked in the beginning. Do scientists find evidence of a creative force in nature, an Architect of the Universe? My observation is most don't. Why? Because of the reasons I explained. They are too caught up in superficial worldly problems. But most importantly, the scientific community is doing the same mistake that the Church or other religious authorities did when they rejected science. Major discoveries of the last 50 years or so have made scientists so arrogant that they simply reject things that they cannot explain. Much like the olden Popes. Where can you find scientists like Avicenna or Algoritmi (Khwarizmi) who were masters of all sciences and not specialised in merely one '-logy'. How many of our scientists can understand and explain cosmos better than a five-year-old? These are the questions we need to be asking our scientists. The link between science and cosmos should be reestablished or we will end up with a demoralised but technologically advanced society. Then, a great war to return to the past, when the world was prettier...

Ali S, BA.45

The masonic influence

Charity is an inseparable aspect of Freemasonry and studying the hidden mysteries of nature and science is every mason's duty. I was attending New Zealand Marine Sciences Conference in Christchurch earlier in July and was delighted to see an acknowledgement slide of funds received from New Zealand Freemasons at the end of a rather interesting presentation about common dolphins. It is great that we support "the science that matters" in New Zealand. While traditionally, most funding grants go to Auckland and Otago Universities, there are a lot of great researches coming out from New Zealand's newer universities. Another aspect of Freemasonry is being tolerant and impartial. It is therefore pleasant to see, researchers outside our older universities are recognized and funded for their aspiring and translational research projects.

Editor



From Seven Liberal Arts

IN the black pool of the midnight Lu has slung the morning star, And its foam in rippling silver whitens into day afar Falling on the mountain rampart piled with pearl above our glen, Only you and I, beloved, moving in the fields of men. In the dark tarn of my spirit, love, the morning star, is lit; And its halo, ever brightening, lightens into dawn in it. Love, a pearl-grey dawn in darkness, breathing peace without desire; But I fain would shun the burning terrors of the mid-day fire.

Through the faint and tender airs of twilight star on star may gaze, But the eyes of light are blinded in the white flame of the days, From the heat that melts together oft a rarer essence slips, And our hearts may still be parted in the meeting of the lips. What a darkness would I gaze on when the day had passed the west, If my eyes were dazed and blinded by the whiteness of a breast? Never through the diamond darkness could I hope to see afar Where beyond the pearly rampart burned the purer evening star.

George William ("A. E.") Russell (1867–1935).



Masonic Quotes

"Courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities... because it is the quality which guarantees all others."

Winston Churchill



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