

The Lodge of the Liberal Arts, No 500.

Our own Master Craftsman

Our Lodge has been blessed to have Bro Warren Howard as a Founding Member. For in addition to a distinguished masonic career, Bro Warren is a bespoke Cabinetmaker of International note. Bro. Warren's skills have been handed down over four generations.



The photo above shows Bro. Warren's Grandfather, George Howard's factory and showroom in Blenheim in the early 1900's. George is on the front right of the photo. Examples of George's furniture are still extant today in the Blenheim Club, Marlborough.

As at 2017, Bro. Warren has been involved in the furniture industry for 65 years, starting his five year cabinetry apprenticeship with the family firm of G Howard & Son at just 15 years old.



Very Worshipful Bro Warren Howard, Past Grand Chaplain, & Founding Member.

Bro. Warren completed a course at Orakei Training School for Apprentices on furniture design and manufacture and this was where he was introduced to the art of inlaying specific woods requiring the skill of precise geometry.

Following this time he was assigned to a chair-frame making business which included many aspects of (current) ergonomics. He was fortunate to learn the art of French polishing and this subsequent knowledge provided all the skills necessary to restore English antique furniture.

From 1895 onwards, G Howard & Son operated from 14 -16 Union Street in Auckland and rented the premises from Marsden Caughey of Smith & Caughey. In the early 1900's Mr Caughey offered the freehold to George Howard and the deal was sealed on a handshake. There were three pohutukawa trees growing in front of the premises and these trees still stand today at the exit from the Motorway at the top of Nelson Street. Smith & Caughey continued to be a prime client of the family firm, subsequently continuing business with Bro. Warren.

In the sixties a notable Auckland antique dealer David Cooke, would annually import three to five containers of antique furniture and much of this required Bro. Warren's restoration expertise. Chandler House was also a favoured client, during their years in Hamilton.

Bro. Warren has been privileged to have used his cabinetry skills making furniture for many notable New Zealanders, including many embassies, knights of the realm and former prime ministers.

It has been an honour for Bro. Warren to have made these many pieces of fine furniture for the Lodge of the Liberal Arts and they are a reflection of his art and the many skills learnt to satisfy his passion of cabinetry. The Masonic Library Boardroom Table and Chairs and a Library table were made by Bro. Warren and Grand Lodge and various Lodges have also had furniture made by him.

Lodge Charter



Bro. Warren had the opportunity to visit Anchor lodge no: 6502 on May 5th 2004 in Bristol in the UK, where he was greeted by the WM, Bro HM Stevens wearing his traditional three cornered Captain's hat, and accorded the honours due his Grand Rank. It was in the Anchor Lodge that Bro. Warren first saw a framed Lodge Charter with the four elements used at the Consecration of a Lodge, each contained in phials in each four corners of the frame. This provided the inspiration for Bro. Warren's design for the Lodge of the Liberal Arts' framed Charter.

The Frame in which our Charter from the Supreme Grand Lodge of New Zealand is displayed, is made from solid mahogany. The front edges are bordered by cross-banded mahogany veneer, inset flush to the remaining solid mahogany frame.

Four glass phials, of a standard used in chemical laboratories, have singly been filled with oil, myrrh, salt and wheat, and then glued shut to keep them airtight. They have been mounted into the frame from the rear, to sit flush with the front surface of the mahogany frame.

The Charter itself has been glued and flat pressed to an acid free backboard, and placed within the frame, then covered with museum standard, non-reflective glass, after which the air has been vacuumed out from the space within the frame, the glass and the backing, to ensure that the Charter is preserved to Museum standards.

Lodge Working Tools Cabinet



Bro. Warren first conceived a design for a Working Tools Cabinet in his imagination. Then he sketched out his ideas to allow him to 'sleep on' various challenges that the concept presented, before finally draughting the scale drawings from which the manufacture proceeded. These scale drawings are now kept in the Lodge Archives, along with the scale drawings of the Lodge Honours' Board and the original pattern

for the Lodge Insignia, featuring the brass-cast profile of Bro Mozart, which appears on each side of the Working Tools cabinet.

The cabinet required over 500 hours of detailed work and careful workmanship in the manufacture.

It is 760mm high, by 720mm wide, and 520mm deep.

The timber selected for the body of the cabinet is English Beech, specially chosen to achieve the white wood effect that appears in the various surrounds, borders, mouldings and highlights.

The veneers are specially selected, rare, Canadian Maple Burr Fiddle back, matching veneers, similar in texture to those used by Stradivarius in the construction of his world renowned, collectible violins.

All the veneers have been hand laid with hot animal glue and a veneer hammer, on to the mahogany sub-trace composite board.

The whole is capped with a moulded top, the surface of which is laid with 4 matching Maple Burr veneers, inlaid with dark Rosewood and light Elm to form the Star symbol - the central 'Glory'. Surrounding the central Star symbol is a fine inlay which indicates the position where the working tools tray should be placed when the Lodge is opened. The top is a representation of the tessellated border of the Lodge room pavement, utilising Rosewood and Elm sections, matching the inlays used for the Star symbol, each individual piece cut and laid by hand.

Each side is decorated by two Corinthian columns, one on each side of the face, ebonised as black marble with hand-carved wooden Corinthian Capitals coated with 24 carat gold, as is the Rodel at the base of each column.

On each side of the cabinet, the Lodge of the Liberal Arts insignia has been applied, with Bro. Mozart's head in flat-cast bronze. The pattern for this casting, (held in the Lodge archives), was made out of Masonite, finished with a hard gel and back carved with negative angles to ensure there were no 90° angles, which would cause a break out in the casting.

Between the ebonised columns, on the front facing, the Masonic Square and Compasses have been inlaid into the surrounding Walnut circle. The Square is a Satinwood inlay and the Compasses, an Elm inlay.

The identical symbol of square and compasses appears centrally on the reverse side, with the same Satinwood and Elm inlays within the Walnut circle. This reverse side also features the two self-closing doors of the cabinet, which neatly dissect the central Square & Compasses symbol.

Inside the cabinet are three shelves, in descending order, each containing specially designed trays for the first, second and third degree working tools. The trays are of identical size, made of English Beech, each with a polished black tray inset, featuring three indented shallow apertures which hold the respective working tools in position. Each working tool can be easily extracted from its aperture by pressing one end, which raises the body of the tool clear of the aperture.

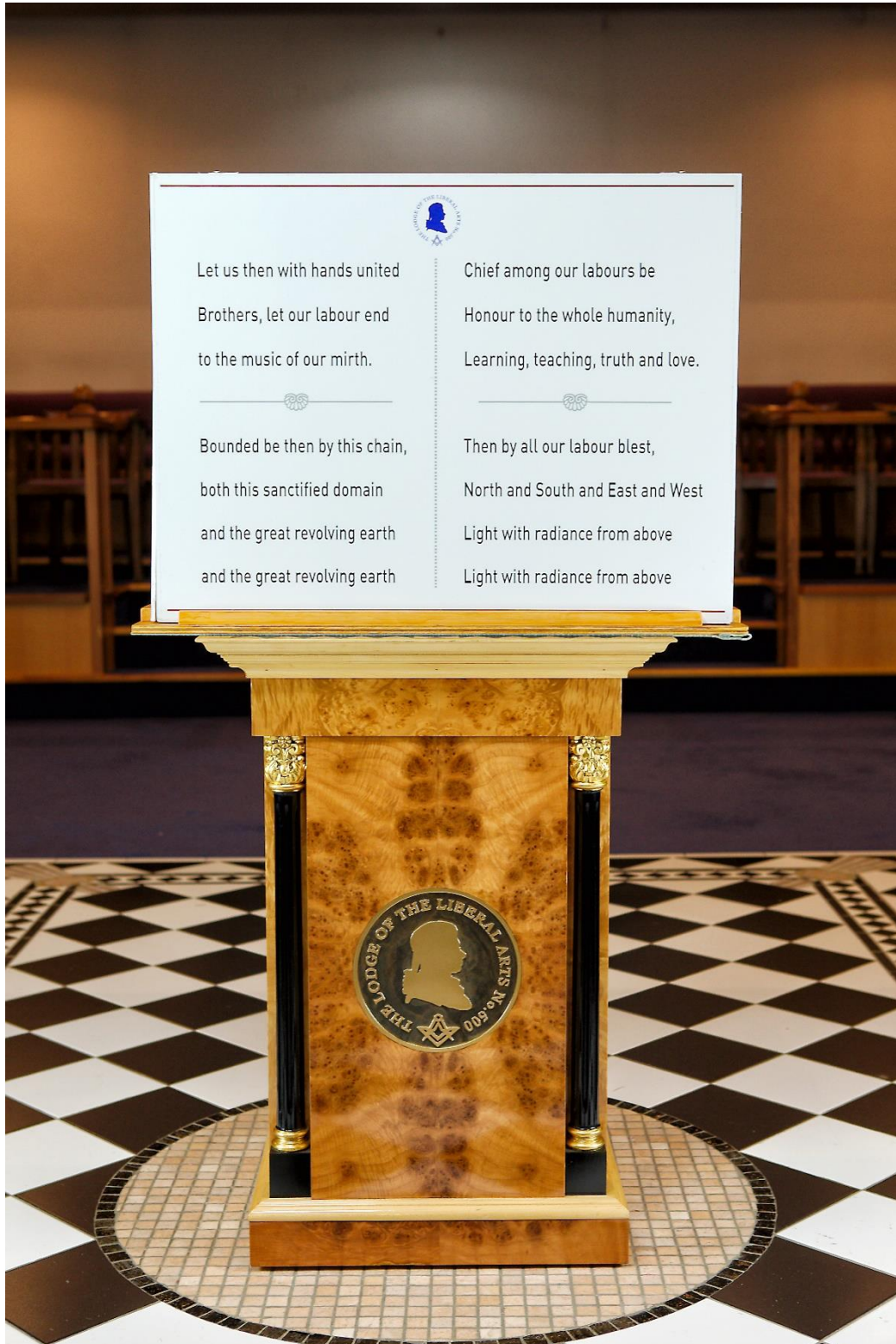
Below the three shelves, is a space with sections to contain the three tiered candelabra, the self-standing 'G", presented to the Lodge by Bro. James Morton, and the DCs baton, presented to the Lodge by our mother Lodge, the Lodge of Peace no. 322.

The secluded placement of the builder's time capsule within the Working Tools cabinet, remains, to this day, an enduring Lodge secret.



Lodge Chain Song

The Lodge Chain Song is placed on a specially designed platform stand, placed on top of the Working Tools Cabinet,. The Brethren form a circle of fraternal friendship around the Cabinet, to sing the Chain Song at the close of each meeting.



Lodge Honours' Board



The Lodge Honours' Board is made with cross-banded Walnut veneer on crown-cut Mahogany.

It is 1,067mm high, by 915mm wide, and 115mm deep.

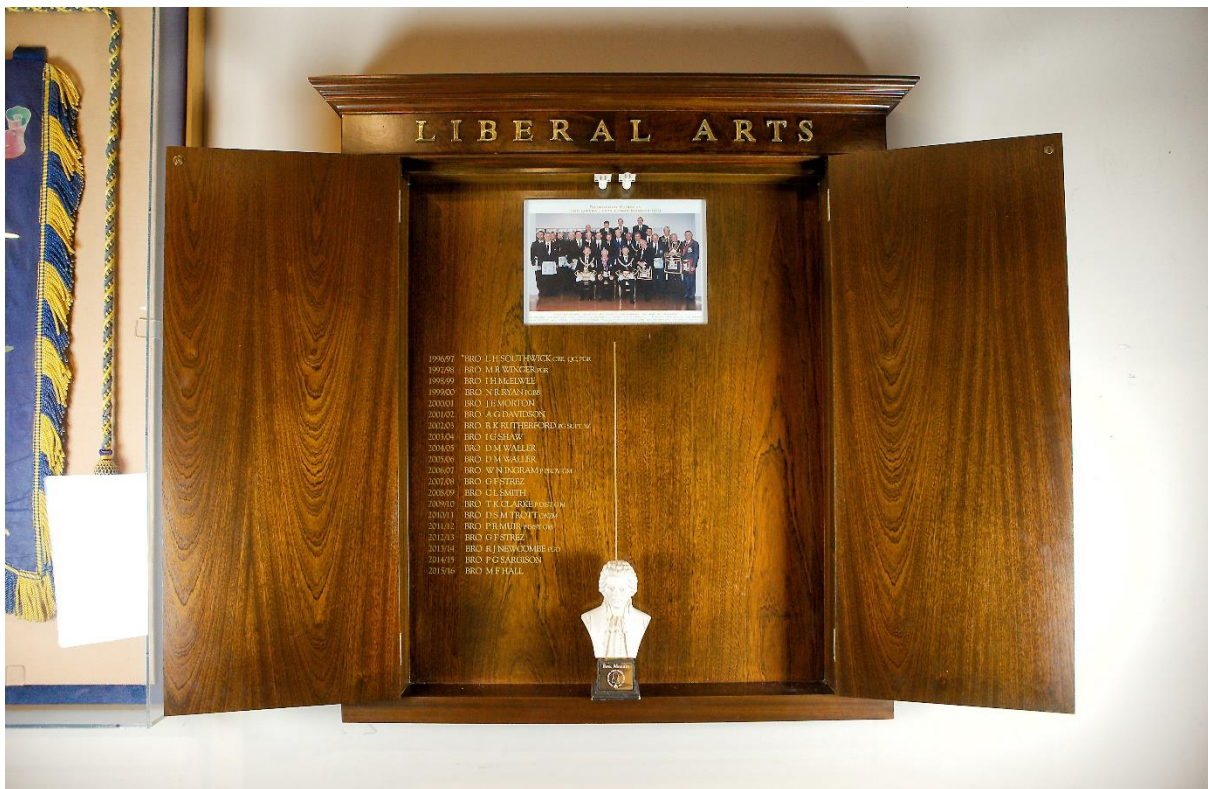
The central emblem of the Masonic Square and Compasses has been inlaid into the surrounding Walnut. The Square is a Satinwood inlay and the Compasses are an Elm inlay.

There are two columns, one on each side of the cabinet, which have been ebonised, with pure black stain, polished nigrescent black. Each column features lathed fluting.

The cabinet is capped with a Mahogany, lathed cornice moulding. Below the cornice is a solid horizontal panel, faced in vertical veneer, on which has been mounted the 35mm high bronze letters, forming the words 'Liberal Arts'. Each letter has a pin on the back which has been pushed into a drilled hole and glued secure. The bronze letters were cast by Drake & Rigley in Auckland.

The front of the cabinet contains two self-closing doors, with brass drawn, butt hinges. The doors open to reveal a colour photograph of the Lodge Founding Members and the chronological list of yearly Lodge Masters, delineated in gold leaf.

A bust of Bro. Mozart, presented to the Lodge by Bro. Noel Ryan, is placed on the bottom ledge of the cabinet when the Lodge is opened.



Lodge Double Kneeler



Bro. Warren sited a single kneeler at the Tapden Hall, Sheffield, owned by the Finers family and once temporary residence of Florence Nightingale. He photographed that kneeler and from it, developed the concept for the double kneeler that now graces our Lodge room.

The backboard and base are constructed of Macracarpa, while the cushioning on the base is fully sprung in blue velvet cloth, buttoned, with brass studs on the webbing. The armrest is also cushioned with blue velvet with brass studs on the webbing.

The two fluted square columns and the internal round columns in the backboard have Corinthian capitals, carved with acacia leaves. There are three fully pierced carvings of the square & compasses, mouldings within the circles, and carved Tudor roses in each top corner.

Lodge Master & Wardens' Pedestal Candle Holders and Candles



Bro. Warren purchased the Everlasting Candles, (fuelled by lamp oil in a refillable cavity), in England and personally crafted the three candle holders in ebonised Macracarpa, with 24 carat gold reading, and triple mouldings at the foot of each holder. There is one candle and holder each, for the pedestals of the Master, Senior Warden and the Junior Warden, all three of which are lit when the Lodge is opened.

Lodge Senior & Junior Wardens' Columns



To complement the Wardens candles, and also displayed at our meetings, on the Wardens' Pedestals, these two columns were purchased from England for the Lodge, by Bro. Neil Ingram.

Lodge Inner Guard Sword Holder



The Inner Guard's Sword Holder is crafted from Macracarpa, specifically fitted to the hilt of the Lodge's Inner Guard's sword. The US military sword was presented to the Lodge by Bro. Ian Shaw.

Lodge Poinyard Stand & Poinyard

On a visit to Mont St Michel in Normandy, France, confronted by 240 steps to the summit, Warren instead visited the souvenir room at foot of the Mount. It was there that he purchased the Poinyard with its dramatic Masonic symbolism. Warren designed the Poinyard Holder in the same form as the Eiffel Tower, four legs Macracarpa tapering to the top.



Poinyard

Lodge Director of Ceremonies Baton Holder



The Baton Holder for the Director of Ceremonies and his Assistant, is constructed of Macrocarpa for the legs and stand, and strong plywood for the parallel holders. Equipped with a brass handle for easy carrying and brass nails providing seating for our Candle Snuffer and gas lighter. The DoC's baton was presented to the Lodge by the Lodge of Peace 322 and Warren presented the Assistant's Baton, previously used by Lodge Orakei.

Emblems of Mortality



The Emblems of Mortality are contained within a self-standing, to-scale burial casket, complete with carrying handles, with the Square and Compasses symbol in brass on the lid.

The casket is constructed from solid mahogany.

When the lid is open and a switch engaged, the Emblems of Mortality are lit by neon lighting on either side and also from within the skull itself.

The Emblems of Mortality are mounted on a removable board, underneath which is an area containing the electrical lighting equipment, including a long-lasting battery with a spare.

