

VISIT AT MIRANDA JUBILEE CHAPTER NO. 120, Caringbah, Australia
Dorothy and Charles Wisherd
November 4, 1986

We arrived at the Hotel from a tour at 4 P.M. and having some free time, I looked in the yellow pages to see if there might be an Eastern Star listing I could call to talk to someone. I found the Grand Chapter of New South Wales listed (872-5607) and called the number. The phone rang and rang and I was about to hang up when Lois Olsen answered. She is the Worthy Grand Secretary of Australia. We visited a while, she told me she had visited our General Grand Chapter in Seattle last year, and then she said it was too bad we weren't in Sydney on Saturday night as her Chapter had had it's Installation of Officers.

She then said that she was just about to leave for an Installation of Officers in Caringbah and maybe we could get there. She said we would have to take the train. I told her we were at the Hilton and she told me that we could get the train at Town Hall Station which was just about a block from our hotel. I told her if we could make arrangements in time, I would call her back. We did and I did.

We hurried and got cleaned up, got to the Station, bought round trip tickets and boarded the subway train, along with everybody who had gotten off work at 5 P.M. The train carried 6 double decked cars and we were jammed in like sardines. We stood in the entry all the way just holding on to a pole. It took us 45 minutes to get to Caringbah.

Lois said she would meet us at the station and take us to the meeting which opened at 6:30. She said she would be wearing a white formal. At their meeting every member wears a white formal, so don't you think I stood out, the only one present in a short pink dress. All the men wore black tuxedos, white shirts and black bow tie, except the Worthy Patron who wore kilts.

We were examined by the Worthy Patron and a couple of Past Matrons and seated by the Worthy Patron. The meeting was held in the Senior Citizens' Hall. A stage was in the north of the room and the Organist was up there and the visiting Worthy Matrons and we were seated in the front row there.

In vouching, name of the Worthy Matron of each Chapter was called. She stood and thanked the Worthy Matron for the invitation to visit her Chapter and then vouched for those who had accompanied her. The Worthy Matron introduced Charles and me "the visitors from America" and vouched for us.

All the Star Point chairs were faced toward the Altar. The response to prayers was sung by everybody. The Immediate Past Worthy Matron is an office bearer and wears a sash with the initials I.P.M. Worthy Matron wears a purple velvet sash on her left shoulder. Other line officers on their right shoulder. Other officers wear collars. All wear a badge similar to ours.

There is no marching and no applause. Marshal does not take the arm, but joins right hands. Curtsies rather than nods. Officers are office bearers. One member came in by affiliation and she was given a lovely affiliation ceremony and obligation at the Altar. Their emblems were very small and there were fresh flowers on the pedestals and many places around the room.

After the Chapter was open, a knock on the door announced the Grand Marshal of NSW. She entered and announced that Grand Officers were present. She escorted them and introduced only the Worthy Grand Matron and Worthy Grand Patron. She escorted them all to the East. (District Grand Officers)

She then retired and escorted the MWGM Elena Braun and WGS Lois Olsen. The Worthy Matron greeted them (forgot the WP!) and the Gr Marshal escorted them.

They do not pledge allegiance to a flag, but did sing the national anthem.

Secretary read the minutes and then a committee meeting minutes which included the reports. Chapter has only 82 members, but there were 170 present
Rent - \$21.00.

Programs for the Installation were rolled up and tied with flowers. For the Ceremony of Installation, the officers took off their badges and sashes and put them on the back of each chair. They then sat in chairs in the South of the Chapter. Marshal collected the badges, collars and sashes and the Secretary had them on a pedestal in the South. As the Marshal called each name to be installed, they walked to the edge of the labyrinth and she placed them in a semi circle for the obligation. The wording of the whole ceremony was exactly like ours. The Secretary handed the sash and badge to the Marshal as she escorted the officer to the Altar. As the Worthy Matron was escorted to the East the members sang "Let There Be Peace on Earth". Marshal stands South of the Altar. Star points carried fans with flowers in their color attached. They were conducted one at a time to their stations.

Two collections were taken - one for their Grand Chapter and one for their Chapter. A visiting Worthy Matron sitting with us told us to just drop in whatever change we had. That's what they all do.

Worthy Matron called for responses from the Most Worthy Grand Matron and she made special mention of us, which was very nice; from the Worthy Grand Matron of NSW and the District Worthy Grand Patron, a visiting Worthy Matron and then said "our visitor from America will respond for all other visitors". The closing ode was "God Be With you Til we Meet Again".

After the Chapter room was cleared a box lunch prepared by the Worthy Matron and her mother was served. It included cold meats, cheese, salads, relishes, and a buttered roll. Then fruit salad with whipped cream was served.

We were royally welcomed and many members came to talk to us.

Grand Representative to Colorado, Mabs McLean was present and asked about her counterpart, Lona Hansen. She is a delightful lady.

"God Save the Queen" was sung at the close of the meeting.

Australia has 205 Chapters and two Grand Chapters - New South Wales and Queensland.

Charles went to tell Lois that we thought we could walk to the Station as it was very near and take the train back to Sydney. She wouldn't hear of it, said the trains were not safe late at night and insisted that she would drive us back to the hotel. The Most Worthy Grand Matron was with her, so we had a very nice visit on the ride back.

W.M. gave each visitor a padded bag.

It was an evening I think I shall never forget!