Leicester

The Lodge of Research No. 2429

Transactions 2011-12

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EDITORIAL

This year has again seen a good attendance at meetings with papers looking at events over the last three hundred years. The Worshipful Master's Inaugural Address looked at Freemasonry in Leicester prior to the Union, whilst the January meeting was concerned with R. W. Bro. William Kelly, to whom Freemasonry in the Province owes so much. This was especially important for two reasons. Firstly, the paper by W. Bro. Aubrey Newman was delivered in the Holmes Temple at London Road, Leicester, with the speaker standing directly next to the portrait of the subject, and secondly, despite many passing references to R. W. Bro. Kelly, there had never been a paper about his career in this journal. My thanks are expressed elsewhere to *A.Q.C.* for allowing its publication in these transactions. Our final paper certainly gave much food for thought. V. W. Bro. The Rev. Neville Barker Cryer discussed what really happened in 1717. This is very much a revisionist view of events and will probably start much discussion, and will certainly 'attract and interest Brethren by means of Papers on the historical and symbolic aspects of Masonry'.

Other papers in this edition look at the background of Freemasonry and also raise interesting points for discussion. Indeed the theme of 1717 is continued by a review of three books on Dr. Desaguliers, which is itself a continuation of the examination of a topic raised in the last edition. In addition there is, on a lighter note, a paper on Masonic Humour, an area which deserves more research.

We are again fortunate to be able to publish papers submitted from outside the Province of Leicestershire and Rutland, as well as papers submitted by our own members. I cannot emphasise too strongly nor too often that all papers take much time to prepare and are of interest to more Brethren those just those in the lodge which first receives them. Indeed the knowledge contained may be extremely helpful to another brother researching in the same area, and therefore these Transactions aim to help each brother's quest for a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.

The Lodge of Research, No. 2429

Officers 2011-2012

Worshipful Master

BRO. BRIAN E. HEAD

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Portrait of the Master, W. Bro. Brian E. Head.

BIOGRAPHY

W. Bro. Brian Head was initiated into Masonry in St. John's Lodge, No. 279, in 1966. He became W. M. in 1984. He acted as Chaplain for several years. He subsequently joined Sir John Corah Lodge, No. 7736, in 2003, and was elected a full member of the Lodge of Research, No. 2429, in 2001. In Provincial Grand Lodge he was appointed Provincial Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies in 1990.

In the Holy Royal Arch he was exalted in Temperantia Chapter, No. 4088, and occupied the First Principal's Chair in 1986. In Provincial Chapter he was appointed Past Scribe Nehemiah in 2001.

In the Masonic and Military Order of the Red Cross of Constantine and the Orders of the Holy Sepulchre and of St. John the Evangelist, he was installed in the John Wiclif Conclave, No. 304, in 1982, and was Sovereign in 1996.

In 1981 he was perfected in Venonae Rose Croix, No. 617, becoming Sovereign in 1992.

Historical Note

The Lodge of Research, No. 2429, was consecrated on 26th October, 1892, W. Bro. J.T. Thorp, a Masonic historian of outstanding note, being installed as the first Master.

The Lodge seeks to exchange opinions with Freemasons throughout the world, and to attract and interest Brethren by means of Papers on the historical and symbolic aspects of Masonry.

(Revised By-Laws, 1962)

Membership

The membership of the Lodge is limited in number. The members will *as a rule* be elected from among the members of the Correspondence Circle.

Papers

The writers of Papers are alone responsible for the opinions expressed therein.

CORRESPONDENCE CIRCLE

The members of the Correspondence Circle are entitled:

to have posted to them, as issued, the Summonses convoking the meetings of the Lodge,

to be supplied gratis with the Annual *Transactions* of the Lodge, to attend Meetings of the Lodge,

to take part in any discussions relating to any Papers which may be read, or subjects of general Masonic interest which may be introduced, to read Papers and introduce discussions on Masonic subjects (by arrangement).

They are not entitled to vote, hold office, or take part in the management of the Lodge.

A Candidate for Membership of the Correspondence Circle is subject to election by a show of hands.

The names of Candidates will be submitted to the Permanent Committee at their next Meeting after completed application forms have been received by the Secretary.

No entrance fee is required, and the Annual Subscription is £12.00 payable in advance in the month of July (Overseas Annual Subscription is £20.00). Any member whose subscription is unpaid for the current year is not entitled to a copy of the Lodge *Transactions*.

The Lodge reserves to itself the full power to exclude any Member from the Correspondence Circle whom it may deem unworthy of continued membership.

Note:- All Master Masons, in good standing, whether Members of Lodges in this Province or elsewhere, are eligible for membership of the Correspondence Circle.

The Four-hundred and ninety-fourth meeting
was held on
Monday 23rd November 2011.

Those present were W. Bro. Ralph Leek, W. M., W. Bro. Brian E. Head, S. W., and W. Bro. Donald A. Peacock, J. W., twelve officers, eight full members, twenty-one members of the Correspondence Circle and six visitors. A total attendance of fifty.

W. Bros. R. I. Breese, A. Green, M. Ludlow, M. R. Platts, J. Sutcliffe, D. J. Turner, Bro. D. N. Evans and the Michigan Masonic Museum and Library (U. S. A.) were elected to membership of the Correspondence Circle.

The Master Elect, W. Bro. Brian E. Head, was presented by the Director of Ceremonies, installed by W. Bro. Ralph Leek, and proclaimed in the three degrees.

After the W. M. had appointed and invested his officers for the year he then gave his Inaugural Address entitled:

"Leicester Freemasonry Up Until The Union."

The brethren afterwards met together for refreshments and conversation.

The Four-hundred and ninety-fifth regular meeting
was held on
Monday 23rd January 2012.

Those present were W. Bro. Brian E. Head, W. M., W. Bro. Donald A. Peacock, S. W., and W. Bro. A. David Herbert, as J. W., thirteen officers, nine full members, and twenty-one members of the Correspondence Circle. A total attendance of thirty-seven.

Bro. S. J. Larkins was elected to membership of the Correspondence Circle.

The Lodge then received a paper from W. Bro. Aubrey Newman entitled:

"William Kelly, Mason Extra-ordinary".

At the conclusion of the paper the W. M. gave a vote of thanks and the gratitude of all present was expressed.

The brethren afterwards met together for refreshments and conversation.

The four-hundred and ninety-sixth regular meeting
was held on
Monday 26th March 2012.

Those present were W. Bro. B. E. Head, W. M., W. Bro. Donald A. Peacock, S. W., W. Bro. Michael A. Robinson, J. W., nine officers, eight full members, twenty-four members of the Correspondence Circle and two visitors. A total attendance of forty-six.

W. Bro. C. A. Ryder and Bros. P. Bennett and D. K. Reynolds were elected to membership of the Correspondence Circle.

The annual election resulted as follows:

W. Bro. Donald A. Peacock	Master Elect
W. Bro. C. David Crocker	Treasurer

The Lodge then received a lecture from V. W. Bro. The Rev. Neville Barker Cryer entitled:

"What really happened in 1717?"

At the conclusion of the paper W. Bro. Aubrey Newman gave a vote of thanks and the gratitude of all present was expressed.

The brethren afterwards met together for refreshments and conversation.

LEICESTER FREEMASONRY UP UNTIL THE UNION

W. Bro. Brian E. Head, PPAGDC

The year 1813 must rate as the most important year in the history of the Craft, for on December 7th, after several months of meetings, a Lodge of Reconciliation was warranted. It was officially adopted by the Dukes of Kent and Sussex, and its aim was to reconcile the workings of the Antient and Modern Grand Lodges. This new lodge had amongst its numbers the two Grand Secretaries and nine brethren from each Grand Lodge. At some forty meetings they demonstrated the ceremonies and invited representatives for 96 Modern and 77 Antient lodges. A final demonstration was given before United Grand Lodge on 9th June, 1816. The last reference to the Lodge of Reconciliation is contained in the minutes of Grand Lodge, dated 4th September, 1816, when the Master, officers and brethren received the thanks of Grand Lodge for their unremitting zest, zeal and exertion in the cause of Freemasonry. Not surprisingly some lodges objected to the new arrangements. Whilst the Lodge of Reconciliation was in existence, a group of London lodges, formerly under allegiance to the Antients' Grand Lodge, organised a determined opposition to the proposals, especially the Obligation. They also challenged the authority of the lodge, claiming that it had 'altered all the ceremonies and language of Freemasonry and not left one sentence standing'. Records show that of a total of 647 lodges on the roll of United Grand Lodge only 172 sent representatives to the demonstrations of the Lodge of Reconciliation. I assume that the other three quarters just ignored the work of the lodge. There is no evidence to show that anyone from Leicester attended. There was also talk of resuscitating the Antients' Grand Lodge.

There was now a long discussion as to which lodge should gain the distinction of being No. 1. The Lodge of Antiquity and The Grand Master's Lodge were both No. 1 in their respective Grand Lodges. Lots were drawn and the successful lodge was The Grand Master's Lodge. Subsequently all lodges throughout the country had to be renumbered. Of the two active Leicester lodges, Lodge 91, founded in 1761, generally known as the old 'Atholl' Lodge, was renumbered 114, but never assumed a name. They met locally at "The Crown and Thistle" in Loseby Lane in 1775, "The Leather Bottle" in Church Gate later in 1775, "The Recruiting Sergeant" at St. Nicholas Square in 1793, and finally "The George Inn" in the Haymarket in 1801. For a time the lodge lay dormant, but it was revived by a Warrant of Renewal dated 2nd November, 1775. By 1790 the brethren of Lodge 91 had an unfortunate disagreement with their Grand Lodge. The cause is lost in the mists of time, but the argument ended with the Master and Wardens, Bros. Charles Horton, Joseph Smith and Thomas Bull, together with other members of the lodge, relinquishing their allegiance to the Antients' Grand Lodge, and petitioning for a Moderns' Warrant. Their petition was granted, and the Master and Wardens of the old Antients'

lodge became the Master and Wardens of the new Moderns' lodge, No. 562, now St. John's Lodge, No. 279, a circumstance which is possibly without equal in the history of the Craft.

Within the county another lodge was operating. In 1803, Henry Granger, Henry Wright and John Raison, three members of Lodge 91 who all resided at Hinckley, played a prominent part in the formation of a lodge under the Antients' Constitution in that town. They obtained an old warrant, No. 47, which was dated 1756, which had been surrendered by some brethren in Macclesfield. This lodge, now named 'Knights of Malta', No. 50, was officially constituted on 1st March, 1803.

The warrant of St. John's Lodge was granted by the Grand Lodge of England to some of the members of Lodge 91 of Antient Masonry. The warrant remained for some time in the custody of Bro. Horton, the actual Master of both lodges. After many requests, and finally through the work of the Grand Secretary of the Atholl Grand Lodge, it was finally delivered up to some of the Antient masons who still desired to work under it.

It is most remarkable that both St. John's Lodge and Knights of Malta owe their existence to the Antients, and surely to Lodge 91 must go the honour and title of 'Mother Lodge of the Province'.

Whilst the three lodges were the only ones present at the time of the Union, there is evidence of other Masonic lodges operating in the 1700s. Lodge No. 179 (Moderns) meeting at "The Wheatsheaf" in Gallowtree Gate, warranted 17th December, 1739, erased 1744; Lodge No.197, "Sign of the Pelican", warranted 21st August, 1754; Lodge No. 250 (Moderns) recorded at "The Pelican Inn", Gallowtree Gate, warranted 1754, erased 1769; and Lodge No. 87 (Antients) attached to the Leicester Militia, dated 29th May, 1761, from which alone it received candidates. It was not unusual for warrants to be issued by British Grand Lodges to 'regulated Militia regiments'. Lodge 87 lapsed in 1764 after the Treaty of Paris the previous year.

Whilst the Antients and Moderns worked in town, the Antients appear to be more Christian in their activities. Lodge 91 worked the Royal Arch, Ark Mariners, Knights Templar and Red Cross of Babylon. There also appears to be a certain degree of snobbishness between Lodge 91 and St. John's, with Lodge 91 holding its meetings in Loseby Lane, Church Gate, St. Nicholas Square and the Haymarket, whilst St. John's met in the more upmarket area of the Market Place and Gallowtree Gate.

Very little evidence of the lodge meetings exist on record, but the *Leicester Journal* records the activities of the lodges in the 18th century, and provides evidence that, despite the number of inhabitants living within the town, it was in this century that the Borough of Leicester expanded from a quiet country town into a centre of manufacturing industry and activity. After 1770, when the hosiery industry started to expand and flourish, these activities are found in the occupations of candidates for admission into the lodges: framework knitter, worsted maker, master comber, hosier, cordwainer and framesmith. This, along with the numerous

military personnel seeking admission, shows the development of the town and its residents.

The first mention of a Masonic meeting is in the *Leicester Journal*, which records a procession for the termination of the war with France and the Treaty of Paris, dated 7th May, 1763. It reads: 'The High Sherriff of the County, the Mayor and Aldermen in their scarlet gowns were accompanied by two Lodges of Free and Accepted Masons, the two Lodge Masters wearing their proper jewels and carrying the Bible, Square and Compasses, the Wardens carrying their columns of office.'

The same journal dated 31st August, 1776, records the following details of a Masonic funeral for a member of Lodge 91. 'On Sunday morning August 25th, died, at his home in this city, Mr Thomas Brown, Worsted Maker. He was a member of the Honourable and Ancient Society of Free and Accepted Masons. The Brethren, as a mark of their esteem, attended the funeral, and preceded the corpse to All Saints Church. They were all dressed in deep mourning, adorned with their jewels, and in the uniform and regalia of their Order. The greatest concourse of people we ever remember to have seen on such an occasion attended the procession, which was very well conducted, and made in the following order. 1st. The Tyler of the Lodge, with his sword drawn. 2nd. Two wardens, with their columns and ensigns of office. 3rd. The two senior Brethren, with a cushion supporting the Bible, Square and Compass. 4th. The Master, with the ensigns of his office. 5th. The Past Masters. 6th. The Secretary with his ensigns, followed by the rest of the Brethren walking two and two, according to their seniority, and followed by the Deacons with their black wands, six Masterr (sic) Masons supported the pall.'

Compare this solemn occasion with the recording by the *Leicester Journal* of a much different procession. 'On Wednesday, June 23rd 1789, the Worshipful Master, Wardens and Brethren of Lodge 91 had a meeting to celebrate their most excellent patron, St. John the Baptist. They walked in solemn procession from the Pelican in Gallowtree Gate to St. Martin's Church, where a sermon was preached on the occasion from the 1st Epistle of Paul to Timothy c1 v18. After divine service, the members went in procession to brother Joseph Smith's "The Crown and Thistle" in Loseby Lane where they dined, and greatest harmony prevailed, and enlivened by toasts to the Craft suitable to the occasion.'

Not long afterwards on 11th November, 1790, the first meeting of St. John's Lodge was held, this time at Brother Joseph Smith's "Lion and Dolphin Inn", Market Place, when it is recorded that Bro. Charles Horton installed the Officers in due form and thanks were voted to the RWPGM for the kind attention paid to the petitioners for the said warrant. The members who took office were Charles Horton, Master, Joseph Smith, S. W. and P.M., and Thomas Bull, J. W. To those worthy brethren must be credited the honour of being the founders of Freemasonry in Leicester in modern times.

The members desirous of celebrating the Festival of St. John the Baptist on 27th June, 1791, by going in procession to church were ordered to

appear in cocked hats, and the Tyler be clothed, at the expense of the lodge, with a blue coat and waistcoat and corduroy breeches, the whole with yellow buttons, and a pair of white stockings and also a three cornered hat, and, to finish it off, to be furnished with a hairy cap to wear on public occasions, the latter to remain the property of the lodge.

An advertisement of the intended procession was included in the *Leicester Journal* and was signed by Thomas Freer, Secretary, an eminent solicitor and Clerk of the Peace for the County. Accordingly, on the day fixed, the members preceded by the Militia band and by visiting brethren from Nottingham, Derby, Newark, Lichfield and other towns, went in procession to St. Martin's Church, where a very excellent discourse, strenuously enforcing the duties of Masons and of Men, was preached by Bro. The Rev. Jeremiah Bigsby of Nottingham. The *Leicester Journal* of that week followed up by saying, 'Freemasonry, after having been lain dormant in this place, is at length revived with great spirit, that the procession of Brethren was numerous and respectable, adorned with the ensigns of the Craft, and with banners displayed and music playing, the novelty of the sight, and the serenity of the weather, drew together an immense concourse of people, who during the whole course of the procession, conducted themselves in the most perfect order and regularity.'

Just pause, brethren, and contemplate the logistics: no e-mails, no buses, no trains nor cars, and yet they appeared from far and near for the occasion.

During this period there appears to be a close liaison with the Antients, with members from both lodges joining up with the opposition in the various lodges. It suggests that possibly the Antients were more popular because of the other degrees being worked.

In 1793 there is the first mention of a 'blue apron', for on 25th July an Emergency Meeting was held, in which Bro. Hodges, SGW, presided as Provincial Grand Master, and opened a Master Masons' lodge during which he invested the Rev. Thomas Hoe with the blue apron as Provincial Grand Chaplain. Following this meeting, Bro. The Rev. Hoe was elected an Honorary Member of St. John's Lodge. A further meeting was arranged at "The Lion and Dolphin". It was presided over, not by the Provincial Grand Master as promised, but by the Most Worshipful Deputy Provincial Grand Master, The Rev. William Peters. On this occasion Bro. Hodges was invested with a blue apron as Senior Warden. This reference to the blue apron mentioned distinguishes the officers of Provincial Grand Lodge. The usual dress for members of private lodges was a full suit of black, with white neck cloth, gloves and stockings, shoes and silver buckles and a WHITE apron, while officers' jewels were suspended from a collar by a white ribbon. It was not until after the Union that the present Third Degree apron was ordered to be worn by all Master Masons, the Grand Officers then being distinguished by purple, the Grand Stewards by crimson, and the Master Masons by blue, the old symbolic colours of the Craft.

The 1790s saw some remarkable happenings. On 7th September, 1796, a member of Lodge 91, Bro. Sergeant Major John Hinton, presented himself

at St. John's Lodge. 'He then proposed to become a member of the Lodge.' He was duly balloted for and accepted. On 12th September of the same year the brethren of Lodge 91 united with the brethren of St. John's Lodge in attending the funeral of Quartermaster Thompson of the 14th Light Dragoons, and lately a Knight Templar of Lodge 273 on the register of the Grand Lodge of Ireland. The remains were interred with great military pomp, being attended to the grave by the whole regiment quartered in the town.

1799 saw another strange happening, for in November, Bro. Robert Pinder, an old member of Lodge 91, was proposed as Tyler of St. John's Lodge, being elected at the next meeting on the following terms: 'To be initiated, passed and raised in Modern Masonry without any expense, save for the registration fee to the Grand Lodge and to receive 1/6 [7½p] for every Lodge meeting for Tyling and delivering the summons, 1/6 at the initiation of every Brother and 1/0 [5p] at the Raising.' This experiment of having an Antient Mason as Tyler in a Modern lodge was obviously doomed to failure, especially as Bro. Pinder still continued as a member of his Mother Lodge. The problem was resolved as St. John's Lodge minutes show that he was discharged and a Modern mason chosen in his stead.

Despite the appearance of complete harmony between the two lodges there was, in fact, a serious undercurrent arising, for the Secretary of Lodge 91 sent a letter to the Grand Secretary. 'By order of the Master of Lodge 91, I am to inform you that Thomas Phipps has ordered his name to be erased out of the Lodge and [has] gone to join the Moderns and we have three more brothers that wish to join the Moderns and still belong to us which we think is not right and we wish to have your answer on the business.'

The brother Phipps referred to had been a member of Lodge 91 for over 29 years, and since the formation of St. John's Lodge had also been an active member of that lodge. This dual membership was obviously resented by the brethren of Lodge 91. The Lodge received a prompt reply from the Grand Secretary. 'I do not know of any law we have to restrain or hinder a Brother being a member or belonging to any other society and so long as he conducts himself with respect to your lodge while he continues to be a member thereof, it is all we can in fairness see after or enquire into.'

In spite of this reply from the Grand Secretary, the brethren of Lodge 91, at their next meeting on 21st March, 1796, passed a resolution 'that no brother who is a member of the Moderns' Lodge should be allowed to hold any office whatsoever in the Antient Lodge'. The difference did not decline for, following on, there is recorded a minute in St. John's Lodge that 'a person stating himself to be an Antient and Modern Mason made application at this Lodge, but on account of his having been seen in company with an Antients' Mason the previous day he was therefore not relieved'.

The numbers registered in the two lodges varied year by year. In one year no new names appeared in Lodge 91, but over three years, 1809 – 1812, no

less than sixteen names were registered. Possibly the working of Royal Arch Masonry by the Antients was an attraction as brethren appeared to prefer a Grand Lodge of Four Degrees. Obviously the introduction of the Chapter of Fortitude, No. 279, helped to resolve the problem. The costs in both organisations were comparable. The charge for registration had been fixed in 1794 and was compulsory: for a country or military brother 5 shillings [25p], for a London brother half a guinea [52½p], exclusive, of course, of the Grand Secretary's fee of one shilling [5p].

1801 saw St. John's Lodge move from "The Lion and Dolphin", the proprietor, Bro. Moore, expressing a wish that the lodge find another house at which to hold the lodge, as, in consequence of Mrs Moore's objections, it militated against his peace of mind. Accordingly they moved to "The Three Cranes" in Gallowtree Gate. At the first meeting in their new home on 15th July, 1801, six officers of the Royal Horse Guards, four of whom were Lieutenants, two Cornets[1] and an Officer of the Light Dragoons, who were billeted in Leicester with their regiment, were proposed, accepted and initiated – surely a record. One of the Cornets, Cornet Packe of Prestwold Hall, afterwards fought and fell at Waterloo. On 7th September a Private in the Blues was initiated and passed in a Lodge of Emergency, and raised the following day, again in a Lodge of Emergency. He was admitted into membership and hurried through the degrees with a view to his acting in his regiment as a Serving Brother, his admission into the lodge being fully sanctioned by his senior officers, several of whom were present at the ceremonies.

One great problem for the members must have been the lack of leadership. There is no evidence of much involvement from the leadership. Sir Thomas Fowke was appointed Provincial Grand Master in 1774, but, after his death, in 1786, the office became vacant for two years. It was then conferred on Thomas Boothby Parkins, an M.P. for Leicester, who was also Provincial Grand Master for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. In 1795 he was created Lord Rancliffe in the Peerage of Ireland. Despite his total absence from the local lodges he enjoyed high eminence in London. He was Provincial Grand Master for Leicestershire, 1782 – 1800, for Nottinghamshire, 1783 – 1800, for Rutland (over what you may ask), 1789 – 1798, and for Derbyshire, 1789. He was also Grand Superintendent Royal Arch for Leicestershire, 1793 – 1800. In the higher degrees he was appointed Principal Z of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter, Grand Master of the Knights Templar, Red Cross and other Chivalric Orders. He was also a trustee of the Masonic Benevolent Society. He does not appear to have taken the slightest interest in masonry in this Province. During the eleven years he presided over it I can find only

1 A Cornet was the fifth commissioned officer in a troop of cavalry, who carried the colours. The rank/term is now obsolete.

one mention of an appearance at a lodge, and that was at a Lodge of Emergency held by St. John's Lodge. During his reign he appointed a Deputy, The Rev. William Peters, the Rector of Knipton in the Vale of Belvoir, a Prebendary of Lincoln Cathedral and Chaplain to H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. He attained a considerable reputation as a portrait painter and was a Royal Academician. Research shows that at Grand Lodge in 1783 he was appointed Grand Portrait Painter. He afterwards painted portraits of the Prince of Wales and the Dukes of Cumberland and Manchester for Freemasons' Hall, London. He later became Provincial Grand Master for Lincolnshire, 1792 – 1814.

I have failed to discover the ritual used in the ceremonies. My researches have proved futile, whilst there are many records of the ritual used by our Scottish and Irish brethren, and numerous lurid accounts on the exposures of the Craft. However, the following was discovered. It is one of the earliest specimens of ritual, dated 1754 and entitled 'The Short Charge to a newly admitted Brother'.

'You are now admitted by the unanimous consent of our Lodge, a fellow of our most Antient and Honourable Society: antient as having existed from time immemorial, and honourable, as tending in every particular to render a man so that he will be comfortable to its glorious precepts.

'The greatest monarchs in all ages, as well of Asia and Africa as of Europe, have been encouragers of the Royal Art, and many of them have presided as Grand Masters over the Masons in their imperial Dignities to level themselves with their brethren in masonry and to act as they did.

'The world's Great Architect is our Supreme Master, and the unerring rule he has given us is that by which we work. Religious disputes are never suffered in the lodge, for as Masons, we only pursue the Universal Religion or the religion of Nature. This is the cement which unites Men of the most different Principles in one sacred Band, and brings together those who are most distant from one another.

'There are three Heads of Duty which Masons ought always to inculcate, viz to God, our neighbours, and ourselves. To God, in never mentioning His name but with that reverential awe which becomes a creature to bear to his Creator, and to look upon Him always as the *summum bonum* which we came into the world to enjoy, and according to that view to regulate all our pursuits; to our neighbour, in acting upon the Square, or doing as we would be done by; to ourselves, in avoiding all intemperances and excesses, whereby we may be rendered incapable of following our work, or led into behaviour unbecoming our laudable profession, and in always keeping within due bounds, and free from pollution.

'In the state, a Mason is to behave as a peaceable and dutiful subject, conforming cheerfully to the government under which he lives. He is to pay due deference to his superiors, and from his inferiors he rather to receive honour with some reluctance than to extort it.

'He is to be a man of Benevolence and Charity, not sitting down contented while his fellow creatures, but much more his brethren, are in

want, when it is in his power without prejudicing himself or family to relieve them.

'In the lodge, he is to behave with all due decorum, lest the beauty and harmony thereof should be disturbed or broken. He is to be obedient to the Master and presiding Officers, and to apply himself closely to that business of the lodge, that he may sooner become a proficient member therein, both for his own credit and for that of the lodge.

'He is not to neglect his own necessary avocations for the sake of Masonry, nor to involve himself in quarrels with those who through ignorance may speak evil of, or ridicule, it.

'He is to be a lover of the Arts and Sciences, and to take all opportunities of improving himself therein.

'If he recommends a friend to be made a Mason, he must vouch him to be such as he really believes will conform to the aforesaid duties, lest by his misconduct at any time the lodge should pass under some evil imputations. Nothing can prove more shocking to all faithful Masons than to see any of their brethren profane or break through the sacred rules of their Order, and as such as can do it they wish had never been admitted.'

Finally, brethren, just pause for a moment and consider how far we have progressed: no more walking to lodge in our white stockings and cocked hat; and no more meeting in draughty, smoke filled unhealthy premises partaking of large amounts of drink during excessively numerous toasts. Instead, due to the foresight of several of our predecessors we enjoy our Masonry in this most beautiful of buildings, clean with good food and wonderful companionship, enjoying strong, devoted leadership and guidance.

Brethren, we have much to be grateful for.

WILLIAM KELLY, MASON EXTRA-ORDINARY

W. Bro. Aubrey Newman, PGADC

An earlier version of this paper was delivered to Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 2076, in London and was printed in its Transactions in 1997. I am grateful to the Editor and to Q.C.C.C Ltd for permission to reprint it here. Reference must also be made to other articles on aspects of the Masonic career of William Kelly which have appeared in the Transactions of this Lodge, especially 'Mark Masonry in Leicester' (1994); 'How the Other Degrees came to Leicester' (1996); and 'Freemasonry in Leicestershire in the 18th and 19th Centuries: comparisons and contrasts' (1998).

Too often the history of Masonry is the history of its institutions. In practice, however, the development of the institution depends upon the individuals who compose it. That, in part, is well illustrated by the career of William Kelly. For the Quatuor Coronati Lodge he certainly has the distinction of having been its first member from Leicester but far wider is his significance in Leicestershire Masonry – not only in the Craft but in all the other degrees which made up that Province. Indeed, the story of Masonry in the Province of Leicestershire and the story of William Kelly are so inextricably linked and the ways in which his own strong personality was demonstrated within the Province are so marked, that almost inevitably the question has to be put as to whether he is better described as 'The Grand Old Man of Leicestershire Masonry' or 'The Great Dictator'?

When William Kelly was initiated in 1838 there were four Lodges in the Province of Leicestershire, one in the Borough and three in the County. Two of the County Lodges were to disappear by 1850. When he died in 1894, after fifty-six years service to Masonry in the Province, there were fourteen Lodges meeting on a regular basis, seven in the Borough and seven in the County. When he was initiated, although there was one Royal Arch Chapter in the Province, no Provincial Grand Superintendent had been appointed for some 34 years. When he died he himself was Provincial Grand Superintendent and there were five active Chapters. When he was initiated there was no Provincial Mark Lodge, no Royal Ark Mariners' Lodge, no Conclave of the Military and Masonic Order of the Red Cross of Constantine, no Rose Croix Chapter working under the Ancient and Accepted Rite and no Preceptory of the United Religious, Military and Masonic Orders of the Temple. When he died, all were flourishing. Virtually all this had been the result of his personal activities. Indeed, he laid down the pattern of Masonry in Leicestershire for over a generation for there was to be no addition to four of these Orders or Degrees for over forty years after his death. Clearly, there is something unusual about Kelly.

Kelly was not a member of a local gentry family. In later years he claimed descent from the Kellys of Ireland and even from the O'Kellys with a brief glimpse at an alleged cadet branch of the family ennobled in France, but of this there is no evidence. His father, also William Kelly and son of yet another William Kelly, partnered his brother Samuel in a firm of 'dyers,

brace manufacturers and manufacturers of hosiery'. The firm's premises were in Market Street and Bow Bridge in Leicester. Samuel died in January 1828 and his Will was proved with a sworn value of under £450.[1]

William Kelly was born in 1815; his baptism entry for 28 July records his father as William Kelly, hosier, and his mother as Anne Baxter, although this is not necessarily proof of domestic irregularity. He was educated locally, spending some time at the school at Billesden in Leicestershire. His father died on 17 September 1833, his estate being sworn at under £1400, but the date of his mother's death is unknown. His sister, Priscilla, predeceased him but, though little else is known of his personal circumstances, his Will made provision for the regular payment of a sum 'not exceeding the annual sum of One Hundred Pounds' for the maintenance of Laura Baxter 'formerly of Oxford afterwards a Lunatic residing at Fisherton House, Salisbury, under the medical care of Doctors Finch and Lush'. Kelly does not seem to have participated in the family business[2] but there is no information about his activities before his appointment in 1849 as Borough Accountant and Secretary to the Highway Committee of the Corporation, posts he held until 1863. In 1862 he was appointed Actuary to the Leicester Savings Bank and, in some local records, he is described as a 'Banker'. It is likely, however, that he had begun his career as a banker. He was also a noted local historian, producing a number of volumes of local history and was elected a fellow of the Royal Historical Society in 1868 and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1879.[3]

1 There is what can only be described as a calculated obscurity about Kelly's early life. The firm of Samuel and William Kelly was very important in Leicester during the early years of the nineteenth century, and was frequently mentioned in contemporary accounts of the hosiery industry in the borough, despite the apparently straitened circumstances suggested by the details of Samuel's will. The executors renounced title and although he died in 1828 letters of administration do not seem to have been taken out until 1837. To complicate matters even further those letters were awarded to William Kelly 'eldest son'. Since Samuel's brother appears elsewhere as William Kelly junior it can only be assumed as mentioned in the text that William Kelly senior had two sons, Samuel and William, and that each of these had a son, also called William. The details of the education of the Masonic William Kelly are equally mysterious, since it is only a chance reference in the 1880s in a letter to him from a school friend referring to their having been at school together which throws any light at all upon this. It is clearly possible that this obscurity was the result of a deliberate decision by Kelly himself who elsewhere was not at all reluctant to give considerable detail about himself.

2 Diligent search has been made of the various records associated with his Mother Lodge, St. John's; at one stage he is described as a hosier, which seems to suggest that he had taken some part in his family firm, but the Lodge Declaration Book contains no clue as to his occupation and the summons does not indicate anything further about him. On the other hand the list of those associated with the foundation of the John of Gaunt Lodge suggests that by 1846 he was involved to some extent in banking, and his appointment in 1849 as Borough Accountant implies some familiarity with finance.

3 His publications include *Borough Records of Leicester* (1855); *Notes illustrative of the drama … extracted from the … manuscripts of the Borough of Leicester* (1865); *The Great Mace of Leicester* (1874); *Visitations of the Plague at Leicester* (1877); and *Royal Progresses and Visits to Leicester* (1884).

Kelly's father had been a mason and was exalted into the Royal Arch in New York on 12 January 1827, in Eagle Chapter, No. 54. He seems also to have brought back with him a number of Masonic books including Webb's Masonic Monitor, of which Kelly junior had read avidly and which, according to his autobiography, inspired him to seek further information.[4] At the age of twenty-one Kelly sought initiation into St. John's Lodge, No. 279, the only one in the borough, but he was advised to wait for a while: 'the Lodge was then in a very unsettled state owing to quarrels amongst the brethren – the result being that many of the better class seceded'. Indeed, for five years there had been no initiations into the Lodge. Eventually he was initiated when he was twenty-four, on 7 November 1838, passed on 5 December 1838, raised on 9 January 1839, was acting as Senior Deacon in March 1839, and was invested as Junior Warden on 27 December 1839. In 1840 he was invested as Senior Warden and, on 27 December 1841, he was installed as Master of the Lodge. In between, on 21 September 1841, he had been exalted into the Royal Arch and immediately appointed Principal Sojourner. In December 1842 he was Third Principal and in August 1843 was installed as First Principal. Since at that stage St. John's Lodge was the only Lodge in the borough and nearly all the Provincial Grand Officers were members of that Lodge, there will be no surprise to find that his progress in Provincial Grand Lodge was equally remarkable and swift. He was Junior Grand Deacon in 1841 and by 1846 had become Senior Grand Warden.

There is some evidence that Masonry in the Province was basically at a low ebb at this stage; there were few initiates and a number of occasions when no meetings of his Lodge could be held, there being too few present. However, once he became Master, Kelly was responsible for fourteen initiations much apparently to the distaste of some of the past Masters of the Lodge, one of whom, William Cooke, later Provincial Grand Secretary, reputedly commented: 'Brother Kelly's a good fellow but he wants to go too fast and to make Masonry too cheap in the town.' It was this same person incidentally whom Kelly accuses of not appearing at Lodge until the meeting was almost over, of seating himself near the Inner Guard and then calling out when he could smell the so-called Fourth Degree as being ready: 'Cut it short Brother Kelly! Cut it short! Supper's ready; supper's ready!'[5] There were clearly feelings amongst a number in the Province that Masonry should not be too broadly based. This is further indicated by the fate of the two County Lodges which, as already mentioned, had disappeared shortly after Kelly's appearance in Masonry. One of them was

4 The Masonic Library at Freemasons' Hall in Leicester contains a great bulk of books and papers of all sorts originally possessed by William Kelly. There is however almost nothing of his father's library, and even his father's Chapter certificate is noted as having been found among William Kelly's papers.

5 Much of this detail is derived from his privately printed *Fifty Years of Masonic Reminiscences* mentioned above.

the Rancliffe Lodge, No. 608, consecrated in 1835 in one of the county towns and confined in its membership to gentlemen of the professions; it became virtually defunct within five years, the decision to have a narrow membership being suicidal in a small agricultural community. The other was the Ivanhoe Lodge, No. 631, consecrated in 1836 in another small town, which had the custom of holding 'champagne banquets' after each of its meetings. The Lodge collapsed after having held a total of thirty-six meetings in all. It has been suggested that this Lodge was closely associated with the Ivanhoe Spa Baths, situated nearby, and that it was its failure to attract the attention of the gentry which led to the demise of the Lodge.[6]

St. John's was clearly not a happy Lodge. There were certainly a number of internal disagreements within the Lodge, one of which led Kelly to a decision not to allow his name to go forward for a further term as Master of the Lodge and another which caused his resignation for twelve months. His correspondence throws light upon these events.[7] The Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Sir Gustavus Fowke, recognised that Kelly had resigned 'on account of the thin attendance at their meetings which would not admit of the workings being carried out properly or even in accordance with the directions in the Book of constitutions.'[8] Although he agreed to return, it is understandable that he should decide to establish a second Lodge in the town. He first approached the brethren of another, virtually moribund, Lodge in a local market town, the Knights of Malta Lodge, No. 50, which met at Hinckley, asking them to agree to transfer their Warrant. The request was unanimously refused, for reasons not unconnected with the level of grants to its members from the Board of Benevolence. He then approached Grand Lodge with a petition for the establishment of a completely new Lodge, the John of Gaunt Lodge. Although St. John's Lodge had officially to be one of the sponsoring Lodges – the other being Tyrian Lodge, No. 253, of the Derbyshire Province – only two of the active members of St. John's Lodge were named as founders. Indeed, the Secretary of St. John's declared: 'there would have been no necessity for the step you have taken had you supported St. John's Lodge in a Masonic spirit.'[9] Instead the petitioners and founders were drawn from a wide range. The petitioners included William Kelly himself and William Williamson of St. John's Lodge; Edmund Crouch, a Past Master from Newcastle on Tyne and manager of the Branch Bank of England; Richard Burne, a Past Master from Bristol and sub-agent of the Bank of England; Rev. Gervase Wright, Past Master of Tyrian Lodge and Provincial Grand Chaplain of Derbyshire; James Murphy, also a Past Master of Tyrian Lodge; and Richard Alien, Master of Commercial Lodge,

6 I am grateful for this suggestion to W. Bro. David Wykes, who is also working on various aspects of Masonry in Victorian Leicester.
7 Kelly Correspondence in Freemasons' Hall, Leicester.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.

No. 411, Nottingham and Provincial Grand Secretary of the Province of Nottinghamshire. The other two were Lord Howe, a Past Master of St. John's Lodge (who also countersigned the Warrant as Deputy Grand Master) and Sir Gustavus Fowke, Deputy Provincial Grand Master. It would be of interest to discover how these individuals could have been brought together to sign the petition. In order to secure an adequate local membership for this new Lodge dispensation was given for the rapid initiation of new candidates – six being initiated on a single night – a local solicitor, the manager of the local branch of the Bank of England, a leading local journalist, a chemist, an Excise-Tax Collector and the Chief Constable of the county police. At the next meeting two more were initiated – the House Surgeon of the Leicester Infirmary and a banker's clerk. The list throws considerable light upon the social standing of provincial freemasons in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Kelly's own *Reminiscences*[10] of this period are consistently aimed at showing himself as the unsung hero of Leicestershire Craft Masonry. Over and over again he appears as doing the work of virtually everyone else in the Province and demonstrating his mastery of ritual. It is he who acted as the Installing Master at almost every Installation ceremony. When he decided that the first Master of another new Lodge was 'not up in the duties of the chair' he performed all the ceremonies of that Lodge for the year. Of the fourteen Lodges in the Province at the time of his death he had consecrated ten, had been a founder member of eleven and had served as Master of twelve. In between time he was induced to undertake the Stewardship for the Province on behalf of the Royal Masonic Institution for Boys, the first time apparently that there was any provincial activity on behalf of any of the Charities. Incidentally, he describes himself at this stage as a 'very shy young fellow'.

With all this activity it is not surprising that Kelly also became prominent at the Provincial level. In addition to filling the Provincial offices mentioned already, he was to become Provincial Grand Secretary and even on occasion acted on behalf of the Provincial Grand Master as an *ad hoc* Deputy. Provincial Grand Lodge had not been noted for its activity. Lord Rancliffe held office as Provincial Grand Master for nearly forty years, during which he himself rarely summoned a meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge and most meetings were not unnaturally usually closely linked with meetings of St. John's Lodge. There was one occasion when the Grand Master, the Duke of Sussex, visited Nottingham and wished to be introduced to the Provincial Grand Officers. Rancliffe hastily summoned St. John's Lodge and appointed them on the spot to Provincial office, after which they could be safely introduced to His Royal Highness. His official Deputy and eventual successor was Sir Gustavus Fowke but his state of

10 See the discussion of these *Memoirs* below

health was such that he too relied heavily upon others. On 10 February 1856, Kelly was appointed Deputy Provincial Grand Master to Sir Gustavus Fowke. When Fowke died three months later Lord Howe was appointed Provincial Grand Master and Kelly's appointment as Deputy was renewed. There is one very striking feature of this appointment. There are in existence two Patents for Kelly as Deputy Provincial Grand Master to Lord Howe. One is the normal certificate signed by Lord Howe and dated 13 October 1856; the second one is a most ornate example of illuminated addresses, also purporting to appoint Kelly as Deputy Provincial Grand Master and also signed by Lord Howe but dated 14 October. Kelly's *Memoirs* refer to his appointment having been made on 14 October and to his Patent, 'beautifully written and illuminated on vellum.' Clearly he was not quite satisfied with the ordinary mundane Warrant so that not only did he have this one specially produced for himself but was even prepared deliberately to mislead posterity about the date of his appointment.

In 1869 Lord Howe decided to retire as Provincial Grand Master and he, together with the leading Masons in the Province, proposed that Kelly be appointed to succeed him. The resulting correspondence[11] is of considerable interest and throws light upon the social standing of such appointments at this time. There was one noble family in Leicester with a good Masonic pedigree, the family of Earl Ferrers. He was still very young, and had indeed only just been initiated; but clearly the Grand Master, Lord Ripon, expected him to be the next Provincial Grand Master. Kelly wrote to John Harvey, the Grand Secretary from 1868 to 1880, on 4th April 1869, about Ferrers' status in Freemasonry and suggested that it would be desirable 'that the PG.M. should prior to his appointment have served the office of Master of a private Lodge.' A week later he wrote again: 'Probably in the course of the next sixteen month the present feeling against Lord Ferrers will die out as he appears to be a pleasing amiable young man who I think, will hereafter be popular in the Craft.'

Eventually Lord Ripon was prevailed upon to accept Kelly but very grudgingly and not happily, for John Harvey, the Grand Secretary from 1868 to 1880, wrote to Kelly on 13 December 1869: 'I have now the pleasure of informing you that in consonance with the wish of Lord Howe and the brethren of the Province the MW Grand Master has nominated you as the successor of that nobleman in the PG Mastership of Leicestershire. The Grand Master, however, is convinced that should it hereafter appear desirable for the benefit of the Province to appoint Earl Ferrers or any other nobleman to the office you are too good a mason to stand in the way some years hence.'

11 The correspondence between Kelly and Harvey is to be found in the bound volumes of Kelly's correspondence sorted in chronological order. There are also some letters in the Archives in the Museum of Freemasonry in Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London.

In the event Kelly remained unhappy, as will be shown, but on being asked what rank etc should be inserted on his Patent Kelly responded sharply: 'Lord Howe and the brethren of the province have not selected me on the grounds of either rank or wealth for I possess neither. Formerly I was in a much better position financially than I am now as I will explain to you when I have the pleasure of seeing you again.' Characteristically Kelly added a postscript to his letter: 'Does this appointment include that of Grand Superintendent of the Province as a matter of course or is that made separately?'

Three years after his initial appointment, Kelly wrote to London (on 1 December 1872) to announce his intention of resigning because of ill-health, but first of all he asked for a favour for a close friend, George Toller, who was retiring as Provincial Grand Secretary: 'This province has never been honoured by one of its members holding office in the Grand Lodge. As a last request, before retiring from office may I ask you kindly to obtain for him if possible an appointment as Grand Deacon or as Grand Sword Bearer?' [Eventually, in 1877 Toller was appointed Sword Bearer – the first Grand Lodge appointment from the Province of Leicestershire and Rutland.]

In replying John Harvey ignored the suggestion about Toller but pointed out that if Kelly retired at that stage, after having served for only three years and not five, he would not be eligible for appointment as a Past Provincial Grand Master and would forfeit his Grand Lodge rank. He invited Kelly to stay on for the extra time to earn his Past rank. Kelly expressed his regret at the information, 'not having observed the footnote lately appended to p. 45 of the *Book of Constitutions*.' The additional sentence had not been in the 1867 printing of the *Book of Constitutions*, but was inserted in that of 1871. However, Kelly repeated his 'need' to resign on account of his health, his Doctor having 'strongly recommended me to free myself from all the mental and bodily labours I can.'

He went on: 'My primary reason for retiring was not, however, the state of my health, but a part of your letter three years ago announcing to me that the MW the Grand Master had appointed me PGM of the Province – you then gave me an intimation to the effect that 'if it should be found hereafter that it would be for the benefit of the Province that Lord Ferrers, or some other brother of rank, should be appointed to the office, his lordship felt assured that I was too good a mason to stand in the way.' Kelly was clearly very upset: 'I never mentioned this to any of the brethren, but I must confess I felt a good deal hurt at such an insinuation, though you [the Grand Secretary] put it very kindly, as it implied that I was only holding the office on sufferance, and I at once declared… that I should only retain office for three years, to enable Lord Ferrers to gain such Masonic experience, but I did not of course contemplate that by so doing I should thus be excluding myself from holding the rank and privileges of a Past Provincial Grand Master.' He complained very strongly against the fact 'after having done all the actual work of the Provincial Grand Mastership

for nearly four times the five years required I should have to forfeit a rank on retiring… However the past rank and privileges must go, and I don't suppose that after upwards of thirty years hard work for the benefit of the craft in the Province and when the necessity for rest has come the brethren of the Craft will esteem me any the less on descending to the ranks as plain Bro. Kelly than if I had been privileged to retain the full blown dignity of a Past GM.'

It was not merely a hurt to his pride that was involved. Becoming Provincial Grand Master had given Kelly a position in Grand Lodge and the only way that he could continue to hold Grand Lodge Rank was by being appointed Past Provincial Grand Master. Ripon gave way gracefully, recognising him as Past Provincial Grand Master with all the seniority which he would have had had he served the full five years. In acknowledging to the Grand Secretary receipt of the letter appointing him as a Past Provincial Grand Master, Kelly commented: 'You will I am sure be glad to learn that my health is in some measure re-established.'

Kelly's career in the Royal Arch was as spectacular as in the Craft. In his *Memoirs* he shows how in 1841 he was Exalted into Fortitude Chapter and the very same day was appointed Principal Sojourner. After achieving a variety of high Provincial offices he was, in 1870, appointed Provincial Grand Superintendent, the same year that he became PGM in the Craft and, despite his resignation from the Craft appointment, he held that office in Chapter until his death. As in the Craft, he displayed himself as a virtuoso in ritual, frequently delivering all three lectures during the course of a single Chapter ceremony.

Having progressed rapidly in both Chapter and in Craft Kelly quite clearly seems to have looked for fresh fields to capture and one of them was the new-fangled Mark degree – new-fangled, not in the sense that it was in itself a new degree but because it was just going through a transformation so far as England was concerned and about to become regularized in its own right, alongside, but not within, Craft Masonry. The middle of the nineteenth century saw a great deal of controversy over the status of this degree. In 1858, however, when Kelly was already Deputy Provincial Grand Master in the Craft and Provincial Second Grand Principal in Chapter, he took it upon himself to superintend the introduction of the Mark degree into Leicester. Firstly, he secured his own Advancement and that of several of his friends into Mark Masonry in the Newstead Time Immemorial Lodge at Nottingham. His certificate as a Mark Mason, issued by Mark Grand Lodge, is of some interest, and the wording is slightly unusual. The basic document contains the then normal wording but written into the text, after the phrase 'having signed his name in the margin hereof' come the words 'having proved that he', and this goes on to say that he was regularly advanced in the degree of a Mark Mason on 2 February, 1858. It then inserts that 'he has joined the Fowke Mark Lodge' but the form has the usual 'in' and the letters 'jo' and 'ed' have been written around those letters. Add to that the fact that Newstead Mark Lodge at that

stage did not issue certificates of Advancement, that it was not under the jurisdiction of Mark Grand Lodge, that Kelly's Grand Lodge certificate is dated 14 August, 1858 and that his patent as PGM of Mark Masons in the Province of the County of Leicester is dated 22 June 1858, that is before the issuance of his Mark certificate, and it becomes even more obvious that the circumstances of his Advancement even then were regarded as having been slightly irregular. It may well be that the authorities in London in the Mark degree were delighted to have secured the adherence of a man of his standing. At all events, he had been appointed as Provincial Grand Master for the Mark degree in Leicestershire before there were any Mark Lodges at all within the Province. Thereafter he presided over the Consecration of two such Lodges based very loosely on the two existing Craft Lodges in the Province – John of Gaunt and St. John's. The membership of these Mark Lodges, especially Fowke Mark, No. 19, reveals a glittering array of individuals – Kelly himself the Borough Accountant, Goodyear the Chief Constable, George Bankart a wool stapler. There were several clerks in Holy Orders, architects, a 'Professor of Music' and several members of the Peerage. The Lodges prospered for some three years but then would seem to have gone into the doldrums and virtually ceased to exist for some seven years. In his later *Memoirs* Kelly unhesitatingly placed the responsibility for such a decline on his successors in the chairs of these Mark Lodges. However he was writing some thirty years later and his memory had, perhaps, betrayed him. Equally perhaps he was trying to justify himself and his actions (or lack of actions). After all, he himself was the only one who could have been held responsible for a failure to summon a meeting of Provincial Mark Grand Lodge over these seven years, or even for his own failure to have a renewal of his Patent as Provincial Grand Master. It is when the history of Mark Grand Lodge is examined that it is realized that this had been a time when clearly he, in company with many other Mark Masons all over the country, were keeping their heads down until the dust had settled and eminent personages in London had agreed to give the Order their patronage. It was not until January 1868 that Mark Masonry began once more to be active in Leicestershire. It was Kelly who initiated a revival! He sent out a circular letter signed as if he were still Provincial Grand Master (and interestingly enough it was counter-signed by the former Grand Senior Warden, George Bankart, and the former Grand Junior Warden, William Pettifer, precisely the two Masters whom later he was to castigate for their neglect in failing to keep their Lodges active) convening a meeting to revive interest in the degree and summoning a meeting of the moribund Mark Lodges. As a result Fowke Mark Lodge celebrated its centenary not in 1958 but in 1968, Howe Mark Lodge, No.21, celebrating its in 1981. The notice of these affairs published in London accurately described Kelly as former Provincial Grand Master and it is of interest that Kelly's patent as Provincial Grand Master, which had expired in 1861, was eventually renewed in March 1868.

After that Kelly made Mark Masonry in the East Midlands peculiarly

and in a number of ways his own Province. Indeed, it is even more remarkable than that. It became his own personal fiefdom. There was even a great deal of argument as to the nature and extent of this Province. When for the first time a Mark Lodge was opened in Derbyshire, at its request it was placed under his personal guidance. Almost immediately he assumed that this meant that he had had Derbyshire added to his original Province. Similarly, a Mark Lodge was opened for the first time in Northamptonshire and at its request was placed under his guidance. Almost immediately he proclaimed himself the Provincial Grand Master of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Northants. All subsequent Lodges in Derbyshire and Northamptonshire came under his control almost by default, for there was no evidence that London had placed these additional Lodges specifically under his control. And when he gave permission to one of the Leicestershire Lodges to hold a meeting in Oakham the Province became Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Northants and Rutland – all still without any sort of formal agreement from Mark Grand Lodge in London, for his Patent continued to be renewed purely in terms of his being Provincial Grand Master of Leicestershire and of the two Lodges outside the county. The Minutes of Mark Grand Lodge are very interesting in this context, for at times his presences (or his absences) are noted in terms of the narrower jurisdiction, while at other times he is recorded under his own description. Some of the jewels still in use in this Mark Province preserve the memory of this mythical Province of Leicestershire, Northants, Derbyshire and Rutland. It was in 1994 that the Mark Province of Leicestershire and Rutland sought to celebrate its centenary, firmly believing that it had only come into existence after Kelly's death instead of realizing that it really ought to have celebrated the occasion in 1958 or at the latest in 1968. Furthermore, so far had Kelly got out of hand that he was in a position to secure his own nomination over and over again by the Mark Masons of his own Province. On a number of occasions the minutes of Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Masons record motions proposing the 'election' of Kelly as Provincial Grand Master and regularly London dutifully renewed his Patent.

It was after his death that Mark Grand Lodge brought the affairs of this Province into some sort of order. The various Lodges in Derbyshire had been content to remain under Kelly's jurisdiction – one reason perhaps for him having continued for so long – but were now constituted under a Mark Province for Derbyshire, while the Lodges in Northamptonshire were linked with other Lodges in Huntingdonshire as a new Province. Leicestershire had to be dealt with firmly and this was done by bringing in the Pro Grand Master himself as Provincial Grand Master and having him imposed on the Province by fiat from above. Provincial Grand Lodge did try to nominate Kelly's successor but it was very firmly put into its place, being given clear instructions, despite strong protests from individuals and Lodges alike, that it was not to be allowed even to discuss the topic. Lord Euston, who was thus brought in to control Leicester as its Provincial

Grand Mark Master, was similarly placed in control of the new Province of Hunts and Northants in order to secure its obedience.

Clearly Kelly was regarded as the Grand Old Man of the Province and had made himself virtually the centre of Masonry in Leicestershire and Rutland. This becomes very clear with an examination of how the 'Other Degrees' came to the Province. Clearly none could have arisen locally without the acquiescence of the Provincial Grand Master of the Craft, but the circumstances of these arrivals shows quite clearly the extent of Kelly's attitude to them and whether he was prepared to participate in them. His first attitude seems to have been that he was unhappy about such degrees and orders, and in his *Fifty Years' Masonic Reminiscences* in 1888 he wrote: 'For many years I stood aloof from all those side degrees or High Grades as they are termed; our former chief, Sir Frederick Gustavus Fowke, who had taken almost every degree, having once said to me that 'if his time could come over again he would never go beyond the Royal Arch, as the others, however good, were not ancient masonry.'

They do, however, begin to appear in the Province in the early 1870s. It is perhaps necessary to clarify the definition of 'appearance' in the Province. Though there are (and presumably were then) a number of Leicester Masons who belong to other Orders or Degrees which have no meeting place in Leicester, such degrees would not necessarily be considered as being 'in Leicester or Leicestershire'; such definition of these other Orders and Degrees involves their being mentioned in the Provincial Yearbook and having a distinct local organization.

The first of these 'additional' Orders to be introduced into Leicester was the Red Cross of Constantine. This Order seems to have been worked in some form or other from the early nineteenth century but, to all intents and purposes, it had been reconstituted in 1865 by Wentworth Little (Provincial Grand Master for Middlesex), W. H. White (Past Grand Secretary of the Craft) and W. J. Hughan (the Masonic historian). Within eight years over 100 Conclaves had been chartered by London and the Order had become very popular. In his memoirs Kelly commented that this introduction into Leicestershire had been his decision when he had finally agreed to accede to the request of some of the Masons in the Province who were 'anxious to have one of the Knightly Orders worked in the Town'. Certainly there was sent out in Leicester a circular letter from Grand Council which spoke of 'a request from Leicester that a Conclave of the Red Cross of Constantine be established locally and that forthwith there be constituted a Division of the Order with the Provincial Grand Master of the Craft as Intendant-General'.[12] This was, of course, Kelly himself and it must be a matter of conjecture whether it would have gone ahead if Kelly were not to be at its head.

The summons for the Consecration of this new Conclave, the Byzantine Conclave, No. 44, was issued in February 1871, shortly after Kelly had consolidated his position in the Mark Degree in the Province of Leicester.

12 Kelly Correspondence, Freemasons' Hall, Leicester.

At the Consecration Kelly was the first to be introduced and installed, followed immediately by several other leading officers of the Craft in the Province, including Rev. William Langley and Leonard Clarke, both of whom were Past Provincial Grand Senior Wardens, George Toller (the Provincial Grand Secretary) and senior members of John of Gaunt Lodge, No. 523. As soon as the Conclave had been duly consecrated Kelly received the office of Venerable Eusebius or Viceroy, was enthroned as Sovereign, and was immediately proclaimed Intendant-General for Leicestershire and Rutland. He did not, however, receive the Appendant Orders until 1873, two years later. There are rules which would normally forbid anyone receiving the office of Viceroy before having received these Appendant Orders; whether once again exceptions were being made for Kelly or whether he was riding roughshod over these rules and no one was prepared to argue with him is unclear. It also appears that Kelly did not receive his Patent for these Orders until 1880, though again it is not clear whether this was the fault of the Recorder of the Conclave who delayed asking for them, the fault of London for failing to deliver the documents, or even (if one accepts the conspiratorial view of History) the result of a decision to cover-up an obvious irregularity.

The list of candidates elected at the first two meetings included virtually all those who were already or were to become the leading members of Leicestershire Craft Masonry. There was Lord Ferrers (PGM 1873–1912), Samuel Partridge and George Toller (both Deputy PGM) and John Thorp (the founder of the Leicester Lodge of Research, No. 2429, and the second Leicester mason to be a member of Quatuor Coronati Lodge). In 1875 Kelly was promoted to be one of ten Chief Intendants-General and given authority that was extended to cover Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Northants and Huntingdonshire. It is very possible that this had always been intended and that those who were responsible for this Order were anxious to secure the adhesion of all the significant members in Leicestershire of the Craft.

On the other hand the Conclave did not always prosper during its first 30 years. It may be that there was not enough enthusiasm to carry both this Order and the others which were to come into the Province. During the first twenty-five years of its existence in Leicester there were no more than 105 Installations of new members, barely enough for the Conclave to keep going. On many occasions the Attendance Register shows that not even all the officers appeared, and even though there were occasions when the Register was not properly signed – as demonstrated from the Minute Book of the Conclave – it is clear that it never attracted a wide membership. On Kelly's death the office of Intendant-General lapsed.[13] His designated

13 According to the then Librarian at Freemasons' Hall, Leicester, and W. Bro. Jeremy Ridge, there has been some disagreement as to whether Kelly's appointment as Intendant-General for the Division of Leicestershire and Rutland was ever made. The Grand Imperial Conclave has apparently no record of such an appointment; however the existence of the Patent proves it beyond doubt.

successor, John Thorp, declined partly on the grounds that he did not see the Order developing further in the area. Clearly even he must have felt that the appointment had been made specifically for Kelly himself.

There came, in 1882, the foundation in Leicester of a Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners. This was, of course, under the general supervision of Kelly as Provincial Grand Mark Master. It was 'moored' to the Fowke Mark Lodge, No. 19, but, instead of taking that Lodge's name and number, it was numbered 19 and named The William Kelly Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners. The names of those who were either foundation members or were candidates for election to it reveal a number of those who were closely concerned with the other Orders under consideration which came into the Province before Kelly's death. At the same time, however, there is a very significant number of persons in what I can only term a lower order of society than in the other degrees with which Kelly was now concerned. It is interesting, therefore, that although he did become a member of the new William Kelly Ark Mariners' Lodge and was given the rank of Past Commander, Kelly did not seem to have taken much interest in this new Lodge nor in the degree at large. When he was writing his *Masonic Reminiscences* in 1888 he gave it little more than a cursory mention, although the Minutes of the William Kelly Lodge record that he presented a set of silver jewels for the officers' collars. He gave permission for the Lodge to be movable, intimating that 'meetings will no doubt hereafter be occasionally held at Derby and Northampton.'

The second Order to be introduced into Leicester was the Ancient and Accepted Rite. The first Rose Croix Chapter, St. Margaret's, No. 92, was consecrated on 28 March 1882. Unlike the occasion for the formation of the Byzantine Conclave, this Convocation did not initially include Kelly himself. Instead we find the names of Partridge, Thorp and Worthington as the designated first officers of this new body. Other members included Baines, Clement Stretton, Spencer, Lawrence Ball, William Fielding, all of them known in various spheres of Leicester business and Masonic life. However, the first list of candidates brought forward for Perfection also included many familiar names: such as Lord Ferrers, Kelly himself (by now described as a Bank Manager); Wright, the Provincial Grand Registrar in the Craft and a Solicitor by profession; Young, the Provincial Director of Ceremonies and a Chemist; others described as Manufacturer, Gentlemen (two of them), a Surgeon, the Prison Governor, a Civil Engineer, a Solicitor, a Colliery Manager and a Worsted Dyer. Two of them, however, including Ferrers, never turned up for Perfection. Unsurprisingly Kelly soon attained high office in the Chapter and, by 1884, he was the Most Wise Sovereign and received the 30th Degree. On the other hand the Minutes of its various Convocations seem to show a substantial number of apologies for absence, including many from Kelly himself, while there were over the years almost as many resignations from the Chapter as new members coming forward for perfection. Indeed, for years after Kelly's death there were problems about this Chapter and its membership. As late

as 1922 an official report on it declared: 'I am sorry to hear of the parlous state of St. Margaret's Chapter. I fully appreciate the idea that quality should be preferred to quantity, but there is such a thing as being too exclusive and as we are only very mortal in such a case too strict exclusiveness may lead to extinction.'[14]

The third of these Orders to be introduced into the Province was that of the Order of the Temple. A number of Leicester Masons were already members of the Mount Calvary Encampment (a Time Immemorial Encampment/Preceptory) which met four times a year at 8a Red Lion Square in London. These included John D. Harris (the Master of Albert Edward Lodge, No. 1560), W. J. Freer, J. G. F. Richardson and, of course, William Kelly, who had been admitted to the Order in 1883. However, in 1885 it was decided to consecrate a local Preceptory, the Rothley Temple Preceptory, No. 152. In the Minutes of the Consecration meeting Kelly is described as Provincial Grand Master, Provincial Grand Superintendent of Leicestershire and Rutland, and Provincial Grand Mark Master of Rutland, Leicestershire, Northampton, and Derbyshire! Those who joined him as Founders of the Preceptory, or were to become members in its early years, once again contained many of the leading figures in Leicestershire Masonry. On the other hand the Consecration of Rothley Temple would not seem to have had much of an initial impact. The history of the Rothley Temple declares that the attendances were very poor, sometimes averaging as low as six. Candidates were few and far between, apart from the initial meetings. By 1890 it had seventeen members. It is indeed interesting in looking at its membership between its foundation in 1885 and Kelly's death to realise that there were usually just enough members to fill the offices in the Preceptory.

An examination of these three Christian Orders that were introduced into the Province before Kelly's death show a fairly consistent pattern; they attracted interest from a rather small highly compact group and it is not surprising that many of the same names appear in all of these new Orders. In these years none of the Orders attracted a wide membership and indeed it was rare for there to be more members than there were officers. Initial analysis of the names of those involved in these various Orders illustrates clearly the restricted nature of the membership and the extent to which those who were invited to come into the Orders represent a significant part of local business and civic life.

In discussing these Orders and Degrees the issues that need to be addressed are the extent of their impact upon the Province as a whole and why they came to Leicester in the first place. So far as the numbers are concerned as usual Kelly had a comment to make. In his *Memoirs* he wrote: 'for some years the Red Cross Order flourished greatly here… since however the opening of St. Margaret's Chapter of Rose Croix and the

14 John Mandleberg, *Ancient and Accepted,* (1995), p. 912.

Rothley Temple Preceptory of Knights Templars, its condition has greatly deteriorated.' About the same time, in 1888, Kelly wrote to Samuel Partridge, 'We shall have seriously to consider the condition of the Conclave. As you know… some years ago… there was no Conclave in the Kingdom which stood higher… for its working than did the Byzantine and it seems a pity that it should fall into abeyance from a want of interest or energy.'[15] However, in fact Kelly was again misleading himself, for at the time at which he wrote Byzantine Conclave had listed fifteen members, not noticeably worse than it had been fifteen years earlier. Nor was there any evidence that any individual left one Order so that he could join another one. Clearly then the introduction of a new Order into the Province did not seem to have that impact upon the others which Kelly attributed to it. On the other hand we ought not to insist too much upon the scarcity of members for these Orders. In 1894 there were 634 individual members of the Craft in the Province so that the average size of membership for these other orders was about 3% of the total. Even for Chapter the numbers were limited. The average membership of a Chapter was about twenty except for Fortitude, No. 279, which had eighty-four. Even today when we have 3368 members of the Craft there are only about 30% of them in Chapter and at most 20% in Mark. Most of the other Degrees and Orders in the Province have memberships averaging between thirty-five and forty, representing the same sort of proportion to the total Craft membership as a century years ago. (The figures today are 37% in Chapter and 22% in Mark. The Craft membership is c.3000 – Editor)

The story of Masonry in Leicestershire is clearly the story of Kelly and of a small group of his associates. As was written of him towards the end of his life, 'During the whole of his long career he has been Masonry's chief and strongest pillar in Leicestershire and there is hardly a Masonic institution in that favoured Province in the establishment, revival, or improvement of which he has not taken a leading part.' [16]

He and his associates were the leading members of Leicester and Leicestershire society, the leading lights in Leicester's industrial life and, almost in consequence, the leading lights in Leicester Masonry. There is certainly a very strong suggestion that within the Province there had been an attempt to create an exclusive inner group, originally round Kelly and inspired by him. At the same time perhaps there is some idea almost of boredom with what they had and a desire for something new. Having achieved high office in one Order, the leading members of this group sought something new in another. Perhaps the truest comment was made in a slightly different context by a leading Royal Arch Companion, who was trying in 1886 to analyse what he felt was the apparently languishing state of Chapter and blaming it on the growth of one or other of the rival Degrees

15 Kelly to Partridge 22 July 1888, quoted, O. Farrant, *The First Hundred Years of Byzantine Conclave*, *No. 44,* Leicester 1971, p. 33.

16 23 February 1894, *The Wyvern*, Leicester.

in the Province, 'A chief cause no doubt is novelty. To many minds the multifarious clothing, jewels and paraphernalia of these Orders have great attraction and whereas a principal charm of Masonry is the consciousness of secret knowledge which gives a sense of superiority over those who have it not, this feeling is intensified by the multiplicity of the degrees taken and the young mason is tempted to wander off the beaten track in search of abstruse and complicated instruction.'[17]

It could be suggested that Kelly's associates were trying to find these new experiences at a time when such Orders and Degrees were beginning to expand more widely in the country at large. On the other hand it is clear that Kelly was never averse to collecting even more regalia – so long as it helped to consolidate his own position as the most significant Mason in the Province.

There are a number of general issues which arise out of this consideration of Kelly and Leicestershire Masonry. How does the Province of Leicester compare with other Provinces in the way in which these other Degrees and Orders developed within each Province? Is Leicester falling into a general pattern or is it something different? For example, it must be pointed out that there was little or no further development in any of these Orders and Degrees inside Leicester for at least forty years after Kelly's death. In at least one of them, the Royal Ark Mariners, it was to be a full hundred years. Without Kelly it is doubtful whether there would have been much development at all in the Province. Clearly, there was no strong aristocratic leadership within county Masonic society as a whole. Neither Lord Howe nor Lord Ferrers, the Provincial Grand Masters immediately before and after Kelly, were strong enough to be able to impose their own wills upon him so that he was able to get his own way over and over again. The way in which, for example, he was able to dominate the Mark degree, to the extent that eventually Lord Euston, the Pro Grand Master, had to be brought in to bring the Province to heel is an indication of that. Equally, we cannot at this stage be certain how far Kelly was unique to Leicestershire or whether there were others performing the same role in other Provinces. It would be of interest for brethren to have a look elsewhere and see how far Kelly can be paralleled elsewhere. Looking outside Masonry, however, and turning to the wider field of social history, Kelly's activities indicate how he was bringing into Masonry a number of broader groups, those who represent either new money or new interests. If, after all, one of our queries as historians of Masonry must relate to the issues of who it was that became involved both in Freemasonry in general or in these new aspects of it which we know were becoming very popular indeed at this time, then the pattern of Kelly's 'invitees' into these new aspects, their social origins and the way in which he attempts to boost their local significance, is likely to be of great importance to us.

17 Sermon by Rev. C. Henton Wood, quoted, H. W. Tassell, 'William Kelly', *Transactions of the Lodge of Research (2429)*, Leicester, 1991, p. 33.

APPENDIX I

Membership of the 'other' Orders and Degrees

Analysis of these groups is currently proceeding, although it has not yet been possible to identify the occupations and subsequent careers of all those who were named. There are in all 124 individuals listed as members of Byzantine Conclave, St. Margaret's Chapter, or Rothley Preceptory between their foundation and Kelly's death. Twenty-two were members of at least two of them, in addition to the two Masons who acted as permanent Tyler or its equivalent to all of the Orders meeting in Leicester. Some were members for only a short period before either resigning or letting their membership lapse, but those who continued include many of the leading figures in Leicester's political and industrial life at the end of the nineteenth or the beginning of the twentieth century as well as filling the major ranks and offices in Leicestershire Masonry. In addition there are those who joined the Royal Ark Mariners degree in the Province. Mention has been made of Kelly's comparative lack of interest in this degree, even though the Lodge that was founded was named after him. It should perhaps be indicated that during Kelly's lifetime seventy-four Mark Master Masons were elevated into that Lodge. Thirty-one Royal Ark Mariners also appear among the 124 mentioned above, while thirty of those listed in the 'knightly Orders' were also in the Royal Ark Mariners. On the other hand, in general, membership of this degree seems to have been drawn from a rather wider social circle than the other degrees. Professions and occupations listed include a wine and spirit dealer, a brewer's agent, a station master, and the clerk/storekeeper of the local lunatic asylum. For a list of these members see Transactions of the Lodge of Research for the year 1998.

APPENDIX II

Kelly's Masonic Reminiscences

One of the principal sources of evidence for Kelly's role in the Masonry of Leicestershire must inevitably be his *Fifty Years of Masonic Reminiscences*, produced in 1888 as an address to St. John's Lodge in Leicester and intended to mark the fiftieth anniversary of his initiation into Masonry. It was subsequently printed and presented by him to a select list of connections. It falls into place as one of a group of Masonic publications by him, including his *History of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Leicestershire (to which the county of Rutland is now annexed)* and a number of Masonic addresses. Much of the material in the earlier items is reconstituted in the later one and indeed often incorporated unchanged. However it must be approached with a considerable degree of caution, and there are a number of statements and inferences which need a great deal of independent verification before they can be taken as acceptable.

In addition to this volume there is a mass of correspondence, and Bro. Yasha Beresiner has written: 'It is not surprising that a man as proud and obsessive about his Masonic advancement as Kelly appears to have been, should keep a pedantic record of all of his Masonic activities, in all the Lodges of each of the Orders he belonged to in Leicestershire, as well as some of the neighbouring provinces. These records are handsomely bound in seven volumes housed in the impressive Museum and Library at Freemasons' Hall in Leicester. The volumes cover the period between 1812 and 1888. Their content comprises a comprehensive printed record of Kelly's activities: every summons, invitation, programme and menu of every event that Kelly ever attended. There is also a colourful array of printed ephemera ranging across all the Orders known in Leicestershire at the time and spreading into several of the neighbouring provinces.'

At the initial delivery a number of comments were made which are noted here rather than being incorporated into the text.

Bro. Yasha Beresiner drew attention to one particular document in the Kelly papers, an A5 size sheet of paper headed *Printing Office, 28 Upper Clifton Street, Finsbury* and dated *December 1846*. The text begins as follows: 'Brother George Claret, PM of Lodges 12 and 228, deems it unnecessary to say much in order to recommend his Masonic works after the very expensive circulation they have had during the last 10 years when they have been universally approved by all who have had them. They are warranted to be genuine modern freemasonry…

This is followed by what is effectively a detailed price-list of various degrees and Masonic artefacts under a number of headings printed on both sides of the leaflet. The rituals offered for sale cover the three Craft degrees and then the Mark, Royal Arch, Knights Templar and more.

The period in which the leaflet was issued coincides with the period during which Kelly would have been thinking of the introduction of many of the Orders beyond the Craft to Leicestershire. It is perfectly conceivable that the leaflet in question is in the Kelly collection because Kelly made practical use of Claret's offers.

One may legitimately speculate as to whether the origins of the varied rituals for the new Orders as they made their way into Leicestershire lie in their having been simply purchased by Kelly from Claret.

Bro. Trevor Stewart has drawn attention to other similar Masonic 'entrepreneurs' in other English Provinces during the 19th century. This seems to beg the question: to what extent, or rather, in what way can we consider Kelly to have been 'mason extra-ordinary'? Clearly, he seems to have been a 'driven' man – driven, one must say, by an almost over-weaning ambition. He certainly became the proverbial 'big fish in a small pond'. Was that drive a key part of his typically bourgeois mentality – that success in life could be measured in offices held, money accumulated and influence exerted over the lives of others – which he inherited from his

middle-class upbringing and schooling and which seems to have governed his actions and more general behaviour in later life towards those of perceived superior social status and towards those of inferior status?

Clearly, one would have to be very circumspect in drawing material from what may be a not entirely unbiased source, such as Kelly's own *Fifty Years* of *Masonic Reminiscences* (1888) but I wonder if any of the unpublished letters which Kelly wrote and his journals give us any further information about his state of mind, his aspirations, his planning. I would be interested to learn if any of his contemporaries expressed their thoughts in writing about him to others. I was struck by the extent to which Kelly resembled some of his London-based contemporaries who were also involved in developing the so-called 'added' Orders such as the 'Red Cross of Constantine'. They seem to have displayed just those characteristic features of perspicacity, ruthlessness, drive, ambition, organizational ability, low native cunning, self-promotion, self-righteousness and skilful manipulation of others which were prominent features of those high Victorian capitalists whom Dickens and other writers criticized so tellingly. I wonder if there was anything in common between the psychology and motivation of the typical frequenters of the London Stock Exchange in the mid-19th century and the mentality of those Masonic 'movers and shakers', men like Kelly, who populated the burgeoning Masonic Lodges during the same period?

To these I would make the further comment:

Bro. Beresiner points out the presence in the remarkable Kelly collections in Leicester of a price list by George Claret for rituals and artefacts in a wide range of Masonic degrees and Orders. While I would agree that the existence of such lists had a great impact upon Kelly's later activities I must point out that there is no evidence of his interest in them as early as 1846 or 1847.

Bro. Stewart, writing from a Provincial perspective himself, raises a number of very important issues at the heart of the paper. I would agree entirely that Kelly was a 'driven' man, but I think I would disagree with his suggestion that it derives from a typically 'bourgeois mentality' for my reading of him is a man far removed from anything typically bourgeois of the time. There is a question mark over his exact status in the Kelly family, not least because he plays no part in the family textile firm. His education is obscure, save for a chance reference in one of the letters to him of the time that his correspondent and he shared in an obscure village school in Leicestershire. Moreover, while I am sure of his attitude towards others, who might achieve high status just on account of their birth (e.g. his hurt that Lord Ferrers might be considered more suitable as PGM despite a complete lack of experience as a Mason), I did not find any parallel remarks to those of lower status.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN 1717?

V. W. Bro. The Rev. Neville Barker Cryer, PGChap.

In this, my 61st year of masonic membership, it is time for me to review two matters. One is my own understanding of how this old Craft, of which I am so proud to be part, began. The other is to look afresh at what we should teach about this to those who now want to join us. What I am now quite clear about is that what I was told in my early years about the 1717 part of the story was neither a complete nor an accurate story. This then is the opportunity to uncover the full story of what did happened before and around 1717. That will enable those who come after us to appreciate the correct nature of events and have answers to the puzzles that have always surrounded the reasons given for why that year was thought to be important.

I begin with the moment when I first joined the premier Lodge of Masonic research, Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 2076, some 40 years ago. As is still the custom a new member is presented with not only the latest copy of the Lodge Transactions but also one other volume from an earlier year. In my case I was given the 1966 volume and there I read three statements about 1717. Considering that they were all in one issue of this respected journal, I felt bound to believe that these were the established views of the then best scholars in our Craft. For the record I give you these statements:

1. In an article entitled 'Grand Lodge 1717 – 1751', W. Bro. Terry Haunch, later the Librarian of Grand Lodge, stated: 'The story of organised Freemasonry in England starts with the establishment of a Grand Lodge in London in 1717 – a turning point in the development of speculative Freemasonry by way of "accepted masonry" FROM the operative craft.'[1]
2. W. Bro. J. R. Clarke, a Past Master of Quatuor Coronati Lodge, started his article on 'The Formation of the Grand Lodge of the Antients' with the words: 'The premier Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons was established in 1717 by four Lodges which INHERITED from their operative predecessors CERTAIN PROCEDURES which had their roots in the distant past.'[2]
3. W. Bro. Harry Carr, the long-serving and very distinguished Secretary of Quatuor Coronati Lodge, wrote as follows to start his article, 'Grand Lodge and the Significance of 1717': 'The formation of the FIRST Grand Lodge in 1717 has made that date an outstanding one in the Masonic Calendar' and then added some very important words, 'but to appreciate the true significance of that event it must be VIEWED, PRIMARILY against the background of the 360 years of recorded Masonic history that had preceded it.'[3]

1 Op. cit. p. 265.
2 Ibid p. 270.
3 Ibid pp. 289f.

To confirm for you that this topic was very much in the forefront of Masonic thinking just then I must add here that in the next volume of 1967 the Librarian of UGLE, W. Bro. R Hewitt, contributed an article that was then the Prestonian Lecture of that year, entitled 'The Grand Lodge of England: A History of the First Hundred Years, 1717 – 1817'.

In the light of all these words it is hardly surprising that, as I was then only a Freemason of 23 years standing, I took what these formidable seniors said as the indisputable truth of the matter. I did what I suspect most other masons did and acknowledged the august credentials of what was to be known popularly as the Grand Lodge of the Moderns. That body was very properly so named because its leaders had introduced practices in the conduct of English Freemasonry that were certainly NOT ancient usage but were contemporary inventions. Of those matters it is not my intention to speak because my aim here is to re-examine the 1717 event. So let us look again at the facts.

The closest actual record of that time is what is described by the Rev. Dr. Anderson in the 1738 edition of the Book of Constitutions. It reads: 'King George I entered London most magnificently on 20 Sept(ember) 1714 and after the Rebellion was over A. D. 1716 the few Lodges AT LONDON, finding themselves neglected by SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN, thought fit to cement under a GRAND MASTER as the Center (sic) of Union and Harmony, viz. the (four) Lodges that met' near St. Pauls, Drury Lane, Covent Garden and Channel Row, Westminster. They and some old Brothers met at the Covent Garden venue and 'having put into the Chair the oldest MASTER MASON (now the MASTER of a Lodge) they constituted themselves a Grand Lodge PRO TEMPORE in Due Form, and forthwith REVIVED the Quarterly Communication of the OFFICERS of Lodges (called the GRAND LODGE) resolved to hold the Annual Assembly and Feast, and then to chuse (sic) a GRAND MASTER from among themselves, till they should have the Honour of a NOBLE BROTHER at their head.' (The capitals used above of those of the author – Editor)

In his article on the '1717 Grand Lodge and its Founding Lodges' Bro. Batham commented: 'Anderson gives no indication as to why the London Lodges should suddenly decide in 1716 to meet together and make plans to do something that had never been done, create a Grand Lodge to supervise the Craft and, perhaps more important, to bring Freemasonry into the light of day.' He further adds that Anderson's reference to there having been some neglect by Sir C. Wren and 'reviving' the Quarterly Communications of Grand Lodge were statements not bearing investigation. He continued: 'It would surely be welcomed by all members of the Craft if ever it were proved that Sir Christopher Wren was a freemason… but that is very unlikely.' That seems pretty conclusive, doesn't it? However, I now have to say that whilst this was no doubt the considered view of our very esteemed Bro. Batham, I wish he were now here to be shown that he had not reflected enough, nor researched

sufficiently widely, to revise his opinion that 'Anderson was notoriously unreliable'. He was wrong. Anderson was reliable, and it is indeed because of his care in recording events that we can at last see the true picture.

For the truth is what these predecessors failed to do was take the advice of wise Bro. Harry Carr that to see the full significance of the 1717 event we have to take into account what happened in the 360 years of recorded Masonic history before that occurrence.

Clearly we cannot survey in any detail that immense period though I should tell you what I am proposing, if I am granted time, to write a new book about that very time. Let me at least remind you of three important sets of facts.

The first set begins in the 1350s: that is 360 years before 1717, when every trade in England was commanded by the Crown to introduce a guild system in which there were fixed rules and regulations for the members. We know that the guilds of stonemasons existed at least in every major town or city of our land, because we see them producing trade plays that they perform in public in those towns for 200 years up to 1572. In addition, each guild had its annual assembly and election of a Right Worshipful Master with a special Feast on the Saint John days. Attached to each mason guild was a permanent lodge, it being the only trade company to have such an extra appendage. The stonemason guilds were in turn regulated by four Grand Lodges in York, Chester, London and either Bath or Bristol. So there WERE Grand Lodges with Grand Masters before the events of 1717, even though they were operative ones. These Grand Lodges had Quarterly Communications of officers and this was, until the later part of the 17th Century, an operative system. Anderson was therefore again correct when he spoke of these things being 'revived'.

However, as I have sought to show in my book *York Mysteries Revealed*, there is also evidence of Freemen, who were non-operatives, belonging to a guild lodge in Elizabeth I's reign. This reveals why in London in the 1620s, and Chester and Warrington in the 1640s and 1650s, men who were Freemen but non-working masons were now ACCEPTED into some Masonic lodges of Lancashire and Cheshire. During the first half of the 1700s we thus have companies and lodges ADMINISTERED by operative masons, but where the rites and customs are now influenced more and more by those who are not operative members.

The second set of facts are these. In the period following the 1660 Restoration of the Monarchy, society develops so that the mason's trade grows rapidly, and between 1670 and 1690 the operative stonemasons in at least London, York, Chester and Coventry ask for new Charters and guilds and break away from the former guilds and lodges, which are now dominated by Free and Accepted masons. The old guilds naturally cease to function because there is no longer a trade enterprise but the lodges that had been linked to them also die out or become private lodges with similar lodges being formed. This is why there appears a private lodge in York in 1692, a similar lodge in Chester and the four private lodges in London and

Westminster. As there is no longer a ruling body of the operatives in York what is now a private Lodge assumes the status of Grand Lodge to replace the earlier operative body and its first certified minutes appear in 1705, but these were clearly not the first minutes to be issued by this new body.

The London Guild or Company of Masons severed its ties with any previous lodges, and so we now have four Accepted lodges looking for a governing body. KNOWING, or learning, that York had now REVIVED a Grand Lodge in the area NORTH of the River Trent, they too set up a local Grand Lodge for London and Westminster *PRO TEMPORE*. These latter words alone suggest a temporary and limited body and we need to be very clear that THIS Grand Lodge is meant, at this point, to be a quite modest local affair and was NOT at once established as a governing body for the whole nation. If you read the General Regulations that were 'Compiled first by Mr. George Payne, Anno 1720, when he was Grand Master' you will see that they end 'with several proper Explications for the Use of the Lodges IN AND ABOUT London and Westminster'. What happened thereafter we shall shortly see, but meanwhile there is another important matter that we have to settle once and for all.

I have just stated above that from the outset of the 18th Century there was a body in York which declared itself a Grand Lodge and acted as such in beginning to authorise other lodges in the North. As I again fully explain in my book on York's Masonic past, this body gave itself the title of 'The Grand Lodge of All England at York according to the Old Constitutions'. That title referred to an area within, and adjacent to, the ancient area of Northumbria (not modern Northumberland) that extended from the River Humber to the suburbs of modern Edinburgh. Also, by the way, the early Archbishops of York were called Archbishops of All England until that title was transferred to Canterbury 300 years later after a new and changed decision by the Pope. It had been a title given by King Athelstan to this part of England when he had at last completed the unification of All England by his conquest of the Danes in this area in 926.

When Bro. Dr. Frances Drake made his famous speech in 1735 as a Junior Grand Warden of this Lodge he had NOT just been appointed to this new office in some new Grand Lodge. The body in which he served was the same which had existed from at least 1705, and most probably 1692. When he makes mention of there being a Grand Lodge in the North which might work amicably with the new Premier Grand Lodge in the South he meant that there had been this already well-established Grand Lodge with a succession of NOBLE presiding rulers during the last twenty years.

Indeed I am sure that the reason why the Grand Lodge in London and Westminster saw its necessary future under a NOBLE head was just because they saw what was the pattern in York. By the same token these London masons wanted to restore the Annual Act of Installation with a Procession, Feast and Church Service as had been done in York from the start of the 18th Century. If Bros. Batham and Hewitt thought that what the London masons sought to do was totally new they were mistaken. I know

that it is hard for London masons to acknowledge that the North might have been already doing what was now desired to be done in London and Westminster, but this is clearly the truth of the matter. Moreover, the fact that some renegade Freemasons have of late misused the information I have been sharing with you (and with whom, of course, I have no connection whatsoever) cannot alter the truth of what really happened in 1717.

There remains a third set of facts. The question was also asked in the articles to which I first alluded why this step in London was taken in 1717. The answer lies in the words of Anderson when he refers to the accession of the Hanoverian monarch, the subsequent rebellion and the neglect of Accepted Lodges by Sir Christopher Wren.

That the accession of the German-speaking George I provoked a violent reaction amongst many English folk is unquestioned. It led to a re-ignition of the Jacobite cause in 1715, and nowhere is that more evident than in the Grand Lodge of All England at York. This development is also described in my book, and it certainly led to a sharp division among the York Grand Lodge members, and, not least, because the noblemen who occupied the post of Grand Master or President of the Lodge until the 1740s were all Roman Catholics. It would have been hearing of cases such as this which would have persuaded the London brethren that, as Freemasons, they needed to set their house in order, and led to the London Grand Masters visiting Prime Minister Walpole and Lord Townshend and assuring them that this new Body was to be composed of loyal subjects, who would support the government of the day. If it had been at all suspected that this further Masonic society, with its peculiar secrets, was in any way untrustworthy its future would have been short-lived. It was just such a background that led to a well-worn reference in the subsequent Constitutions about men being brought together who would otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance.

The other fact needing our attention is the matter of Sir Christopher Wren's involvement and his apparent neglect of the London lodges. You will recall that Bro. Batham thought that Freemasons would welcome the assurance that Sir Christopher was an Accepted Freemason but he thought it most unlikely that would ever be proved to be the case. Fortuously we have a Prestonian Lecture in 2011 on this very subject. Bro. James Campbell, the lecturer, says in his closing summary, 'I have managed to show why there is so much confusion surrounding Wren's membership: the situation is undoubtedly complicated. But I hope I have also shown that there is convincing evidence for Wren being a Mason.'[4]

Whilst I applaud the careful sifting of the documents and facts that has led to this paper, there is one aspect of this study that the writer has not defined clearly enough. It is showing the difference between the Operative

4 p. 34.

and the Free and Accepted aspects of Wren's involvement. This is vitally important if we are to reach satisfactory conclusions in this matter, and not least if we are to agree with this lecturer that the evidence provided by the antiquarian John Aubrey is the real solution to the problem. Aubrey wrote: 'this day (May the 18th…Monday, 1691) is a great convention at St. Paul's Church of the Fraternity…of Free Accepted Masons: where Sir Christopher Wren is to be adopted a brother…and divers others'.[5]

How could this be true if, as Bro. Campbell asserts, Dr. Anderson claimed that Wren was a Grand Warden from 1660, Deputy Grand Master from 1666 and Grand Master from 1685 – 95 and then Grand Master from 1698 – 1716? How could this be? The answer begins to emerge when we start defining precisely what we mean by the term 'mason' in relation to Wren. I clearly cannot argue the case in full here but I give you this potted history of the great man's 'masonic' career when so defined.

He was born in 1632. If he is to be involved in the building trade then he has to join the Masons Company and he does so in the 1650s. Sometime after 1654 he is eligible to apply to join the Old St. Paul's Lodge of which Inigo Jones and Nicholas Stone had been Grand Masters. This is a lodge of Operative Masons that had, from 1620 at least, been 'accepting' non-masons as members. It is through this attachment that Wren becomes a Grand Warden, Deputy and Grand Master of Operative Lodges. In the period 1670 – 80 the Operative Masons start a new guild or Company, which is limited to Operative Masons only. In 1691, however, Sir Christopher is admitted into a separate Accepted Fraternity, and becomes a Grand Master among them. Remember that, as in York and Chester, these now private lodges still considered themselves the descendents of the old operative system, and hence needed an overall Grand Lodge authority. By 1712 we are told that Wren, now 80 years old, does not approve of what these Accepted Masons are doing and thus ceases to visit or assist them. That was just what Anderson said had happened. With the lack of a Grand Master the four London and Westminster lodges in 1716 desire a new ruler. That is therefore what happened in 1717. No more.

It only remains to point out what happened immediately after the Grand Lodge of London and Westminster is formed. In 1718 G. M. Payne asks the brethren 'to bring to the Grand Lodge any old Writings and Records concerning Masons and Masonry in order to show the USAGES of ANCIENT TIMES: and this year several copies of the GOTHIC CONSTITUTIONS (i.e. the Old Charges) were produced and collated.' This, I submit, hardly looks like the creation of a quite new body, but rather a continuance of the kind of Grand Lodge as at York with its Old Charges and Old Constitutions. You may wish to recall that when the Antients sought to establish their Grand Lodge in 1751 they specifically chose the Old Constitutions as their basis and as a statement of their proven antiquity.

5 ibid p. 23.

The General Regulations of 1720 have already been shown to be local in their intention, and, in 1721, though the numbers attending the Annual Feast were too many for a Tavern and they moved to the Stationers' Hall. The London and Westminster lodges were still the focus. Indeed, if you look at the Charges in the 1723 Constitutions, it clearly states: 'The ancient RECORDS of Lodges beyond Sea, and those in England, Scotland and Ireland, for the use of the Lodges IN LONDON.'

However, by this date things were beginning to change, and what Bro. Haunch wrote in 1966 has to be carefully considered. He wrote: 'If the founders did not INITIALLY constitute themselves into a Grand Lodge for the control and regulation of (all) the Fraternity, they must have soon recognised the necessity for this and during the LATER 1720s new measures were taken.' The new measures were to transform a local Grand Lodge into one with a national concern and the Premier Grand Lodge DOES now begin to emerge. The first Premier Grand Lodge Minutes appear in 1723 and so does the appointment of a FIRST Grand Secretary and a Provincial Grand Master, being that for Cheshire, because that is from where G. M. Payne came.

I am now sure that you have had enough to ponder on, but let me just sum up the main implications of all that I have shown you. First, the Premier Grand Lodge did NOT begin in 1717; what began then was a local Grand Lodge, basing itself on previous old practice, and from this the Premier Grand Lodge was developed in 1722/3. Second, it is certainly not the first Grand Lodge ever to be formed, though the former Grand Lodges were somewhat different in kind. Thirdly, it is not possible to say that this is the oldest EXTANT Grand Lodge of its type in the world, because the United Grand Lodge of 1813 was substantially different from its 1720s predecessor. What we can claim is that the Premier Grand Lodge was the basis for what has since become the modern Masonry of today. That is what we can tell English Masons today, but that is all.

THE ALCHEMY OF FREEMASONRY

V. W. Bro. J. S. Mather, PGSwdB

I recently reviewed the lectures I have given not only in the Craft but in other Orders. These tended to be factual rather than speculative but on one occasion I did hypothesize that the relationship between the Order and its adherents was the reason for its success. The Order fitted well with its members and its members fitted well with it.

Professor Andrew Prescott has propounded the axiom that Freemasonry is about Freemasons. At first sight this seems obvious but his proposal was that history should look at the Freemasons themselves, their professions, and the society from which they came, rather than historical facts of time and event.

This triggered in my mind that I had read articles and papers on this theme, particularly in *AQC,* as well as in various books which are in my collection. In reading the credentials of the authors of the more interesting articles and books, I discovered that many were what may be loosely described as scientists. This may of course be that I would naturally have an empathy with such people, or perhaps because their language is easier to read than that of historians! In what I am going to say I have called heavily on these authors and references to their work are given at the end of the paper.

I shall first describe what may be termed the alchemical situation which existed in the earliest times of Freemasonry in the 17th and 18th Centuries, and then draw parallels to what we do in our ritual on our lodges.

The best known goals of the alchemists were the transmutation of common metals into gold or silver, and the creation of a 'panacea', a remedy that supposedly would cure all diseases and prolong life indefinitely. Although these were not the only uses for the science of alchemy, they were the ones most documented and well known. The commonly held modern perception of alchemists is that they consisted of pseudo-scientists, liars and charlatans with their attempts at metamorphosis, believing that the universe was composed of the four elements of earth, air, fire and water, and spent most of their time concocting miraculous remedies, poisons and magic potions. Of course we find these four concepts included in the Royal Arch in the text on the explanation of the jewel.

Although some scientific alchemists were indeed poseurs, liars and charlatans, most were well meaning and intelligent scholars and distinguished scientists, such as Isaac Newton and Robert Boyle, and I shall make reference to these two later. For the moment we recognise that alchemy for these innovators meant attempting to explore the nature of chemical substances and processes. They had to rely both on experimentation and speculative thought in their attempts to uncover the mysteries of the physical universe. It became clear to the alchemists that in chemical processes something was being conserved even in the dramatic

changes of physical state and appearance, i.e. that the substances contained some principles that could be hidden under many outer forms and revealed by proper manipulation. Isn't that esoteric situation precisely what we do in our ceremonies? The builders' tools to which we refer in all three degrees surely allude to the manipulation of matter (alchemy) and, by extension, to ethics.

Throughout the history of the discipline alchemists struggled to understand the nature of these principles and find some order and sense in the results of their chemical experiments – which were often undermined by impure or poorly characterised reagents, the lack of quantitative measurements and confusing and inconsistent nomenclature.

There is, however, a second meaning the of the term 'alchemy', which refers to an early form of investigation of nature and an early philosophical and spiritual discipline, both of these combining elements of chemistry, metallurgy, physics, medicine, astrology, pathology mysticism, spiritualism and art all as parts of one greater force. For us this is surely an analogy to the 'hidden mysteries of nature and science'?

Both types of alchemy were practised in Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt, Persia, India and China, in Classical Greece and Rome, in the Muslim civilisation, and then in Europe to the 19th Century – in a complex network of schools and philosophical systems spanning at least 2,500 years.

Parenthetically, alchemists enjoyed prestige and the support of society through the centuries, though not for their pursuit of those goals, nor the mystic and philosophical speculation that dominates their literature. Rather it was for their mundane contributions to the 'chemical' industries of the day – the invention of ink, dyes, paints and cosmetics, leather tanning, ceramics and glass manufacture, preparation of extracts and liquors, and so on. Interestingly, it seems that the preparation of *aqua vitae* (water of life) was a fairly popular 'experiment' among European alchemists. The commonplace name is ethanol, or, at best, one of the alcoholic spirits such as whisky!

From antiquity until well into the Modern Age, a study of physics without any metaphysical insight would have been as unsatisfying as metaphysics without any physical outcome. For one thing, the lack of common words for chemical concepts and processes, as well as the need for secrecy, led alchemists to borrow the terms and symbols from biblical and pagan mythology, astrology, the kabbalah, and other mystic and esoteric fields; so that even the plainest chemical recipe ended up reading like a magic incantation. Moreover, alchemists sought in those fields the theoretical frameworks into which they could fit their growing collection of disjointed experimental facts.

Starting with the Middle Ages in this country, some alchemists, perhaps those with more depth in their thinking, increasingly came to view these metaphysical aspects as the true foundation of alchemy; and chemical substances, physical states, and material processes as mere similes for spiritual entities, states and transformations. In these senses,

the literal meanings of alchemical formulae were hiding their true spiritual philosophy. But why hide it, we must ask? Consider the time when this development was taking place. Over a span of 100 years this country had beheaded a king, had a Cromwellian parliament, tampered with its religious base, created a more liberal society, and returned to the rightful king. Was that which was being proposed at odds with the Mediaeval Church, such that it would have led these alchemists to take the 'stack and rack' in a form of Inquisition under charges of heresy? I can do no better than to use the phraseology of one of my references which states, 'Thus, both the transmutation of common metals into gold and the creation of a universal panacea symbolized evolution from an imperfect, diseased, corruptible and ephemeral state towards a perfect, healthy, incorruptible and everlasting state; and the philosopher's stone then represented some mystic key that would make this evolution possible. Applied to the alchemist himself, the twin goal symbolized this evolution from ignorance to enlightenment, and the stone represented some hidden spiritual truth or power that would lead to that goal. In texts that are written according to this view, the cryptic alchemical works typically contain multiple layers of meanings, allegories and references to other equally cryptic works; and must be laboriously "decoded" in order to discover their true meaning.'[1]

Perhaps two simpler alchemical analogies given by Jacob Bronowski in his book *The Ascent of Man* may serve to explain the allegory I am referring to. There he describes the purification of gold. The cupellation process involves placing a compound of gold and its dross into a bone-ash vessel which is heated to over 1000º C. The contents melt and the dross, usually lead, is absorbed into the walls of the vessel leaving pure gold and silver. The silver can then be removed by nitric acid. The analogy is that of turning corruptible into incorruptible, which, it is suggested, we might define as the process of seeking moral truth and virtue, Bronowski also describes the ancient process of making of a Japanese sword for which there is no written language and no chemical formula. The procedure requires a precise formula which has to be learned. Finally at this stage, let us remember that Huram Abi (sent from Hiram, King of Tyre) was also an alchemist in casting the various vessels at the Temple. The Sea, for instance, weighted in at about 26 tonnes and required a material of considerable strength, probably an alloy of copper.

Let me now concentrate on the early years of our Order. In the growth period of Freemasonry, an exceptional number of influential masons, were, or were connected to, eminent individuals in science. Many of these scientists were also the founders of what is now known as the Royal Society. I shall portray the lives of some of them and their achievements so

1 D. McClymont: *More 1st degree symbolism Alchemy, Hermeticism and the Kabbalah in the Craft*; http://www.mabitech.co.za/dai_kabbalah.html.

that we may all appreciate the intellectual power that they brought to Freemasonry:

1. Robert Boyle (1627–1691) an Anglo-Irish philosopher and alchemist. He regarded the acquisition of knowledge as an end in itself. Its application was not important to him, although he admitted his work had important merits. From his work on hydrostatics, he produced Boyle's Law. He also worked on the propagation of sound, the expansion of freezing water, specific gravity, refraction, colour and chemical analysis.
2. Robert Hooke (1635–1703), who was basically a biologist. He met Boyle at Oxford and took responsibility for Boyle's experiments. He created the biological term 'cell'. He acted as surveyor and architect in London, and was for many years assistant to Christopher Wren in his scientific experiments. He gave his name to the famous Law of Elasticity and, like Boyle, worked on the compression of gases. Although not exceptional at Mathematics, he did attempt to lay down the laws governing motion and gravity. As you may imagine this led to a huge personal disagreement with Isaac Newton, which was never resolved.
3 Sir Christopher Wren (1632–1723), probably the greatest architect of his time, but possessing a breadth of abilities in many subjects including, Astronomy, Optics, Longitude, Cosmology, Mechanics, Microscopy, Surveying, Medicine and Meteorology.
4. But perhaps, and it is certainly debateable, the greatest of all these, at the time, was Sir Isaac Newton (1647–1727), a famous Alchemist, Mathematician, Physicist and Astronomer. Known for his work on Gravitation, Classical Mechanics, Planetary motion, and Differential and Integral Calculus, without his work engineering would not be possible. He used the concept of alchemy, for instance, by relying on the occult idea of action at a distance, across a vacuum, to produce his theories of gravity; it was stated by one of his biographers that he was 'not the first in an age of reason, but the last of the magicians.'[2] Newton stated, 'gravity explains the motion of the planets but it cannot explain who set the planets into motion. God governs all things and knows all that is or can be done.'[3]

Newton and the others were only scraping the surface of science. They had limited knowledge and access to the tools we have today, and Newton knew this when he said, 'I do not know what I may appear to the world but to myself now and then finding a smoother pebble or prettier shell than ordinary whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me'.[4] I

2 John Maynard Keynes, *Address to the Royal Society Club* (1942).
3 *Principia*, Book III.
4 Brewster, *Memoirs of Newton* (1855).

have to say on a personal note that the more research I do in and around Freemasonry, the more pertinent become the sentiments expressed by Newton and that may also be true for many of you.

This was also the time when the Royal Society was founded, although at the time some argue that it was termed the 'Invisible College'. The formation was driven by a very hardworking Freemason, Sir Robert Moray. Is it not surprising, considering the time and effort that they had to direct to their scientific endeavours, that some of the most famous scientists of the day, such as Robert Hooke, Christopher Wren and Robert Boyle entered the Fraternity and brought their philosophical and scientific thoughts to bear on its systems? Minutes of their meetings show that in the first half of the 18th Century 25% of the Fellows of the Royal Society were Freemasons. By 1725 59 Fellows were Freemasons.

What attracted them? For some, I propose not those I have mentioned, social standing was the reason rather than scientific ability. For the rest perhaps they had a persistent preoccupation with Hermeticism, knew that masonic lore was connected with Kabbalah wisdom philosophy (or Jewish mysticism), knew that it was related to the culture of the biblical kings and were aware of a scholarly existence before the days of the Roman Empire, researched the technology of the Babylonians, the philosophies of Plato and Pythagoras (both very able geometrists), or studied ancient Egyptian traditions and philosophies.

However, despite their massive scientific achievements, they still felt that they lived in the shadow of King Solomon, whom Newton called 'the greatest philosopher in the world'. He viewed the design of King Solomon's Temple as the paradigm for the entire future of mankind and, in referring to the masters of old, stated that 'there are things which only they understand'. Newton believed that the dimensions and geometry of King Solomon's Temple floor plan contained clues to timescales and he used these in his mathematical calculations when developing the perfect microcosm of existence. We know that at the centre of the Temple in the Sanctum Sanctorum was the Ark of the Covenant, and Newton likened this to a perpetual fire with light radiating away in circles, whilst also being constantly attracted back to the centre. A point within a circle was the ancient Egyptian symbol for Light, and you will recognise the phrase which we use in the opening of the third degree!

In summary, therefore, we see that the choice of the Temple was perhaps very fortuitous. This selection opened up a rich vein of stories, which might not have seen the light of day had some other principle been used.

So we could, and perhaps should, conclude that the significant scientific thought and philosophical reasoning in existence during the latter part of the 17th Century might have had some significant effect on the formation of Freemasonry.

Is there any further evidence for this? In *Ars Quatuor Coronati*, in an erudite paper published in 2004, Dr. Stewart also deals speculatively with the origins of Freemasonry and I would recommend any Brother to read it.

There is one section which I find interesting. He states that in the early days of lodge meetings the agendas on the summons showed that initiations were rare, and that many of the meetings were lectures. In fact the members were making 'a daily advancement in knowledge' and, as we say in the Exhortation in the Third Degree – '…in the second degree we were led to contemplate the intellectual facility….' and later '…the secrets of nature and the principles of intellectual truth were then unveiled to our view.'

In what is probably the most important piece of ritual in Freemasonry, the Charge after Initiation, we say: 'As a last general recommendation, let me exhort you to dedicate yourself to such pursuits as may enable you to become respectable in life, useful to mankind and as ornament to the society of which you have just become a member. More especially that you devote time to study such of the liberal arts and sciences as may be within the compass of your attainment and that without neglecting the ordinary duties of your station, to endeavour to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.'

I ask you to note that some early rituals do not have the words 'Masonic knowledge' but simply 'knowledge', and in the early days, the lectures would have been on non-masonic subjects such as medicine, engineering etc. This confirms that early Freemasonry set out to improve the knowledge of its members about the whole of society, and we should wonder whether, currently, we are negligent in ignoring this principle in our institution.

I cannot better finish this paper, which attempts to demonstrate the profound effect that the alchemists of the late 17th Century had on the foundations of Freemasonry, effects which we should alter or ignore at our peril, than by quoting straight from the introduction, or summary, of the paper in *AQC* by Charles Lawrence (another scientist), which states: 'In a humanitarian sense Freemasonry has the capacity of being all things to all men, and when correctly applied is a model for the very highest in social behaviour and has in consequence occupied in the minds of numerous commentators and authors. Since Speculative Freemasonry is fashioned on an essentially unchanged system formalised in the early 1700s its initial structure and ethos has attracted the attention of a similar number of historians anxious to unlock its seeming magic.'[5] However, this paper by Lawrence contends that it was instigated when a small caucus of men in circa 1720 realised that this *ad hoc* arrangement, begun in 1717, had the potential to meet their needs and decided to fashion it to their purpose in a formalised way. 'Time was of the essence and so they packed together a compilation of Masonic rituals and Constitutions in such a way as to cause the least offence and construct a unifying piece of ritual. They were bound

5 Lawrence, C. C., 'Within and without: the Hidden Mysteries of Nature and Science as a key to Early Grand Lodge Freemasonry*', AQC* (2005).

together in many ways social, economic, political, family, religious etc. but most significantly they all had a deep interest in science.'

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THE CUSTOMS OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS AND THE SYSTEM OF PYTHAGORAS – FORERUNNERS OF FREEMASONRY?

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In the 2009 edition of the *Transactions of the Manchester Association for Masonic Research*, R. W. Bro. Robert Bashford, in his paper on Freemasonry in Ireland, refers to the Essenes of Jerusalem who imposed the obligation of secrecy upon the candidate; denied admission to women; used distinctive signs and tokens of recognition; and during the formal rite of admission the candidate was clothed in white – as being emblematic of innocence and purity. There is no reference to the Essenes in Masonic Ritual. However, we do learn in the first lines of the First Tracing Board that

> 'the usages and customs among Freemasons have ever borne a near infinity to those of the ancient Egyptians'

and that

> 'the system of Pythagoras was founded on a similar principle'.

What were these usages, customs and systems, and were they really forerunners of Freemasonry? This was the question asked me, as a Lodge Mentor, by an E.A., who followed up with, 'Why do Freemasons acknowledge them? Do they have any real meaning?'

It is, of course, also necessary to note that prior to the major revival of Freemasonry in this country in the early 18th Century, it had, of course, been flourishing in Scotland. As David Stevenson points out in his book *The First Freemasons* through the study of the works and writings of Hermes Trismegistes and an in-depth study of the hieroglyphics in which the Egyptians were supposed to have concealed their wisdom from the eyes of the profane, the core of ritual in the Scottish lodges founded around 1600 contained at least some of the aspects of ancient Egyptian myth. Indeed it is possible to claim that the Craft already claimed a direct link with Hermes, and that some of its wisdom derived from Egypt. A close examination of the Old Charges emphasise this point, for the myths claimed that the roots of the Craft were to be found in Ancient Egypt.

I should add that I do not intend to try to draw direct parallels between these systems and our own Order – indeed there may be references to the ritual in other Degrees of which I am unaware, as I am not a member. (I have been told I refer to 18 different degrees – please let me know if I mention more!) What I intend to do is to present the two systems separately and allow you to make your own comparisons and to draw your own conclusions.

I should also add that just as there are different 'workings' in Freemasonry, so there were different customs in Egypt and different versions

of the life of Pythagoras. For ease in this context I have decided in all cases to follow the more popular version, unless I have stated the opposite.

Let us start with the usages and customs which were to be found in Ancient Egypt.

The Egyptian Book of the Dead relates, in symbolic form, the voyage of the soul after death, with expiation in a burning region, purification of its sidereal covering, its encounter with the evil pilot seated in a boat with his head turned aside, and with the good pilot who looked forward. The soul next appears before the 42 terrestrial judges, followed by its justification by Thoth (Hermes), and finally its entry and transfiguration in the light of Osiris (the god of the Underworld, judge of the dead, brother and husband of Isis, who revived him after he had been killed by his brother, Seth.)

The ancient mysteries themselves were taught, it is believed, by dramatic representation to the public in temple ceremonies; by precept to accepted students; and by individuals and personal demonstrations to a few, who duly qualified for the higher work. The main tenet of the teaching was the conscious self-identity of the individual intelligence independent of the physical body. They were seen to represent the progress of man, from a barbarous to a civilised state, and his advancement and struggles through gloom and toil towards the supreme perfection, whether in time or eternity.

The candidate wishing to discover the secrets of the Temple presented himself at the Great Temple of either Thebes or Memphis. Here the portico of the inner court was surrounded by great pillars, depicting strength and purity. A hierophant (priest) would approach the new arrival and would ask him questions about the city of his birth, his family and the temple which had originally instructed him. He was also required to furnish proofs of a pure and moral life as evidence that he was fitted for admission. If he passed the interview, he would proceed to a small temple which was the entrance to the underground crypts. The door was disguised by a life sized statue of Isis, and was between two columns, one red, representing the ascension of the spirit into the light of Osiris, and the other black, depicting the capacity of the spirit in matter. Once the door was closed, there was no turning back.

If he wished to continue he had to work with the temple servants, doing the most menial tasks in the strictest silence. He was required to spend a week in solitude and meditation, abstain from all unchaste acts, confine himself to a light diet, and to purify the body by frequent ablutions and severe mortifications of the flesh. On the night of his initiation he passed through the door into a dark corridor without visible means of exit. The corridor was crossed in silence and at the end two assistants showed him a small hole which could be entered only by crawling. If he wished to continue he was then given a little lighted lamp and left on his own. A voice was heard at the end of the corridor saying, 'Fools who covet knowledge and power perish here.' This was re-echoed seven times by the acoustics of the corridor.

The corridor sloped downwards into a hole leading to an abyss. As he descended the passage three priests, disguised in masks resembling jackals

and armed with swords, tried to frighten him, firstly by their appearance and noise, and afterwards by enumerating the danger that awaited him on the journey. He, however, continued to a place where there was a ladder, which was not immediately visible; nor was the crevice at the end, which led to the right to a spiral staircase which, in turn, led to a bronze grating which opened into a hall, on the walls of which were two rows of symbolic frescoes, eleven groups on each side. The grating was opened by the patophor, or magus – the guardian of the sacred symbols. The opening of this grating marked the end of the first test.

The magus then explained that the 22 symbols were the first 22 Mysteries and represented the alphabet of the Secret Science – i.e. the universal keys of the source of all wisdom and power. Each symbol, letter or number had repercussions in the divine world, the intellectual world and the physical world. For example, 'A' represented 1, which in turn represented firstly the Absolute Being; secondly the Unity of origin and synthesis of numbers; and finally, Man, the head of related beings. The Arcanum, or mystery, was represented among Egyptians by a magus in a white robe portraying purity, with a sceptre – authority – and a golden crown – universal light.

The magus then opened a door which led to a long narrow corridor at the end of which was a door, in front of which was a red-hot furnace. When the candidate for the Mysteries reached the coals, he discovered they were an optical illusion with a path through the middle. This was followed by a trial by water, as he had to cross a black stagnant pool, which was fed by water from the Nile. He was then dried by two assistants and dressed in fine linen and left to rest on a sumptuous bed with music playing. This lulled him to sleep.

On waking he was approached by a Nubian woman, carrying a cup crowned with roses in an attempt to seduce him. If he touched her, or drank from the cup, he became a slave of the Temple, for he needed to prove that he could triumph over himself. If, however, he was successful he then entered the sanctuary of Isis, where he took an oath of silence and submission and was then called 'brother'. He was, at this stage, seen as an apprentice, or adept, of the Science. To become a full member it was still necessary for him to cross the threshold of Osiris.

This was achieved by entering, at dusk, a low crypt, in which lay an open sarcophagus, in which he was left with funeral chants sung round him. During this time the light went out. Lying there in the sarcophagus he would fall into a state of lethargy, during which time his life would pass before him. He then entered a state of ecstasy, in which a light approached in the form of a star which developed into a rainbow which then became the sun. This then developed into a white rose which evaporated into a cloud, which, in turn, became a woman with a transparent veil holding a scroll, which was the book of his life. He then abruptly returned to his state of lethargy, from which he awoke to see the hierophant and magi, who gave him cordial to drink, after which he ascended to the observatory of the

Temple, where the Head of the Temple related to him the Vision of Hermes, the secrets of which were only transmitted orally.

The adept was now consecrated as a priest of Osiris, bound by an absolute silence with regards the secrets of which he was now in possession. Should he break them he was assured of a violent death.

Such then were the secrets and mysteries of the Ancient Egyptians, which bear many resemblances to Freemasonry. The secrets were fairly straight forward and comprehensible. On the other hand those of the system of Pythagoras were of a more complex and philosophical nature.

The system of Pythagoras was based on two classes, the Simple Hearers and the Last. The Last were allowed to propose difficulties and to learn reasons for all that was taught. The system's chief aim was one of moral doctrine, viz to purge the mind from the impurities of the body and the clouds of the imagination. Unlike other contemporary systems it had more purity and piety in it, but less exactness. It had six maxims or bare explanations of:

- divine worship
- natural honesty
- integrity
- public spiritedness, and
- other common offices of life.

The Sun was seen as the centre of the planetary system, thus being the emblem of the Deity served. This continued the idea of Divine omnipresence put forward by Hermes:

> 'But if thou wilt see him (i.e. the Deity), consider the course of the moon, consider the order of the stars. Oh Thou unspeakable, unutterable, to be praised with silence.'

A similar system was to be found later among the Essenes, for the Greek philosophers had only the knowledge of the god of Nature, and it was under Jewish Law that they had learnt of the worship of the deity. The Essenes' system was only ceremonial. It consisted of bodily cleanliness, the observation of the Sabbath and an annual presentation to the Temple. Those included in the Order were bound by oaths to observe Piety, Justice, Fidelity and Modesty; to conceal the secrets of the fraternity; and to preserve the books of their instructors. They also taught that Science arose in the East:

> '…and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the East, His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with his glory.'
>
> *(Ezekiel 43:2)*

These then were the mysteries Pythagoras took back to Greece from Egypt after he had been initiated into several different orders of priest, who kept their secrets from vulgar gaze and who only revealed every geometric theorem to those who had first undergone five years of silence. He also discovered the 47th problem of the First Book of Euclid, one of his most important discoveries, for which he is said to have sacrificed a hecatomb (100 oxen or other cattle), and which has, of course, great relevance to our own Order. He also knew the true system of the world and the solar system, which was later to be revived by Copernicus. Pythagoras founded a great lodge at Crotona in Graecia Magna (a large Greek colony in Italy).

Pythagoras was the first person to take the name of 'philosopher' or 'lover of wisdom'. He aimed to study philosophy in order to elevate man to a resemblance of the Deity. God was seen as a soul diffused throughout all Nature and from Him are human souls derived. These souls are immortal and men needed only to take pains to purge themselves of their vices in order to be united to the Deity. Unity was seen as the principle of all things, and between God and Man were various orders of Supreme Beings which were ministers of the Supreme will.

Pythagoras condemned all images of the Deity and wanted God to be worshipped with as few ceremonies as possible. The system held all goods in common stock, condemned all pleasures of the senses, and insisted on abstinence from swearing. Nothing was eaten if it still had life, and Pythagoras believed in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. It is, of course, possible that this last idea originated in Egypt.

The Institution was based on the unification of Science and Art. To enter, the aspirant was allowed to attend the gymnasium to take part in discussions and voice his ideas, so that his disposition could be ascertained.

He then spent a night in a lonely cavern, where it was said there were monsters and phantoms. The moral test was more serious than this physical one. Having been locked in a bare cell for twelve hours with only dry bread and water, and having been given a problem (e.g. what is the meaning of a triangle within a circle?), the aspirant was asked to explain his ideas before the assembled novices who had been given strict instructions to ridicule him. If he could withstand their taunts with calmness and show accurate and spiritual necessities, he would then be invited to join their number.

As a novice, a period of two to five years, he was placed under a rule of absolute silence with his teacher, but friendship with another novice in order to learn tolerance, the unity of peoples and religion, and that, in the heart of the Ancient Mysteries, all the gods were re-established in One Supreme God.

Once he had passed through this period, he took the second step – that of purification, through the learning of the Numbers or Theogony (rational theology), which claimed to provide the key of being, of science and of life. The novice was received into Pythagoras' home and entered the inner courts there, where he enjoyed an intimate and direct relationship with his

master. He now became an ‘esoteric’ (those on the inside) and this marked the real start with initiation, in which he learnt the complete and rational explanation of the esoteric doctrine from the beginnings, which continued with the mystic science of numbers and concluded with the final consequences of universal evolution, and dealt with the destinies and supreme goals of the divine Psyche – the Human Soul.

The numbers, letters and geometric figures had human representations which could only be understood by initiates, and only revealed to adepts after they had taken a vow of silence. Pythagoras formulated this Science in his book, ‘Hieros Logos’ (The Sacred Word).

The science of numbers was seen as the living forces of the divine faculties in action in the world. By explaining their workings Pythagoras formulated his theogony.

The main figures that he used firstly were the Equilateral Triangle and the Square. The Equilateral Triangle, he taught, was a perfect figure and was the symbol of the Deity, the principle and author of all subluminary things, the essence of Light and Truth, who was, who is, and who shall be. He saw the Square as being the union of the celestial and terrestrial elements of power, and also as the emblem of Morality and Justice.

The most expressive symbol that he used was the Tetractys, which was expressed by ten jods disposed in the form of a triangle, each side containing four. It was on this symbol that all initiates were obligated, as it was the basis of many awful and important truths. These were explained as follows:

- the one point represented the monad or active principle;
- the two points the duad, or passive principle;
- the three points the triad, or the world proceeding from third union;
- the four, the quarternary, or Liberal Sciences.

He also used the cube to show the mind of man, after a well-spent life in acts of piety and devotion, and so prepared by virtue for translation into the society of the celestial gods. The Point within the Circle was seen by Pythagoras as the symbol of the Universe. The use of this symbol as coeval with the first created man – the creation was the circle and the man himself the centre. Similarly the dodecahedron, a figure with twelve sides, was also a symbol of the universe. Finally he also taught that the Triple Triangle – a unity of perfection – was a symbol of health, and as such was called Hygeia.

This teaching took place in a circular temple in which could be seen the 9 Muses, carved in marble, around Hestia, the guardian of the divine element present in everything. The Muses that surrounded her represented the following attributes:

- Urania — astronomy and astrology
- Polymia — divination
- Melpomene — life and death

- Calliope medicine
- Clio magic
- Euterpe ethics
- Terpsichore physics
- Erato botany, and
- Thalia zoology.

Here the adept learnt the First Principle, viz God was seen to have as a number – Unity, which contained Infinity; as a name – Father, Creator or Eternal Masculine; and as a sign – the Living Fire, the symbol of the Spirit, the essence of everything. Pythagoras based this principle on a threefold law, which became the centre of his theogony:

- that Man was three elements – body, soul and spirit
- that the Universe consisted of the natural, human and divine worlds; and
- that the mind of man received its immortal, invisible and entirely active nature of God.

He pursued the teaching of Numbers still further, arguing that the basic principles were contained in the first four, since in adding or multiplying them all numbers can be found. He attached especial importance to the numbers 7 and 10. 7, being a compound of 3 and 4, represented the union of man and divinity, since it expressed complete fulfilment in everything through seven stages. It also represented the law of evolution. 10, being the number found if the first four numbers are added together, was the perfect number, since it represented all the principles of Divinity evolved and united in a new Unity. This was linked to the 9 Muses, who formed three groups of three, and with Hestia forming divine Science, Guardian of the Archetypal Fire – the Sacred Decade.

The third stage of the initiation was that of Perfection, which involved Cosmology and Psychology, and looked closely at the evolution of the soul. This stage took place at night, for Pythagoras felt that the calm and the darkness added value to the teaching. These secrets were perhaps the most startling for the initiate, for they went beyond then commonly held beliefs, and also added symbolism to what had, at face value, a different meaning.

Pythagoras saw the Universe as a living being, animated by a great Soul, and permeated with a great Intelligence. At a centre of the Universe was a Fire, of which the Sun was but a reflection. Fire was seen as the sign of the Spirit, and of divine universal Consciousness; i.e. the Earth was the region of corporeal life, where all activities accompanying the incarnation and excarnation of the soul took place. In short, Pythagoras taught the movement of the Earth round the Sun, and that each solar world formed a little universe having its corresponding spiritual world and own heaven. This was taught at a time when the static Earth theory was prevalent. In

other words he saw man revolving round the impermeable source of all life and not vice versa.

He also taught that the visible universe was only a passing form of the world-soul. There were four elements which formed all stars, and all beings should be seen as progressive states of matter. These states were:

- Earth - the solid state
- Water - the liquid state
- Air - the gaseous state, and
- Fire - the imponderable state.

Pythagoras also suggested that there existed a fifth or ethereal state, that of astral or the world-soul.

This fusion, which formed all beings, led the initiate sages to the ultimate truth, which all Freemasons are charged also to consider:

'know yourself'

for Pythagoras believed that it was only through this knowledge that it was possible to know the universe of the gods.

He also taught that evolution of the Earth was followed by the evolution of souls, which led him to raise such questions as 'What is the human soul?' His answer was that it was part of the great soul of the World, a spark of divine spirit. He developed this into an argument that it was unlike all other souls, for its progress was marked by good and evil. In effect, he advanced a form of teaching found today in the Hindu teaching of re-incarnation – namely that your state in this life is influenced by your previous lives and will influence your future existence. (For example disability is seen as a punishment for a previous bad existence.) Pythagoras taught that the human soul alone came from heaven and returns there after death, preserving its individuality, but perfected from all impurities gathered in this life.

The final, or fourth, stage was that of the Epiphany or 'showing forth'. While the first three stages were concerned with the initiation of human will, the final was to apply that teaching to daily life. Pythagoras taught that it was necessary to realise that there was truth in intellect, virtue in the soul and purity in the body. To achieve this end, he taught that wise hygiene and temperate continence were necessary as means to the greatest end – a pure body in a pure soul. To put this another way, he argued that, in the light of intelligence, a soul can acquire courage, abnegation, devotion and faith – i.e. Virtue – which ultimately led to Wisdom to distinguish good and evil in everything, and to see God in the smallest things as well as in the totality of worlds. When this has been achieved, then the initiate became 'adept', a very rare state of being. Indeed in Ancient Greece it has been argued that there were but three adepts in all time – Orpheus at the rise of Greece, Pythagoras at its zenith and Appolomus at its decline.

The origins of Good and Evil were to be seen in the role of Destiny which led to the worlds of both matter and the Spirit, where freed souls existed and where divine law reigned. Between the two Pythagoras saw Providence in action. This he summarised as Destiny, which revealed the past; Freedom, revealing the future; and Providence, which covered both, and therefore was the ever existing Present and Eternity. This naturally could be developed into seeing Evil as an illusionary temporal existence and Good as the real eternal existence. However, in order to explain the existence of Good and Evil, and to account for their need to exist, Pythagoras explained that it was necessary to accept Re-incarnation, so that the two qualities could be seen in terms of Punishment and Reward.

There were also women initiates, which led to the idea of marriage to make the radiating and creative power of the couple, the call of the Soul to incarnation. To Pythagoras, the father, mother and child were representative of the Spirit, Soul and Heart of the Universe. Thus this last initiation saw the foundation of social work, a creation to which each initiate brought a unique building stone.

Before concluding it is necessary to make one final point. In Croton Pythagoras organised the supreme regulating body of the State, the Council of 300, all of whom had to be Initiates. This powerful body lasted for 25 years, but after the war with the Sybans – a rival city state – there were calls for democratic changes to the way Croton was ruled. This was rejected by the Council of 300, but Cylon, who had been rejected as a candidate of the Order, turned a large crowd against Pythagoras, who (according to one version of the tale) died in the ensuing riot, and as a result the Order dispersed.

I said at the start that it was not my intention to try to draw parallels between the two movements and Freemasonry, and, although I have made the occasional cross-reference where I have felt it appropriate, I have not made any conscious attempt to draw out every parallel. How far these two systems were forerunners of our own Order is obviously a matter of conjecture, but I believe that there are obvious similarities which you, as experienced masons, can observe. Therefore whether or not we are right to claim that

> 'Masonry….is not only the most ancient but also the most honourable society that has ever existed…'

is, brethren, for you to decide for yourselves.

Further Reading

Edouard Schuré	*The Great Initiates*
W. W. Covey-Crump	Egyptian Mysteries and English Masonry *(Transactions of the Lodge of Research, No. 2429, 1917–1918)*
W. W. Covey-Crump	History and Symbolism of the First Tracing-Board *(Transactions of the Lodge of Research, No. 2429, 1919–1920)*
T. C. Thorpe	Pythagoras: His Philosophy and its References to the Craft *(Transactions of the Lodge of Research, No. 2429, 1931–1932)*

SECOND THOUGHTS

W. Bro. David J. Walters, PAGDC

The title of this paper may imply a fixation with the Second or Fellow Craft Degree, and, certainly, that is where my thoughts started. However, I do not intend to limit my thoughts to one degree, but to wander from one ceremony to others, even non-masonic, where there is a link or comparison.

Let us start with the steps taken by the Candidate in the three degrees: three, five or seven. Are they to reinforce the Masonic mantra of 'Three rule a Lodge, five hold a Lodge and seven or more make it perfect', or is there some other explanation? V. W. Bro. The Rev. Neville Barker Cryer points out that each step is a significant point on a journey from the West Gate of the Temple. As an E. A. the first step takes us into the Court of the Gentiles, the second into the Court of the Women, and the third and final step, at this level, into the Court of the male Israelites. Here we are told that we have become accepted as a member of the family of B., but are limited in our knowledge and in full participation.

The next two steps takes us first into the Court of the Priests, and thence to the entrance of the Inner Temple. Thus we become acquainted with J., the Assistant High Priest. This last step takes us to the Middle Chamber where the Craftsman received their wages – but only during the building of the Temple as, on the completion of the work, only the priests were allowed there.

The final two steps lead us into the Holy of Holies.

Let us consider the shape of the staircase. It is a winding spiral, which, as we ascend, opens more steps to our view. Perhaps this is a symbol, which emphasises the injunction to extend our researches into the hidden mysteries of Nature and Science. However, there is good evidence that the early writers of the ritual would have taken the legend of the Virgin Mary, as a child, being taken to the Temple, and encouraged to ascend the staircase to the priest. Certainly the N-Town plays of the 15th Century would tend to support this view. Play 9 is entitled 'Joachim and Anne's Presentation of Mary at the Temple.'

[The N-Town plays are also described under the title of mediaeval or Mystery plays, some of which were based on the Bible, while others are taken from either Roman Catholic or folk tradition. The 'N' stands for 'Nomen' – translated from the Latin as 'Name' – and used to indicate the town in which the play was being acted – e.g. Melton Mowbray Play or Loughborough Play.]

I have mentioned the hidden mysteries of Nature and Science. During the explanation of the Tracing Board the five Noble Orders of Architecture are enumerated as well as the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences. Doubtless these are given to us to direct our researches. I do not intend to delve into matters

Doric, Ionic et cetera – they are covered in depth in the Fourth Section of the Second Lecture in the book of *The Lectures of the Three Degrees of Craft Masonry*. The Fourth Section defines the Liberal Arts and Sciences. Briefly **Grammar** teaches the proper arrangement of words; **Rhetoric** teaches us to speak copiously and fluently on any subject – not merely with precision alone, but with all the advantages of force and elegance, wisely contriving to captivate the hearers by strength of argument and beauty of expression, whether it be to instruct, exhort, admonish or applaud; **Logic** teaches us to guide our reason discretionally in the general knowledge of things and to direct our inquiries after truth; **Arithmetic** teaches the power and property of numbers; **Geometry** treats of the powers and properties of magnitude in general, where length, length and breadth, or length, breadth and thickness are considered; **Music** teaches us of the art of forming concords, so as to produce a delightful harmony, by a mathematical and proportionate arrangement of acute, grave and mixed sounds, (something that usually eludes us in our singing of the Opening and Closing Odes); and **Astronomy**, which is that Divine art by which we are taught to read the Wisdom, Strength and Beauty of the Almighty Creator in the sacred pages of the celestial hemisphere. Assisted by Astronomy, we can observe the motions, measure the distances, comprehend the magnitude, and calculate the periods and eclipses of the Heavenly Bodies; by it also we learn the use of the Globes, and the system of the World, and the primary laws of Nature; and while we are employed in the study of this science, we may perceive unparalleled instances of wisdom and goodness, and on every hand may trace the Glorious Author by His works.

We will put our own contemporary interpretation on each of these subjects. I have given the 'Second Lecture' definition of Rhetoric and Astronomy in full to exemplify how language changes over time. One of my favourite Masonic instructions is 'Brother, do you proceed to discharge your special duty'. This is not a question – it is a command. Likewise our appreciation of rhetoric and astronomy are not those of older, even mediaeval, times. Rhetoric stems from Roman times, when Senators were taught to use their brains to formulate arguments and respond to the rebuttal of their case et cetera without the modern use of notes – they did not have notebooks nor memory-sticks to help them. By the time we get to the 15th and 16th Centuries, or thereabouts, much had been written on this subject, and the early composers of the ritual would have been aware of this. I am conscious that the Emulation Lodge of Improvement was formed in 1823, but there were lectures before this date – notably those of William Preston, which were written in 1772 or thereabouts – which, I feel sure, would have been of influence. Hence, the older interpretation would have been acceptable in those days.

As to Astronomy – in reality we would understand this more under the title of Astrology. Do not dismiss this as superstition. In its day it was the cutting edge of science – even Isaac Newton was an Alchemist. Heaven knows what future generations will think of our knowledge and efforts.

Why were these subjects chosen? The principal undergraduate course at many mediaeval universities was the *trivium*, consisting of grammar, rhetoric and logic. Success with this meant that one could consider the more challenging *quadrivium* – arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. Thus, such a strong academic background would influence the early compilers of the ritual. Incidentally, the contrast between the simpler *trivium* (meaning 'three ways') and the more difficult *quadrivium* ('four ways') gave rise to the word 'trivial'.

As ever serendipity played a part in my preparations. I happened upon the fascinating fact that the word that means 'an ear of corn near to a fall of water' has association with the Arabic word 'siblet' meaning 'ear of corn', whilst the Hebrew for a 'fall of water' is 'shibboleth'. The use of such a password is inspired. It is also of note that the earliest reference in English is as early as John Wycliffe's 1382 translation of the Bible.

There is much in the Ceremony of Passing, but it is quite lightweight when compared to the other two degrees. Part of the problem lies in the early days when the various degrees were established. However, it is a shame when some of the better written portions of the ritual are ignored because they are not strict Emulation. I refer to the longer explanation of the Second Degree Working Tools, for example '…. for he who is placed on the lowest spoke of fortune's wheel is equally entitled to our regard, as a time will come – and the wisest of us knows not how soon – when all distinctions, save those of goodness and virtue, shall cease and death, the great leveller of all human greatness, reduce us all to the same state.'

There are passages in the Charge after Passing, which deserve more attention. Frankly, I could quote the whole of the Charge, but shall content myself with one small portion: 'As the solemnity of our ceremonies requires serious deportment, you are to be particularly attentive to your behaviour in our assemblies; you are to preserve our ancient usages and customs sacred and inviolable, and induce others by your example to hold them in veneration.'

So where are these disconnected jottings leading me? Perhaps to a couple of thoughts. Firstly, when reading our various rituals, we should beware of becoming blinkered by a 20th or 21st Century ignorance of the past, and particularly the language. Secondly, we should be more open to change. I mean neither stepping beyond the 'Landmarks' nor moving the 'Landmarks', but embracing the opportunities that are available. Just because we have 'never done that before' does not mean we should ignore 'it' now. The item should be considered in detail. If it enhances the ceremony, awakens an interest in the Brethren, and is within the regular 'Landmarks', perhaps we should add it to our armoury.

Finally, it is very rare for our Books of Ritual to be worked verbatim. After all, Emulation Ritual is supposed to be delivered, in the main, by the Master. We, as an agricultural Province, tend to farm it out. Each Lodge interprets 'The Book' as they, and their traditions, see fit. Yes, the Sns and Ss should be communicated by the Master or a PM of the Lodge – but

where does that leave us with the last part of the Third Degree TB – there are several Sns communicated at that point?

Should we adhere most strictly to the printed word – perhaps, yes. However, there are many occasions when a brother may find a variation, with the same meaning but possibly more comprehensible, which then receives the rough edge of the D.C.'s tongue. My view is that, as long as the meaning is there, the flow maintained, and the Candidate understands the various points being made, then it is acceptable.

Thus, I hope that I leave you with a couple of points to ponder. However, I am quietly confident that 'We have NEVER done that before' will hold sway.

DEEP INTO THAT DARKNESS – PEERING

W. Bro. Roger W. Bishop, PAGReg

I turned on the radio a couple of months ago and I heard a representative of the R. S. P. B. say 'for MYElennia many many birds have landed on this shore.' I thought, why MYElennia? The word is MILLenia. Why do people change the pronunciation of words? I immediately thought of that lovely masonic word which is pronounced by at least 90% of you, in my submission wrongly, fYEdelity. I've always had a thing about fidelity. You will remember – 'adeste fideles' – 'oh come all ye faithful', or those two words which appear on nearly all your coins – fidei defensor – defender of the faith, and I'm not sure that any of you reading out loud a passage of English prose would actually say 'FYEdelity'. Perhaps it's just a masonic pronunciation. How and why it came to be pronounced that way, in the masonic sense, is anyone's guess; perhaps from the old Lodges of Instruction and Reconciliation. However, it's not the only pronunciation that I have a thing about. Why do I hear on the radio and TV 'DYElemma' instead of 'DILemma', 'HarASSment' instead of 'Harassment', 'REsearch' instead of 'Research?' I appreciate these are masonic irrelevancies but then I come to that masonic word 'Tenet'. It's not 'TEEnet', but 'Tenet'. It doesn't refer to the dried leaves of an evergreen shrub used to make a beverage by the infusion of hot water. It means a belief, an opinion, a dogma. It derives from the Latin "tenere" to hold. Accordingly I submit to you it is 'tenet', not 'TEEnet'.

Now these are words of individual pronunciation. We learn how to pronounce them without any direction, except in one famous case. The Book of Emulation specifically tells us how to pronounce one word. In the ritual Book of Emulation it is the only direction in how to pronounce a word. Some of you are nodding, you know what is coming; some of you will be wondering, expectantly I hope, what it might be. Brethren it is the word "heel" or "hail". (The 1955 ritual spells it 'hele' – Editor.) In the First Degree obligation we are taught, indeed we read, that beautiful masonic phrase "heel, conceal and never reveal". It is, I suggest, a magnificent expression of masonic poetry. Why the authors of our Emulation Ritual should say "hail" I still do not know. My father on visiting one of his brothers would always purloin a plant for his own garden. On arriving home he would then say "I'll just go and heel in that plant" and off he'd go into the garden (a spade or his own heel) and he would cover the roots with soil. At the weekend he would plant it properly. In the old Masonic Quarterly magazine, in 2006, there were 3 separate editions where letter writers argued their own preferred pronunciation and explained their reasons. All of them, supporting heel, were I suggest, sensible and logical. All of those supporting hail, including the Emulation Lodge of Improvement, founded in 1823, said the pronunciation of the word was uncertain but that it should be pronounced as "hail" in the old ancient and antique way and of course "we've always pronounced it that way". Well

they were right about it having been pronounced that way in olden times, that is as "hale", but then so was "concale" and "revale". The differences in pronunciation stem from the great English vowel shift between Chaucer (who used the word) and Shakespeare (who didn't). The editor closed the correspondence by referring to an article on the website which really told us much as above, except to state in its closing remarks that W. Bro. Millward, a Founder and First Master of a Buxton Lodge, an extremely venerable Past Master, who spent a great deal of his time in London at one of the Lodges of Reconciliation, was adamant that it must be pronounced "Hale". I am more than happy at this point to disclose that W. Bro. Millward was the first Master of the Phoenix Lodge of St. Ann, No. 1235. I think the rivalry of the Buxton Lodges commences at this point, or, at least it would have done, if the Buxton Lodge, No. 1688, had then been in existence.[1]

So our Emulation Lodge of Improvement says it should be pronounced "hail". Is this important? Does it matter? The basic ritual that we now use followed the Act of Union in 1813. Before that there had been some attempts to arrive at a uniform ritual. William Preston attempted uniformity in the1790s but only in 1813 did the Duke of Sussex, the Grand Master, set out to achieve "the most perfect unity" contained in the Articles of Union. A draft form was eventually arrived at by the Lodge of Reconciliation, but no copy was ever kept. Indeed, at that time any printed copy of the ritual was considered a very serious offence. Most of the teaching at that time was by a series of catechismal lectures – questions and answers, and often quite complicated questions and answers. So Lodges of Instruction, of Reconciliation, and of Emulation were formed and a certain amount of progress was made, although only slight. In the 1820s/30s if you wanted to read a Masonic ritual you would have to turn to an exposure. The exposures were first printed in the 1730s but continued right through to the next century. They were usually quite accurate but clearly not authentic and for precisely that reason George Claret in 1838 published a real Masonic ritual. A few years before this would have been a serious Masonic offence. He was followed by others taking similar actions, e.g. George Bradshaw, Hogg's Perfect Ceremonies and ultimately Franklin Thomas. Thomas was a very interesting man. His Masonic career moved him right across the country, starting in Kent, then to Oxford, and finally to Lancashire. On his travels he gathered up a great deal of Masonic knowledge and expertise and he wrote it all down. In his books he included lengthy footnotes making it clear that his ritual was correct and any other variation wrong. It is important to say at this point that no action was ever taken against any of these Masonic writers by Grand Lodge or any other Masonic authority.

1 Editorial Note. In *Help for the Initiate*, complied in 1945 by W. Bro. C.C. H. Binns, it states: 'Possibly the three words "hele, conceal and reveal" were originally a "jingle". Since the 18th Century reveal and conceal were pronounced "revale and conccale", hele may have become phonetically similar, to preserve the "jingle". There is an O.E. word "helian" – to cover over, but the "e" was probably pronounced as in the French word "chef", so we must remain uncertain.'

So we have all these forms of Masonic ritual, all of them similar but all of them with variations, usually non-essential variations. The Lodge of Reconciliation in the early 1800s forbade any of its members from writing anything down and it met only occasionally. Therefore, it's a bit much to expect any of its members to return to their own Lodges and remember, exactly, precisely what they had been taught. When differences came to the fore in the 19th and early 20th Centuries, Grand Lodge would often refer the enquirer to his own PGM. What I'm suggesting is that whilst our ritual comes from different sources and is in places variable in content, it doesn't really matter if we change it ever so slightly to ensure it makes sense.

The form, the content of the ritual, is important to us. We must make sure that the speaker, the candidate, and the other Brethren in the Lodge, understand each and every single word phrase and sentence. Understanding ritual is one thing, misunderstanding words a much less important part. Shakespeare, in his plays and sonnets, used about 15,000 words, and of those he made up, i.e. he invented, about 10% of them. He expected his audience to understand those words, e.g. 'barefaced', 'critical', 'excellent', 'radiance', lonely', and he wasn't the only one – Ben Jonson, Newton, Coleridge and John Milton. Paradise Lost, Il Penseroso, L'Allegro conjure up all kinds of words. If Milton couldn't find the right word he made one up – 'jubilant', 'fragrance', 'damp', 'extravagance', and even the word 'space', that vast void between the stars. Thus, whilst the words are important, we can get used to all of them, mispronounced or not, but what really causes us difficulties are the wrong verbs, incorrect phrases, misplaced commas etc.

In the Installation ritual, in the Master's Obligation, the ritual says 'faithfully, zealously and impartially to administer" and then there is a comma. "Administer" is generally a transitive verb, so administer what? Earlier in that Obligation it mentions 'duties', and in a reading of the whole paragraph it therefore has to be 'duties', so that short phrase must be 'faithfully, zealously and impartially to administer THEM'. It doesn't actually affect the meaning of the Obligation, but wouldn't it be better to include 'them' as an addition to one's own learning and, on its appreciation and understanding, to the Brethren listening? The whole purpose of our ritual, in whatever degree, is to make sure the words, the phrases and the sentences are understood, wholly and totally, not just by the speaker but by all those listening. A lack of nouns, adverbs, adjectives, and misplaced commas mean that unless you change the ritual, however slightly, it never will make sense.

In the Knight Templar ceremony there is a sentence that is quite clearly wrong. It doesn't accord with the information and understanding we receive in the Chapter ritual. Now my Eminent Preceptor, before a meeting, said to me, "This is wrong, it should be X." I said, "Absolutely right, change it." As a result, he did change it in the ceremony, but unfortunately neither of us informed the Immediate Past Preceptor. So when the Preceptor said the correct words his predecessor, sitting behind him and with the book, immediately corrected him with the wrong sentence. "No", said the Preceptor,

"it's X." "No it isn't," said his predecessor again reading his book with a kind of anguished disgruntlement, "it's Y." Fortunately the Preceptor neglected to continue the argument and proceeded with the rest of the ceremony.

In another ritual, not Craft, there are written the words 'we rejoice to have united'. Now you cannot 'have' united. You can unite or be united. For those of you who speak French it's the old problem— is it être or avoir, the verb 'to be' or 'to have'. The printed ritual is still the same. It's wrong, and when I pronounce those words, I change them and no-one has ever noticed. Therefore, when an important member of this lodge, a Past Master, received certain eminent Brethren from London, I was, as you would expect, more than a little interested to see how one of those eminent Brethren would repeat these few words. I was not disappointed. He changed the verb entirely, but he kept the whole sense of the sentence. Instead of saying "We rejoice to have united" he said, "We rejoice to have shared". No switching of 'have' for 'be', but the change of 'united' to 'shared'. The ritual is still the same. I look forward to the next reprint.

The reason that I am carping on about these verbs, phrases, words is that we shouldn't automatically believe the ritual is grammatically correct. Our ritual, in whatever degree, is beautiful and imposing and I do not suggest wholesale changes – only very tiny ones. It then becomes easier for us to learn, and more understandable to the candidate and the Brethren in the lodge, and misinterpretation becomes, hopefully, impossible.

I don't know much about Hebrew history, or the history of the events quoted in the Bible or many historical references in our ritual. However, for many years, I thought that Boaz was a Prince and Ruler in Israel. Some of you may still think that. The Emulation words in our First Degree Ceremony referring to the left hand pillar say "so named after Boaz COMMA the great grandfather of David COMMA a Prince and Ruler in Israel". Now commas act as parentheses, so in any sentence you can remove the words between the commas and the remaining sentence will still make sense. So in the extract I've just mentioned if you extract the words between the commas you are left with "so named after Boaz a Prince and Ruler in Israel". I always thought that is what he was but he's not. The Prince and Ruler in Israel is David. You may say it is of little import. Probably it isn't, but to the experienced mason, probably me, I completely misunderstood the sentence. Simply by misplacing a comma the writers of our Emulation ritual can produce a meaning that is simply not true. Perhaps in the future someone can remedy the situation.

I recall that in 2004/5 Supreme Grand Chapter changed a part of Chapter ritual. Recommendations were made for the insertion of new words. The advisory note of Supreme Grand Chapter for these alterations was not to encourage candidates and to make it more understandable to them, but, and I quote, "become more attractive to existing members."

Thus Brethren, if it is necessary change your ritual, not by a lot, it is to make it more understandable to you and to produce a ritual that is clear precise and understandable to the Candidate, but, more importantly, and, to quote Supreme Grand Chapter, to make it "more attractive to existing members."

DR. DESAGULIERS AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE YEAR 1717: A REVIEW-ARTICLE OF THREE BOOKS.

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John Theophilus Desaguliers: A Natural Philosopher, Engineer and Freemason in Newtonian England. Dr. A.T. Carpenter, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011, ISBN 978-1-4411-2778-5 (paper back.)

The Genesis of Freemasonry. Dr. D. Harrison, Lewis Masonic, 2009, ISBN (10)-0-85318-322-8 (hard back.)

Freemasonry and the Enlightenment: Architecture, Symbols and Influences. Professor James Stevens Curl, Historical Publications, 2011, ISBN 978-1-905286-45-4 (hard back).

The primary focus of this article will be on the life and influence of that remarkable, but often neglected, Freemason, Dr. Desaguliers, and his part in the emergence of the modern Craft from its mediaeval background. The opportunity will, however, be taken to consider the influences which led to the process whereby an old operative craft organisation was transformed into a social and philanthropic body, which retained some of the outward forms and rites of its predecessor, but which was, in truth, a real example of new wine being put into old bottles.

DR. DESAGULIERS

Does it take one polymath to recognise the true extent of the genius of another? The author of the book under consideration is certainly one such, as is the subject of her work. Dr. Audrey Carpenter initially read Natural Sciences at University in London and undertook doctoral research there before working for many years as a technical abstractor and librarian. She then returned to academic life at the University of Loughborough, where she read Humanities and there encountered the life of J. T. Desaguliers, on whom she subsequently undertook further doctoral research, which has resulted in the first modern and in-depth study of the life of someone, who, though commemorated by his brother masons, has been unjustly neglected by the rest of the world. Dr. Carpenter's meticulously researched and well written work reveals someone who, starting from quite modest beginnings as the son of an émigré Huguenot minister, forced to flee France as a result of Louis XIV's intolerant persecutions, rose to quite a distinguished and influential position in English society in the early years of the 18th Century. Desaguliers was educated at Bishop Vesey's School in Sutton Coldfield and appears to have written his first scientific paper there on the germination of turnips, which was published by the Royal Society, a body

of which he was later to become a member. He then obtained a place as a Servitor (a student who undertook tasks in return for education) at Christ Church College, Oxford. He seems at this period to have made the first of a number of acquaintanceships which were to advance his career. This time it was with John Wilkins, a wealthy mine owner in Leicestershire. Desaguliers read for the BA degree, the syllabus for which included Grammar and Rhetoric, Aristotle's Ethics and Politics, Moral Philosophy, Greek and Theology. Following graduation he sought ordination in the Church of England, following the example of his father, who had converted to Anglicanism from the rather Calvinist Huguenot denomination. At the same time he was much influenced by the scientific studies and lectures of John Keill, who was an exponent of the ideas of Sir Isaac Newton and who became himself a FRS. In due course Keill also became Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford. Dr. Carpenter argues that Desaguliers became Keill's demonstrator, while also undertaking post graduate studies at the then Hart Hall (now Hertford College), Oxford, for which he received the MA degree. Though he left Oxford for London in 1712, Desaguliers's academic work was recognised by the University who made him an Honorary Doctor of Civil Law in 1719. As he subsequently undertook teaching at Cambridge, that University incorporated him as a Doctor of Laws, and hence he became known as "Dr. Desaguliers, LLD."

It was in London that Desaguliers's career blossomed. He began to deliver public lectures on science in 1712, taking advantage of the great thirst for scientific knowledge and the new learning that gripped the capital. These were delivered on a subscription basis, and they formed the basis of Desaguliers's income, though he was also later in receipt of stipends as a result of preferment to livings in the Church of England, the most well known of which was St. Laurence, Stanmore, the Parish for the Duke of Chandos's palatial mansion of Cannons near Edgware. Desaguliers served also as a chaplain to the Duke—another powerful and influential patron – for many years. The lectures and public experiments that were delivered were designed to demonstrate the ideas of Sir Isaac Newton, and in due course they resulted in the publication of a *Course of Experimental Philosophy*, a book that was to have a great influence on the development of scientific thinking and practice for many years after its appearance in 1734. Desaguliers published a number of other works in the area then known as "Natural Philosophy", and, as Dr. Carpenter shows, he also turned his hand to poetry where he enjoyed some modest success as a versifier in the conventional style of the time, primarily using his pen to advance Newtonian concepts in verse. His knowledge of French as well as Latin, Greek and English further led to a successful career as a translator of scientific books from the continental mainland of Europe, while his prowess as a scientific demonstrator led to early contacts with the Royal Family, lecturing to King George I and the Prince and Princess of Wales (later King George II and Queen Caroline) in 1717. This Royal connection also led to a degree of Patronage for Desaguliers, and also brought him into

contact with George and Caroline's son, Frederick, Prince of Wales, whom he was later to initiate into Freemasonry.

Shortly after he came to London, Desaguliers's prowess as a demonstrator came to the attention of Newton, who brought him before the Royal Society on a regular basis. There Desaguliers also lectured on optics and magnetism, often devising intricate machines with which to demonstrate the ideas under discussion, and, in 1714, he was elected as FRS. His interests in the natural and applied sciences as we now know them were widespread, and he was much involved with improving the draughting and efficiency of coal fires, developing the power of steam engines, and early experiments with electricity. He was also involved with bridge building and was much bound up with the project to create a second bridge across the Thames at Westminster, though ironically this was to result in the demolition of his own house in Channel Row to make way for the approach road to the new bridge.

Linguist, physicist, engineer, astronomer and mathematician, as well as cleric and courtier, Desaguliers certainly deserves to be remembered as one of the foremost scientific minds of his time, though, as Dr. Carpenter argues, his chief claim to scientific fame lies primarily as an educator and populariser of science rather than as an original thinker. However, history has generally ignored these achievements and has largely known him for his involvement with Freemasonry, though, as is clearly shown in Dr. Carpenter's work, Freemasonry ran like a thread through all of Desaguliers's adult life and work in London as his Masonic contacts were often also prominent in the Royal Society, and in the life of the Royal Court and great noble households.

DESAGULIERS THE FREEMASON

It is not known when Desaguliers became a mason. Dr. Carpenter points out that he may have been involved while in Oxford, or that his initiation came shortly after his move to London. It is known that he was a member of the lodge which met at the famous "Rummer and Grapes" Tavern, situated near his home in Channel Row, Westminster, by 1717, the year in which that lodge was instrumental in creating the London Premier Grand Lodge. As his biographer concludes, 'He must have been a member for some time before 1717 as he played such an important role soon after that year, and he remained an active and prominent Freemason until his death in 1744.' Desaguliers became Grand Master in 1719, and later served as Deputy Grand Master at the time of the Duke of Wharton's disaffection from Masonry in 1723. The Craft was growing in prestige and influence rapidly at this time, with many members drawn from the nobility and from the ranks of the Royal Society. Desaguliers must be considered as a major force in bringing about this development as a consequence of his having such a wide circle of noble and scientific acquaintance. Desagauliers served as Deputy Grand Master for a second time in 1725, and thereafter

acted as an *ad hoc* Grand Master or Deputy Grand Master on a number of individual occasions. He is credited with reviving and reinvigorating the office of Steward, for beginning the standardisation of regalia, for ensuring due decorum in lodge meetings, for being prominent in emphasising from an early date the charitable role of Freemasonry, for promoting links with lodges in Scotland and on the continental mainland, and for initiating Frederick, Prince of Wales, into Freemasonry, as well as Francis, Duke of Lorraine, who was later to be husband of the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria. While Desaguliers was primarily active in London Masonry, he also made visits to Bath and Bristol and must have played a part in spreading the influence and control of the Premier Grand Lodge into the provinces of England.

DESAGULIERS AND THE 1723 CONSTITUTIONS

Dr. Carpenter makes the claim, which will not be welcome to some, that 'Freemasonry was reinvented in London in 1717'. Here we must certainly draw attention to the arguments of that leading Masonic scholar, V. W. Bro. The Rev. Neville Barker Cryer, as delivered to the Lodge of Research, No. 2429, in Leicester in March 2012, and printed in full elsewhere in this volume. In brief, that contention was that 1717 has been too much overemphasised as a point of radical change, and that what was done in London then was a development of existing notions of a "Grand Lodge" which would have jurisdiction over a particular locality, as already existed in York. The four London lodges whose actions led to what became known as "Premier Grand Lodge" do not seem to have been the only Masonic lodges in London and its environs, and the argument that they intended to set up a new national body is therefore open to question. However, as is often the case, an event may subsequently—and even quite quickly— be invested with a significance it did not perhaps initially have. Within a quite short period of time the notion of a national ruling body did "catch on" and this led to other major innovations, for example with regard to ritual. Certainly the application of the Grand Lodge concept was an important development in London which quite quickly had national implications, and it ushered in a period of intense change and the recasting of the thinking of the Craft. In particular it led to the excision of specifically Christian references from the governing documents of the association. George Payne as Grand Master, circa 1720, introduced the notion of "General Regulations" for lodges and these were followed in 1723 by "Constitutions of the Free Masons". Dr. Carpenter is clear that this book is rightly attributed to the Reverend James Anderson, a Presbyterian Minister in London, though of Scottish descent. However, she adds that George Payne and Desaguliers undoubtedly made contributions. As the religious aspect of what that book brought about has always been controversial – and misunderstood – let us note some of what it said. Anderson did not exclude religion in general; indeed his work is the basis of our current insistence that no man can become a mason without

acknowledging the existence of a Supreme Being. What he did do was to substitute for the older charge of "loyalty to God and Holy Church" an obligation to accept "that religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves". This he expanded by saying that "our Religion (is) the Law of Nature and to love God above all things and our Neighbour as our self; this is the true, primitive, catholic and universal Religion, agreed to be so in all Times and Ages." This has echoes of both Jewish and Christian teaching and is not far from the famous Golden Rule to treat others as you would have them treat you, but it does attempt to prevent matters of credal or doctrinal significance from invading the peace and harmony of a lodge. Anderson was an ordained minister, as was Desaguliers, so both must have consented to the removal of the older forms of religious requirements. The philosophical influences which may have helped them reach these conclusions will be examined in more detail below.

WAS THERE A GENESIS OF FREEMASONRY?

For a while we must now consider Dr. Harrison's work for he too is most concerned with the emergence of Freemasonry in its modern form. Thereafter we must turn to the work of Professor Curl.

It is perhaps a little unfortunate that Dr. Harrison chose to give his study the title of *The Genesis of Freemasonry.* 'Genesis' is a word loaded with all sorts of overtones about moments of creation and beginnings, but this is a book not concerned with a moment of time, nor even, as Dr. Carpenter's work is concerned, a comparatively short period, but rather with what was well over a century and a half, from the start of the 17th Century until well into the 18th, which period, Dr. Harrison argues, saw the emergence of modern Freemasonry through various phases of development. It is not possible to argue with the basic premise that this period gave us much of Freemasonry as we now know it, and, in particular, the notion of a controlling Grand Lodge, so we may ask what it is that Dr. Harrison adds to our understanding of what happened.

Dr. Harrison gives us many facts and introduces us to many ideas. The 'many facts' are, it has to be said, one of the weaknesses of the book, for much of it – arguably too much – is written in a highly propositional style in which one fact follows another with sometimes little apparent connection. The author relies too much on the device of summarising passages at the end of each chapter to create a conceptual framework. The result is that this is a book which can be quite quickly and easily read, but which will not necessarily elucidate its readers too much in the process. On the other hand, after some reflection, and with some prior knowledge of the issues, an experienced student of Masonic history can gain insights from what Dr. Harrison has written.

SO WHAT CONCEPTUAL ISSUES CHARACTERISE THIS BOOK?

Dr. Harrison's thesis is that both the period under study and the practices of Freemasonry at the time can be divided roughly into three, though these periods it should be said may well overlap in terms of chronology. The first period is the end of the time of purely operative Masonry – a most indeterminate concept in terms of dates. The next period is the latter part of the 17th Century, certainly from about 1640 onwards. This was the period of what may be called "the acceptance", the time, in Masonic terms, of the initiation of Elias Ashmole and of the career of the Scot, Sir Robert Moray, later influential in the creation of the Royal Society. It was the time of Thomas Martin's *Narrative of the True Mason's Word* (1659), and of Plot's exposé of Masonic gatherings in his *Natural History of Staffordshire* (1686). Dr. Harrison shows that, while the narrative of the history of Freemasonry at this time is incomplete, certainly in England in comparison to Scotland, nevertheless it is clear that an "accepted" form of Freemasonry was emerging from the older operative practices, and that a number of gentlemen of the landed classes in a variety of areas were concerned in this process. In time these "accepted masons" were, of course, to displace the operatives. This was, moreover, an era of great intellectual ferment in which many schools of thought and types of philosophy vied to gain the attention of the educated classes. It was a time when the beginnings of modern scientific rationalism emerged, though it is most important that we should remember that the distinction we so easily make today between "Science" on the one hand and "Superstition" on the other was unknown – Chemistry and Alchemy had not parted company, and many a great mind, including that of Newton himself, was concerned with issues which today we would consider not worth rational thought. During the early part this period Dr. Harrison argues much of the symbolism and ritual of Masonry was heavily influenced by older systems of thinking, such as Kabbalism and Rosicrucianism, Necromancy and Alchemical notions. It was a period largely brought to an end by the creation of the Premier Grand Lodge of which Dr. Harrison, perhaps somewhat controversially, says, 'The Premier Grand Lodge was set up in London in 1717 as an action to gain official central control of English Freemasonry.' Of the new ritual which followed from that he says, 'The ritual was at the centre of this "*modernisation"*, the older magic elements becoming embellished with Newtonian experimental philosophy, and the ancient ritual transmuting into one that was more modern in outlook.' The final period is the time after the Premier Grand Lodge began when there were various tensions and reactions within the body of Freemasonry

Thus far it is clear there is clear consonance between the work of Doctors Carpenter and Harrison, and both identify the creation of Premier Grand Lodge as a radical development signalising a departure from past norms. Of course, there are those alluded to earlier who would not agree, at least with the issue of date and, maybe, purpose.

INTO THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

We must now turn to Professor Curl. His weighty book – in every sense of the word – is a major reworking of an earlier volume *The Art and Architecture of Freemasonry: An Introductory Study* published originally by Batsford in 1991, and reissued by other publishers since that date. It is arguable that Professor Curl did not do that book full justice by terming it 'introductory', but the current volume is certainly vastly more comprehensive. Professor Curl has taken time to reflect on and incorporate the great advances that have been made in thinking about Masonic history, particularly by non-masonic scholars, since he first wrote. He is clearly conversant with most recent developments in thinking and writing. Unfortunately much of the writing in the current volume takes the form of insertions into the previous text. Up to a point this is inevitable when revising a book, but so much has been written since 1991, and so much has the author had to digest and incorporate, that the text is not easy to follow. One must constantly remind oneself of the theme of each chapter and portion of the text, so great is the amount of detail. This is not, therefore, an easily read book. That is not to deny its impressive claim to scholastic importance, merely to serve as a warning to the reader.

Professor Curl has sought to place the thinking of Freemasonry and its physical manifestations in the form of buildings and structural forms, within the context of the emergence of Enlightenment thinking and its growth throughout the 18th Century, which must, of course, involve him in a discussion of the origins and well springs of that thinking. It is in that context that the present author has found his work of most value, and on which he will concentrate, though there is much else within the work, for example the sections on that great work of Masonic Art, Bro. Mozart's "Magic Flute", which perforce must be here ignored.

Professor Curl begins by considering who the original masons were and how they were organised. He accepts the view, outlined above, and to which later allusion will be made, that what we now call "the Craft" went through a threefold process of "Operative," "Accepted" and "Speculative" phases in response to changing social and political conditions. Older forms of organisation and ritual thus had to be re-invented, elaborated and developed as time went by, but through all these changing scenes Professor Curl identifies 'attractions for intellectuals searching for Wisdom and meaning in Antiquity and ancient texts'.

THAT WHICH WAS LOST

As Professor Curl says, 'One of the common features of esoteric cults and secret societies is a tendency to claim hidden knowledge not available to the outsider.' It is, in fact, a not uncommon feature of human societies and cultures to believe in the existence of some former state in which there was perfection and mystic knowledge which has since been lost. In the

Judeo-Christian tradition, for example, there is the Eden legend in which the parents of the human race lose their former state of innocence and bliss, while we find references to the lost "age of gold" and its return at some future time in the popular Christmas hymn 'It came upon the midnight clear'. (Music by Bro. Sir Arthur Sullivan.) In Greek mythology the world is condemned to misery and loss of bliss when Pandora opens her box and only hope is left inside. It is little wonder then that groups should arise which seek to regain the lost state of bliss, perfection, happiness or whatever.

Craft Freemasonry's 'lost' knowledge are the 'genuine secrets of a Master Mason', which were lost in consequence of the death of Hiram Abif. All Master Masons are aware of that, but many may not realise that what they are taught is a feature of Speculative, not Operative, Freemasonry. Professor Curl points out that various versions of a "Hiramic Legend" exist, but the one we utilise concerns the killing of King Solomon's chief architect by three Fellow Crafts who wanted to obtain "the mason word" along with the other secrets of a Master Mason. Professor Curl states, 'The legend was probably known in the 1720's when Anderson brought out his *Constitutions,* but the oldest known form appears to be that recorded in Pritchard's *Masonry Dissected* (1730).' Professor Curl argues that the story of the discovery of Hiram's body and what follows on from that is, in part, an example of necromantic thinking in which the living seek to obtain information or other benefits from the dead. He leaves open the question of whether the Hebraic words currently in use as 'the word' of a Master Mason are related in any way to an earlier word, which, in Operative times, was 'the Mason word', possession of which would clearly indicate that a man had been fully trained in the arts of Masonry and was therefore a reliable and trustworthy worker.

However, Bernard E Jones in his *Freemasons' Guide and Compendium* (1956) argued that whatever the origins of the Hiramic legend it was certainly not worked into our ritual in 1717. He acknowledges the outline of a necromantic legend in existence in the early 1700's, but states, 'we do not know that in the year 1722 or 1723 there was any lodge working a dramatized version of the Hiramic story, though in all probability there was. Nevertheless, only a year or two later some lodges are known to have been working an Hiramic degree, and by 1730 many lodges must have worked one.' However, Jones goes on to point out that there is no evidence of how or why this came about. He poses two possibilities: the first that the legend was present in an earlier form in Operative times and was modified over time as the old two degree structure of the Craft became divided into three; the second that the third degree was imposed at some time after 1717 by the Premier Grand Lodge, though Jones is sceptical about the ability of a London based organisation to achieve so much nationwide in that direction in so short a time. He thus leaves the issue open, though it is clear that, within a few years of 1717 the ritual of the Craft was undergoing considerable and radical change as truly Speculative Freemasonry took

hold. It could be that the very fact of the speculative nature of the Craft led more and more lodges towards the adoption of a mysterious legend focussing on the search for lost truth until it became characteristic of the movement as a whole.

No matter how the development came about, Craft Freemasonry in its speculative form now has at its heart the notion that something of enormous significance and importance has been lost, and thus lies within the tradition of seeking lost wisdom and knowledge. Professor Curl is able therefore to locate Freemasonry within a line of thought which acknowledges the existence of the 'lost', and stresses the importance of a search to find it. That is not, however, just a feature of post 18th Century speculative Masonry. The operative masons of the Middle Ages were much concerned with the significance of Geometry, and not just with regard to its practical application in the creation of great buildings. Professor Curl writes, 'Geometry…became intimately connected with, in an increasingly sophisticated form, the art and science of Masonry. ... [There was] a stimulus to accord Geometry a grandeur associated with the mysteries, with power (both sacred and secular) and with political clout.' To the mind of the mediaeval operative mason the geometric construction of great churches was a way of bringing Heaven to Earth, and showing fallen humanity a vision of what it might recover by way of divine forgiveness. Indeed, in the Christian Scriptures, the Book of The Revelation of St. John the Divine contains a detailed blueprint for the creation of the 'New Jerusalem' after judgement has been wrought upon the Earth, and that contains highly detailed earthly measurements.

> 'And he…had a golden rod to measure the city... And the city lieth foursquare, and the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal... an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is of the angel.' (Revelation 21:15-17)

The Book of The Revelation has often been criticised for not being particularly revealing, but that passage, unclear as it may be, obviously had a "message" for our operative forebears containing, as it does, references to both squares and cubes and the cubit, of which more below.

That sense of the mystic significance of built forms and the geometric rules underlying their creation was enhanced with what we now call the Renaissance and the rediscovery of ancient texts dealing with what came to be called 'Wisdom writing'. Professor Curl deals with this at length in his Chapter 3, which is entitled 'Hermeticism, Memory, Legends and Syncretism'. At the risk of distorting what the author wrote, it is possible here only to give a "flavour" of the argument. Briefly, as understood by the present writer, it can be argued that cultures, and indeed races and peoples, tend both to aggrandise their pasts and also indulge in Syncretism: that is melding together from previous cultures what seems to support their beliefs. It is certainly possible to see this in current Masonic practice. Take

as an example of the former the investing of a new initiate with his white apron by the Senior Warden. It is claimed that 'the badge' is more ancient than the Roman Eagle and more honourable than the Garter and the Golden Fleece or any other order. From a strictly historical point of view that is a staggering claim, though it can be morally justified on the basis that the apron represents eternal values of innocence and friendship. As an example of the latter consider the opening of the First Degree Tracing Board which claims that the practices and precepts of Masons have ever born a near affinity to those of the Ancient Egyptians—again a claim likely to be met with historical incredulity. Indeed, Professor Curl argues that the Egyptianising theme did not begin to exhibit a strong influence in Freemasonry much before 1750. Even so, it is clear that by the 16th Century, there was a growing familiarity among men of learning with texts which dealt with Rosicrucianism, Hermeticism, Kabbalism and Neo Platonism, to which allusion has been made in the context of Dr. Harrison's work, and all of which spoke of the search for lost wisdom and learning and means of finding it. Of these various texts it is those dealing with Neo Platonism which seem to the present writer to be of most importance. I shall return to this at more length below, but must initially state that Neo Platonism is a type of thought derived from the works of Plato which stresses that what we see as material is but a reflection of true reality, which is 'ideal'. Any person or object only appears to the senses as what they are insofar as they approximate to the ideal reality which is hidden from our eyes, and which is the state of true perfection. Professor Curl states, 'Emblems, Symbols and Hieroglyphs were valued by thinkers of the Neo Platonic moulds, for they were like perceived truths of the universe: they had meanings which could be interpreted, but those meanings could also be disguised in decent obscurity to keep them from the uninitiated.'

THE IMPORTANCE OF KING SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

For Professor Curl the Temple is 'The Great Prototype' for Masonic thinking. Initially Israelite worship was centred on the Tabernacle of God, which Scripture records as a rectangular space measured in cubits, and hidden from the gaze of the profane by curtains of fine linen woven with blue, scarlet and purple. Within the Tabernacle was the Holy of Holies, which contained the Ark of the Covenant and this space was a perfect cube. Under King Solomon the moving tabernacle was replaced by the Temple at Jerusalem, but the shapes of the previous holy dwellings were retained. Of course, Scripture contains no pictures of the Temple, but, from the Middle Ages onwards, there were attempts to interpret the scriptural record to produce visual representations of the structure. Professor Curl shows how some of those who were concerned to create images were also adherents of Kabbalistic, Hermetic and Neo Platonic thinking, so we see a further syncretism at work here. He goes on to argue that 'Architectural history was equated with the development of society and architecture was seen as

a means of establishing a just and ordered system ... Order and Geometry were therefore associated with the structure of society, and especially with a lost ideal: the Temple was the greatest achievement of architecture and ancient society, and so the purification of ...society and a reconstruction of ...lost ...values ...were achievable by reconstructing the Temple in hundreds of locations and thousands of minds.'

Dr. Harrison, for his part, argues that within the whole period under consideration Freemasonry began its peculiar involvement with King Solomon's Temple. His "second subject-cum middle period" thesis here is that Newton and Wren, who both had a vast influence on Masonic thinking even if their involvements in the Craft are decidedly unclear, were particularly concerned with a search within sacred texts for the dimensions of the Temple, especially the determination of the cubit as God's own measurement. Thus he argues, 'Freemasonry during the early 18th Century was linked historically to the Masons who constructed the Temple, and reflected in the way that Freemasons saw themselves as God's Masons placed upon earth to build his world.' (It is at this point, however, that one has to point out that Dr. Harrison has committed the cardinal error in terms of both Biblical and Masonic scholarship of confusing Hiram, King of Tyre with Hiram Abif, but let that pass because overall it does not invalidate the author's argument, though it is an error of serious proportions.)

Dr. Harrison sees the decline of the older ways of thinking within Operative Masonry and the rise, towards the beginning of the 18th Century, of newer rationalism as culminating in the work of Desaguliers and Anderson in substituting for older philosophies the search for a new form of divine order within Masonic ritual. That ritual was centred on the building and form of the Temple at Jerusalem – the perfection of harmony, form and proportion, and the physical manifestation on earth of those divine laws laid down by the Creator. Little wonder then, as Dr. Harrison argues, that Aristocratic Freemasons attempted to reproduce that divine harmony in the great houses they built, and, as an example, we may mention the work of Lord Burlington at his Chiswick Villa. However, it was not just in 'stately homes' that this influence was felt, as witness the clear Masonic thinking behind the creation of 18th Century Bath by John Wood, and the influence that such a search for harmony and proportion was later to have in the building of squares and terraces in London, Bristol and Liverpool well into the 19th Century. Maybe, however, at this point we should reflect that the creation of heavenly proportions within the area of domestic architecture did not extend its benign influence beyond the wealthy land owning and upper mercantile classes.

The final portion of time within the period studied by Dr. Harrison is, as has already been stated, largely concerned with the events following the creation of Premier Grand Lodge. This was the time during which the older ritual was revised and replaced, but also a time when opposition both to change and to the growing influence of Premier Grand Lodge began to be felt, which led in due course to the great schism between the Moderns and

the Antients. The extent to which what would now be called "party politics" played a part in these developments is unclear. There are writers, e.g. Margaret C Jacob, who have argued that Premier Grand Lodge was a part of the Whig domination of British political life throughout the early part of the 18th Century. To this Dr. Harrison replies by pointing to the presence of undoubted Tories in that organisation, even though they might not have been particularly influential. Professor Curl, as we shall see, also alludes to these men as representatives of a minority strand of Freemasonry somewhat romantically attached to the "old" Stuart Cause. Dr. Harrison refers also to Pope, Swift and Hogarth as Masons, who were, in fact, highly critical of Walpole's Whig government. He further notes that there were even open Jacobite supporters within London lodges at the time, and appears to discount the long term political significance of the public disagreement between Dr. Desaguliers and the Jacobite Duke of Wharton in 1723. Indeed his summation of the period is that Freemasonry may have provided bridges between Jacobites and Whigs: 'This was possible as Freemasonry was a society which did not openly discuss politics and religion within an open lodge.' The mix of Whig and Tory opinions was mirrored in those parts of the country where opposition to the hegemony of Premier Grand Lodge was later to grow. It would therefore be most incorrect to assume that Premier Grand Lodge was Whig to the core, while, on the other hand, the Antients and the other short lived Grand Lodges outside London were Tory to a man. What divided these bodies was, as Dr. Harrison argues, opposition to central control and changes in ritual coupled with the destruction of documents containing older forms of practice by Anderson *et al*. 'Politics does not seem to have played a great part in the development of the rebel Grand Lodges.'

We must now ask what was the thinking which led Anderson, Desaguliers, *et al* in the particular direction they took.

THE INFLUENCE OF NEWTONIAN THINKING

We may be familiar with Pope's famous phrase, 'Nature's laws lay hid in deepest night. God said "let Newton be and all was light".' Living as we now do in a post Newtonian world where even some of Einstein's thinking is being questioned and where the Cosmos appears once more nigh on impenetrably complex, we may echo, however, Sir John Squire's riposte to Pope, 'It did not last, the devil howling, "Ho, let Einstein be," restored the status quo!' Yet, for a very considerable time Newtonian thinking underpinned not just the natural and the applied sciences, but also attempts to frame systems of government. This is clear from the framework of the Constitution of the United States, the underlying principle of which is that certain "truths" are held to be "self-evident". The notion that there are underlying ineradicable 'laws' governing relationships between citizens and the state also colours thinking on Human Rights. Newtonian thinking pointed to the existence of a God who had created all things on a very ordered basis, and who deserved adoration for

that reason, while it was a further duty of humans to study and explore the natural order. This promoted Deism, which accepts the existence and divinity of God, but which has little room for religious revelation. Newton himself believed in God but was not an orthodox Christian despite being an apparent conformist. As Dr. Carpenter puts it, 'Deists were convinced that the workings of the Universe were so complex that there must be an all-powerful being responsible for creating and maintaining it, and they believed that men were endowed with a rational nature that allowed them to lead a moral life. But they did not believe in intervention by divine force.' Such thinking was clearly influential in leading the framers of the "Constitutions" to require belief in the existence of God, at the same time leaving it to the conscience of the individual mason to decide the nature of God.

Consider the following passage from the not-often-delivered Explanation of the First Degree Tracing Board, 'Wisdom, Strength and Beauty are about his throne as pillars of his works, for His Wisdom is infinite, His Strength omnipotent and Beauty shines through the whole of the creation in symmetry and order. The Heavens He has stretched forth as a canopy; the Earth He has planted as a footstool; He crowns his Temple with Stars as with a diadem, and with His hand He extends the Power and the Glory. The Sun and the Moon are messengers of His will, and all His Law is concord.' Can it be doubted that this passage is heavily influenced by the thinking and works of Sir Isaac Newton?

Professor Curl's comments on the issue of Newtonianism, however, point towards a future religious conflict, that between Freemasonry and the Church of Rome. 'Freemasonry with its Great Architect, reverence for Natural Order and connections with Newtonian Figures and Whiggery and the post – 1689 Settlement, encouraged a *form* of religiosity, but it was protean, undogmatic and liberal. For this very reason it was to incur the displeasure of the Roman Catholic Church.' Professor Curl argues that, across Europe, Freemasonry developed into three strands of thinking, one, as already stated, attached to the old Stuart cause, the much more influential, so far as England was concerned, moderate, Liberal-minded Whig strand, and a radical, rationalist and republican strand which took firm hold in Lodges in France and the Low Countries. While the events of 1717 in England led to the creation of other Grand Lodges on the continental mainland, e.g. that of France in Paris in 1725, there was a growing anti-clericalism in continental circles. As Professor Curl comments, 'Freemasonry prospered on the continent and acquired new and ever more exotic degrees from the 1730s onwards ... [and] tended to become a vehicle for the dissemination of ideas unacceptable to reactionary forces ... the Craft was increasingly seen as deriving from crusading chivalry, from Ancient Egyptian Mysteries and possibly from the Templars.' Papal disapproval of such developments then drove French Freemasons in particular to become even more radical and anti-clerical.

So far as England is concerned, however, Professor Curl argues, 'Freemasonry in the latter half of the eighteenth century reflected many of

the philosophical, moral, political, artistic and intellectual currents of the Enlightenment in its various guises. Liberalism and progressive notions were implicit in Freemasons' ideals of the Brotherhood and Perfectability of Man ... Freemasonry then was seen as an agency for improvement, for creating an ideal society with buildings and landscapes that themselves would reflect the aspirations of the Brotherhood ... [Thus] not only would the grandeur and lost Antiquity be rediscovered, but an Ideal World based on that Antiquity grow again to renewed Perfection.'

It is thus clear that Newtonian thinking, coupled with other streams of Enlightenment philosophies, had a great influence on the development of Masonic culture once the London Premier Grand Lodge was formed. That body was born in the National Capital. It had clear links and connections to both the Royal Society and the circles of the richest and most powerful in the land, and while it may be too much to claim that within those circles all were Newtonians to a man, there would certainly be a strong impulse for that philosophy to leave a mark upon the Craft.

But were there other forces which had an influence on the "Constitutions?" Dr. Carpenter hints there may have been, particularly with regard to Latitudinarianism, but these forces deserve rather more consideration in the present author's opinion.

RELIGIOUS FATIGUE

It must be borne in mind that from the early years of the 16th Century Western and Central Europe had been racked by religious wars and controversies. Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anabaptism, and that peculiarly English hybrid, Anglicanism, all vied with traditional Romanism for the hearts and loyalties of people and nations. Being on the "right side" in a religious dispute over doctrinal issues became a test of political loyalty. Those who could not subscribe to the 'official' version of faith within their homeland were considered disloyal, dangerous, worthy of persecution and even death. While many suffered individual punishments, from time to time wholesale slaughter broke out on a nationwide basis, as witness the French Wars of Religion in the 16th Century, the continuing persecution of Huguenots in France under Cardinal Richlieu and Louis XIV, the 30 Years War between 1618 and 1648 across central Europe and the English Civil War of 1642 to 1649. Furthermore, in this country the "rumblings" of religious conflict continued even after the Restoration of the Monarchy, culminating in the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 and the ejection of the Roman Catholic James II from the throne. Moreover, even then there were aftershocks as witness the 1715 Rebellion in Scotland in favour of the Catholic 'Old Pretender'. That event occurred only two years before the founding of the Premier Grand Lodge, and it must have had an influence on the mind of Anderson, the Scot, in seeking to exclude matters of doctrinal discussion from lodges. It also reinforces those who argue that the Premier Grand Lodge, if not in the pocket of the Whigs, was at least in

part a device to band together the principal London lodges for their mutual support and protection, and as a means of demonstrating their loyalty to the Crown and the Hanoverian succession.

Men might in the early 18th Century have become weary of fighting over religion, but there were still sharp divides of belief in England between conformist Trinitarian Anglicans, Presbyterian and Congregationalist non-conformists and radical Unitarians who cast doubt on the divinity of Jesus. Even within the ranks of outwardly Christian men there was enough variation of belief to cause strife and controversy, and that was reason in itself to leave the issues of creed and conformity to the private sphere of a man's conscience so far as Freemasonry was concerned.

LATITUDINARIANISM

This view of ecclesiastical polity had its origins in the 16th Century with the writings of the Elizabethan Divine, Richard Hooker. In his seminal work *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* Hooker argued that the primary concern of God is with the moral condition of the individual and that issues of Church government are "things indifferent." By the late 17th Century there was a group of Anglican Clergy who took this forward to argue for the central role of reason in religion, and the importance of practical morality over credal speculation. Hooker's views were thus expanded from issues of Church government into the realms of doctrine and belief. A central tenet among this group of thinkers was that the purpose of the Christian religion was "to make men good". Many amongst this group advocated an alliance of religion and science. It can be argued that Latitudinarianism became the operative philosophy of the Church of England in the 18th Century, and by the 19th it had become known as the "Broad Church" school of thinking. It is clear that there are obvious connections between this form of religious belief and practice and the practice of Freemasonry after 1723. Both were opposed to extremes of religious "enthusiasm" and to the expression of "hard line" exclusionary doctrines. Even to this day the extended version of the Second Degree Working Tools warns the newly passed Craftsman not to be an enthusiast, persecutor or slanderer of religion. Where else could such an argument come from but the tolerant latitudinarian school of thought? We shall return later to the issue of what is meant by the phrase "an enthusiast … of religion" because it does not mean what it might be supposed to!

It may also be that it was this spirit of tolerance which both prompted and allowed the Anglican Desaguliers to attend the funeral of the Presbyterian Anderson in 1739, as well as, to cite Dr. Carpenter's argument, the 'respect Desaguliers had for Anderson'. Of course by then the Anglican Church of England and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland had become rather oddly aligned "Churches by Law Established" within a United Kingdom of Great Britain, and Anderson would no doubt have had a group of ex-patriate Scots to whom to minister in London, so it might not

be entirely correct to refer to him as a "dissenter." Nevertheless, Anderson's burial took place at Bunhill Fields in London, and, as that was the interment place for Nonconformists at the time, it would not have been common practice for an Anglican clergyman to be present. All that was long before the modern days of ecumenism.

NEO PLATONISM

Dr. Carpenter does not mention Neo Platonism in her work, and there is nothing there to suggest that Desaguliers studied such a school of philosophy. Neither does Dr. Harrison make an overt reference to this way of thinking. However, he does mention other schools of thought which are not dissimilar. Hermeticism is a search for truth and wisdom having a 'particular spiritual belief in the study of nature and ancient Egyptian mysteries'. Alongside this philosophy he sets Kabbalism which he identifies as 'very similar to Hermeticism, both being entwined in the search for ancient lost wisdom'. Kabbalism was esoteric Jewish lore, and there were claims that its secrets had been passed down by word of mouth from one enlightened one to another down the centuries. Jews were readmitted to England in 1655 by Cromwell, and Dr. Harrison sees the use of Jewish symbolism such as the Star of David, Seal of Solomon and the influence of King Solomon's Temple as evidence that Jewish mystical teaching had an influence on the emergence of modern Masonry from its medieval past. Professor Curl is, of course, much more explicit and detailed in his references to such systems of belief.

The Latitudinarian approach to religious life and practice clearly did affect Masonic thinking, and among Latitudinarians (especially those from Cambridge in the mid to late 17th Century) there were Neo Platonists. The Cambridge group were opposed to the dogmatism of the Puritans, whom they also saw as being anti-rationalist. They were further dissatisfied with notions that spiritual revelation depends entirely on individual experience, while also rejecting materialist thinkers who denied the idealistic aspect of creation. To them reason was an echo of the divine within the human soul, and thus was semi divine, and so capable of leading man closer to the creator. It is clearly possible that this school of thought was influential in the development of Freemasonry in the early part of the 18th Century.

But what is Neo Platonism? Only the most sketchy of answers can be given here, but the first point to note is that it denies the solely material nature of life and existence and emphasises the spirit. It asserts that the source of all true reality is God, who exceeds all categories of finite thinking. God is utterly unique and is also utterly good, and his goodness emanates into the world, but the world is not the true ultimate reality, and humanity, being composed of both soul and body (i.e. matter), is thus separated from God, and needs to find its way back to God by means of purifying knowledge. Humanity must proceed from contemplation of the intellect within itself to that which is above. In short the spiritual world is

more real than the world of matter—what we see is not necessarily what there 'truly is', but what 'truly is' is the ideal world which we should seek. Thus, true reality is known not only by physical sensation, but intuitively from what are known as 'intelligible forms' existing beyond the material world of everyday sight in which purely physical senses are unreliable guides to true reality. These arguments from the Eastern Mediterranean world of the first four centuries of the Christian era were gradually incorporated into Christian thinking as they emphasised the importance of the spiritual life. This is a form of thinking which is compatible with Christianity, but which is not derived from that faith. Neo Platonism enjoyed various revivals, for example in the works of Dante and then particularly in Cambridge in the 17th Century, and was also influential in the 19th Century in the works of Coleridge and Blake. To such thinkers everyday objects can be symbolic of the wider reality around us. This entails acceptance that there is a distinction between the world of mere sight, where we see measurable objects, and that of vision, where we encounter the real behind the visible. Every object may thus have a cosmic significance because, in itself, it is part of the dispersion of God himself into the material world that He has created, but it also reflects the existence of the true spiritual world of the Divine Creator, who has endowed all the creation with something of a celestial nature. A grain of sand can thus on the one hand come to represent the whole current world in all its wonder, but behind that grain of sand lies the ultimate goodness of God. Thus Neo Platonism resists a mechanistic view of nature. The cold world of empiricist observation and taxonomical counting, which leads to scientific reductionism of the most atheistic variety, is not for those of this school of thought. Furthermore, its followers must resist notions that "progress" can exist without restraint and moral limitations and that technicalities are all that matter.

The so called 'Cambridge Platonists' of the period 1640 to 1680 were hardly an organised group of any sort, but they shared many common conceptions. In *A History of Emmanuel College Cambridge* (Bendall, Brooke and Collinson, 1999) it is said they were 'kindred spirits, sharing a common intellectual and spiritual climate. We can almost reduce their philosophy and religion to an ethic, the belief that it is good to be good (but also natural to be good); and to the urge to know'. At least one of them, Henry Moore, was also a Fellow of the Royal Society, but the most influential, Benjamin Whichcote, once wrote, 'I did not make myself, God made me, and God did not make a sorry worthless piece for no use...' Whichcote later became Incumbent of St. Lawrence Jewry in the City of London (1668), where he was greatly influential in his preaching at the end of the 17th Century, and whence his ideas and teaching influenced the next generation. Whichcote was opposed to what he regarded as "ranting" in preaching and doctrine and 'enthusiasm' in religion whereby any person, however ill educated, takes it upon himself to interpret and apply scripture in any way he chooses—that is the original meaning of "enthusiasm" – see

above in the context of the Second Degree Working Tools. The phrase considered there takes on a new meaning. The Fellow Craft is enjoined not to speak ill of any religion, nor to persecute religion nor to be an 'enthusiast', i.e. not to be his own 'doctrine commission' setting forward his own views, however poorly educated, as an absolute standard of truth. It should also be remembered that Whichcote, together with Ralph Cudworth, another of the Cambridge Platonists, advised Oliver Cromwell on extending religious toleration to Jews on their re-admission to this country in 1655. Allusion has been made above to Dr. Harrison's argument that this exercise of toleration had an influence on the emergence of speculative Masonic thinking.

Now all of that may seem very academic and intellectual, and far removed from the World of Freemasonry, but is it? Our rituals and ceremonies are declared to be both symbolic and allegorical. Masonry reveals inner truths under the form of outward objects—hence the importance of the Working Tools in each degree. We fill our buildings with emblems and symbolic ornament, and each of the degree ceremonies while enacting an incident in this world does so with a view to inculcating the acceptance of a higher spiritual realm whence true morality and goodness emanate. In a sense this helps Freemasonry counter some of the influence of Newtonianism which might otherwise lead us to suppose that all truths can be determined by observation. The adaptation of the old forms and charges of the Mediaeval Stone Masons into our current three degree system must, I submit, owe something to a school of thought which saw the value of symbolic working as a means of passing on deeper truths and even greater realities than the merely visual might at first seem to suggest. Ritual drama is one of the most powerful forms of symbolism. Faiths and Creeds have their liturgies, which are dramatic in their own way; we have Initiation, Passing and Raising. Each teaches a truth about this world, but each by itself and together with the others points to a greater reality beyond the merely temporal.

Lest it be thought that I have gone off on a tangent entirely of my own making, let me cite a paper by M. W. Bro. Fabio Venzi, Grand Master of the Regular Grand Lodge of Italy and published by that esteemed Masonic research body, the Cornerstone Society. This paper, 'The Neoplatonists of Cambridge', is available on the Society's web site at *www.cornerstonesociety.com,* and I am indebted to it, both because of its support for my views, but also because it argues for the influence of a group of men who might, rather like Desaguliers, be overlooked by current thinking. These men also happen to be associated with my own College, Emmanuel, Cambridge, so I have another reason to be grateful for the paper! M. W. Bro. Venzi's paper is also included in his *The Influence of Neoplatonic Thought on Freemasonry and other essays* (Book Guild Publishing 2007). There are also extensive references to Neo Platonism in Chapter 5 of Professor Stevenson's seminal study *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century 1590-1710*. (CUP 1990) and see also *The*

Ideas which made Freemasonry Possible by W. H. Stemper Jr available at *www.themasonictrowel.com*.

The thinking of the 'Cambridge Platonists' and what they believed has a very direct relationship to how Freemasonry developed in the late 17th and early 18th Centuries—namely the rejection of purely materialist ways of thinking, and the promotion of a notion of natural goodness. M. W. Bro. Fabio Venzi develops this theme in his paper. He is particularly concerned with whether there is any organized system of thought which underpins our moral and ethical code of conduct. He points out that much of the vast history of Masonic documentation is incomplete and discontinuous, but argues that 'only within the Masonic ritual of the late 18th Century is it possible to find the traces of what we might call Masonic "philosophy"....' Rather like Dr. Harrison, M. W. Bro. Venzi argues for the historical existence of three phases of Freemasonry, the old "operative" phase of the medieval craft, the transitional phase, which he calls "operative and accepted" when non-operatives were accepted into the Craft and gradually took it over, a period he especially associates with the years 1680 to 1730, and then the purely "speculative" phase after 1730 when considerable thinking about the meaning of Freemasonry continued to take place. He says, 'Without doubt the most important mutation was the division of the esoteric doctrine and consequently the entire ritual into three parts...since elements that may be classified as "speculative" appear only in a phase following the official birth of Freemasonry (1717).' He then continues, 'the 'Cambridge Platonists' represented, in the period and historical context which witnessed the birth of speculative Freemasonry, the philosophy which fits more than any other with the moral and ethical dictates of Freemasonry itself.' In this connection he points out that the 'Cambridge Platonists' were much concerned with concepts of tolerance and brotherly love, with notions that mere observation of nature will not unlock its inner hidden meaning, with connections between reason and religion where the spiritual 'is nothing more than the purest and highest form of the ... rational being' and with a highly ecumenical notion of God which finds truths in many faiths and which values 'the good nature of a heathen [as] more God-like than the furious zeal of a Christian' (Whichcote). Truly for the thinker of this school, God is a circle whose centre is nowhere, that is it cannot be tied down, and whose circumference is everywhere, that is it is all embracing.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing philosophical excursion was not intended as a criticism of Dr. Carpenter's work. One should not criticise an author for not writing a book he or she never set out to write, and Dr. Carpenter did not set out to write about the development of Masonic philosophy and thinking in the late 17th and early 18th Centuries. Her task was to chronicle the life and assess the importance in his own and for future generations of Dr. Desaguliers. In this task she has succeeded more than

admirably. Desaguliers emerges from her work as a figure of seminal importance in the popularisation of science, as well as being a technical and inventive genius in his own right. From a scientific point of view he must inevitably be in the shadow of Newton, but that was a fate shared by many men of learning of the time. He rose from humble beginnings and little by way of fortune, albeit with the help of considerable patronage along the way, to walk and talk with the richest and most powerful of his day, and, if patronage did play no more small part in his rise to eminence, let it be remembered that the powerful rarely freely choose to promote those who are of little worth and poor intelligence. By means of his brains and capacity for sustained hard work Desaguliers realised the Masonic hope of living respected and dying regretted. He has been unjustly forgotten outside Freemasonry, and Dr. Carpenter has done us all a great service by rescuing his memory and reassessing his reputation. In so doing she has also cast considerable light on the growth and application of science in the early part of the 18th Century.

However, before ending this review, it has to be repeated that, to his brethren, Desaguliers will always be remembered first and foremost as a Mason, and a most important figure in the development of the Grand Lodge system. Dr. Carpenter, it will be remembered, makes the claim that 'Freemasonry was reinvented in London in 1717'. First of all was that so, and, secondly, what significant role did Desaguliers have in that process? 'Reinvention', as has been argued above, is a radical concept to apply in the present context. Certainly Freemasonry was not invented in 1717, and, in many ways, the creation of the Premier Grand Lodge may well have passed unnoticed outside the lodges in London immediately affected. However, the organisation of a type of regulatory body for what had hitherto been a somewhat *ad hoc* institution was undoubtedly an important departure. What is perhaps of equal significance is the speed with which the influence and jurisdiction of the Premier Grand Lodge grew, and that did owe quite a lot to Desaguliers's travels to Bath etc and the acceptance there of the central authority. The idea of a Grand Lodge became central to Masonic thinking, and even when the jurisdiction of Premier Grand Lodge was challenged, the counterclaimants organised their own Grand Lodges.

The other major new point of departure was the introduction within six years of a new system of 'Constitutions.' These, as Dr. Carpenter shows, were primarily the work of Anderson, though with undoubted assistance from Payne and Desaguliers. It might be thought that the changes made by the 1723 document amounted to such a radical revision of the role of conventional religion *vis-à-vis* Freemasonry that another time of reinvention might be identified. However, I hope that what I have alluded to above might indicate that the changes were first of all acceptable within the pattern of thinking at the time, but also that, for many, they would have been expected. Religious disputation was certainly no longer 'polite' nor was any gentleman expected to be traditionally devout as his ancestors

might have been in mediaeval times. Such fondness for the 'Gothick' as was later espoused in Georgian England was largely of a very cosmetic architectural kind. It would therefore be perfectly 'proper' at the time for Anderson and his associates to make the content of religious beliefs a purely private matter not to be raised in open Lodge, while at the same time insisting on a general subscription to the notion of a divine creator. Any other formulation would have run counter to the teachings of Newtonianism and the precepts of Latitudinarianism. On the other hand, a healthy dose of Neo Platonism in the rituals of the 'reinvented' organisation not only served to maintain a clear link with spiritual values but also enabled older rites and forms of working to be invested with new symbolic meanings. Freemasonry thus became not just a system of practical morality, but also an institution which can truly be argued to be the servant of faith and a graceful pendant to it, for at its heart lie symbolic spiritual values. Freemasonry as we know and practise it can thus never have any truck with materialist atheism which asserts everything is the lucky, but essentially chaotic, outcome of the coincidental operation of certain forces within the cosmos; neither, on the other hand, can it ever espouse fundamentalist religious beliefs which claim exclusive revelations of all truth. What it can do, however, surely almost uniquely in this world, is to be a platform on which men of goodwill can meet and sink differences between their detailed beliefs in a bond of mutual respect and brotherly love, recognising that the things that unite are more important than those that divide. That Freemasonry enjoys this special position is greatly due to the life and work of Dr. John Desaguliers. We must be thankful for him.

CONSTANTINE, SOLDIER AND POLITICIAN – THE EARLY YEARS

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To understand Constantine and how he was able to change history for all time, it is first necessary to understand the state of the Empire over which he was to become the sole ruler, an Empire which covered the known World from the banks of the Euphrates river in the East, the Atlantic Ocean in the West, and Hadrian's Wall in the North.

The Empire had been ruled from Rome by a succession of Emperors for some two hundred plus years, and in that time had seen many years of turmoil since the first conflicts between Octavian and Anthony, whom Octavian soundly defeated at the battle of Actium in 31 BCE, after which Octavian rose to power and became the first Augustus (revered personage). In 268 CE the Empire was subjected to a major attack by central European tribes both on land and by sea. They were soundly defeated by a Balkan general by the name of Marcus Aurelius Claudius, who succeeded to the Imperial Crown of Rome after the death of the Emperor Gallienus and became Claudius II. He reigned for two years and was succeeded in 270 CE by Aurelian, who had also been a general over the Legions of Gallienus. He faced daunting challenges on coming to power. The northern tribes were on the move once again and Aurelian was forced into the defence of Italy. He had a fight on his hands, but finally won and went on to cement good relations with the people of Rome. However, he was not to have an easy ride for very soon conflicts both within and without the Empire culminated in his murder (275 CE) at the hands of his staff in Thrace (modern Turkey). Over the next nine years the crown of Rome was worn by four Emperors, Claudius Tacitus, Probus, Carus, and Carinus.

In 285 CE Diocletian set out to remove the crown from Carinus. He succeeded, and at once proceeded to make changes to how the Empire was to be ruled. He married one of his daughters to a junior general by the name of Maximian, and raised him to Deputy Emperor, or Caesar, after he had proved himself in battle. This was not a complete departure from the norm, as the Emperor Carus had involved his own sons in his rule, first as Caesars and then as Augusti.

The Prefect Flavius Constantius, a popular and effective commander, who led a successful campaign against the Alemans, due to his success became a threat to Maximian, who, to secure his loyalty, engineered his marriage to his daughter, Theodora. Constantius was happy with this arrangement despite the fact that he already had a union with Helena by whom he had a son Constantine. He had a further six children over the next ten years which he fathered between battles, demonstrating his enthusiasm for his new young bride. History tells us very little about Helena's background. However, there are many traditions. Greek accounts have her

to be the daughter of an innkeeper, and that Constantius met her as a barmaid. In Britain she was the daughter of King Coel of Colchester. Most historians accept the account given by an anonymous but nearly contemporary writer that Constantine was born at Naissus, the great city on the high road from Byzantium to the Danube. A later Greek tradition said that he was born near Nicomedia where Constantius stayed with Helena at her father's inn. There is no historical evidence to show what sort of relationship he had with Helena, but he always considered Constantine to be his heir.

As a boy Constantine had a close relationship with his father. As a youth of about 18 years old he was dispatched to Nicomedia to be educated at the court of Diocletian alongside Maximian's son, Maxentius. Both boys it would appear were being groomed as Caesars of the next generation.

However, this happy state of affairs did not continue as Diocletian changed his mind. One reason for this may have been the fact that Diocletian suddenly became a grandfather.

In the last decade of the century Diocletian, influenced by a clique of army officers from Rome's Adriatic provinces in the Balkans, which was headed by Galerius, turned his attention to the destruction of the Christian faith within the Empire. In 303 CE he moved against the Christians, ordering them to sacrifice to the traditional gods. He also seized their communal property. Those who did not comply faced losing their civil rights and possible execution.

It had been many years since the state had organized the persecution of Christians on such a scale. However, by the time of Diocletian, Christians were well represented in the army and the court. More importantly, they were employed in education in places such as Nicomedia where it is possible that the Christian theologian Lactantius met the young Constantine. Lactantius was very important to the Christian faith in the later part of the 3rd Century and early part of the 4th Century, as he made it more acceptable to the more educated non-Christians. He was very critical of the Emperors who had persecuted his faith, and sought to demonstrate that all who had been persecutors had met a hideous death. Lactantius recorded considerable detail of the persecutions including the destruction of churches and scriptures. The persecutions were unlikely to succeed as there were simply far too many Christians, and the actions of the Christian Martyrs in giving their lives for their faith gave the movement great focus.

It is also worthy of note that the general population did not approve of such persecutions as the Roman way had always been to promote tolerance with regard to religious belief.

Diocletian had very little interest in Rome itself and spent most of his time in his palace in the east. He divided the Empire into two parts comprising of the East and West. He formed the Tetrarchy or rule of four. There were two juniors with the title of 'Caesar' and two seniors with the title of 'Augustus'. In the West the junior was Constantius, the father of

Constantine. He was under Maximian. In the East the junior was Galerius, who was under Diocletian.

Constantius recovered Britain for the Empire from the rebel, Carausius. His triumph is recorded on a Roman coin found in Arras in 1922. It displays his triumphal entry into London. Constantine did not go with his father to Britain, because he had been dispatched to the East, where he gained considerable experience with the army. He gained the rank of military Tribune. He gained his spurs fighting the Persians and on the Danube frontier fighting the Sarmatians. According to the *Origo Constantini* we read: "When Constantine, then a young man, was serving in the cavalry against the Sarmatians, he seized by the hair and carried off a fierce savage, and threw him at the feet of the Emperor Galerius. Then sent through a swamp by Galerius, he entered it on his horse and made a way for the rest to the Sarmatians, of whom he slew many and won the victory for Galerius."

It is interesting to note that the young Constantine was serving in the cavalry which had become an important change in the Roman military machine. The reason for this was that during the previous half century the Roman armies had found it necessary to become far more mobile in order to protect the extensive frontiers of the Empire, a sort of Roman blitzkrieg.

Constantine was an experienced campaigner around the age of thirty. He was a member of Diocletian's inner circle. He would have been fully aware of the great persecution of Christians, but may not have given it his full support, as reports suggest that he may have favoured the Christian principles displayed by some of his close acquaintances. It was at this time that he shared his bed with a young woman called Minervina, who bore him a son named Crispus. The date of the birth is not recorded and the fate of the mother is not known. It is, however, known that the infant was placed in the care of Constantine's mother, Helena, who was a practising Christian.

In 303 CE Constantine travelled to Rome with the aging Diocletian. Like Diocletian, Constantine had not visited Rome. It was the largest city in the Western Empire, and had the largest concentration of Christians. Diocletian left never to return, but Constantine was destined to return in triumph a decade later becoming the sole ruler of the Western Roman Empire.

Diocletian abdicated in 305 CE, causing a power struggle. The result was that Constantine lost his powerful patrons. However, his father was now, after the re-shuffle, the senior Augustus in the West and he demanded that his son be returned to his side. Galerius was not too happy with this, as he knew that it was to hand over an army to Constantine, who would support and acclaim him. However, he did accede to the request and sent him on his way in late 305 CE. It can only be assumed that some sort of agreement was made that, upon his father's death, Constantine would acknowledge Galerius as Senior Augustus in the East and Severus as Augustus in the West. Constantine suppressed any such agreement, putting about a tale of escape, a midnight flight while Galerius was

drunk. Whatever the truth, Constantine arrived in Britain shortly before his father's death.

He did, in fact, meet up with his father in Gaul and travelled with him up to York. Constantius died in York, and the legions acclaimed Constantine alone as Augustus on 25th July, 306 CE.

It is interesting to note that, although the younger sons of Constantius were also in York at the time of his death, the legions did not wish to recognize their claims, and their mother, Theodora, appears to have stood by the troops. The fact that Constantine was of mature age and had considerable military experience may have had something to do with his acclimation.

Galerius was furious, but he was powerless to act, especially since Maxentius, inspired by the developments in Britain, claimed the throne in Rome. His father Maximian came out of retirement to support him. Severus tried to quell the revolt or coup, but found that the army which had served under Maximian was proving loyal to their former commander. He was, in time, killed off, as was the Roman way.

The stage was now set for a major power struggle between Maxentius, who now ruled in Rome, and his boyhood companion, Constantine, who, at this time, remained on the side lines waiting to see the action develop in Italy.

Sources

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THE HINCKLEY COPPER PLATE

W. Bro. Donald A. Peacock, PAGDC

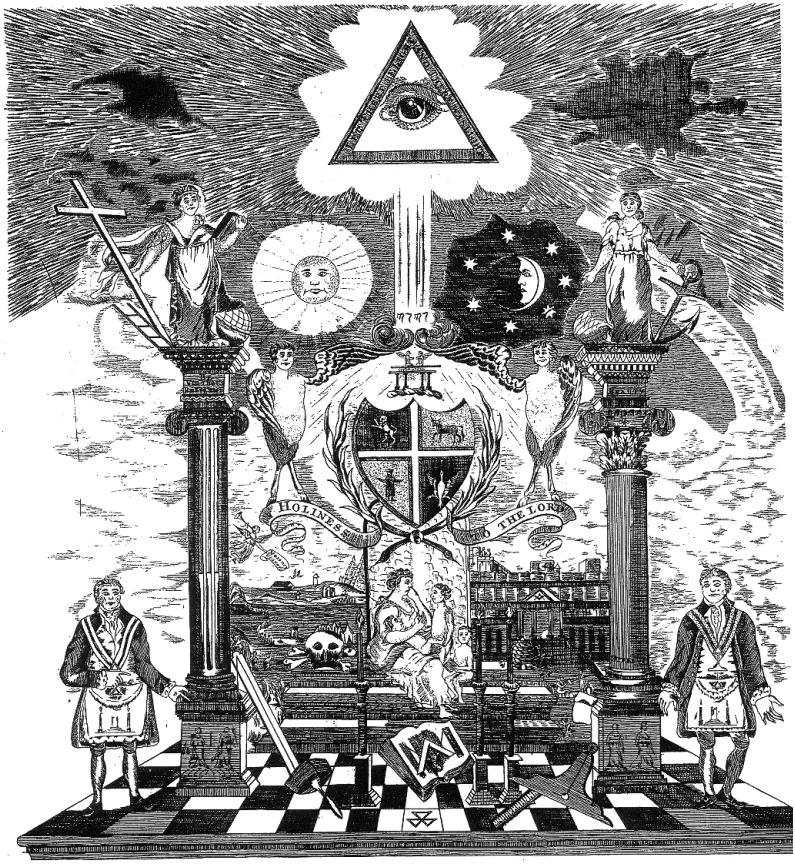
Printed overleaf is a picture taken from the old copper plate belonging to the Knights of Malta Lodge, No. 50, in the Province of Leicestershire and Rutland. The Knights of Malta Lodge was warranted in Hinckley in 1803 and, at the time, was an Antients or Atholl Lodge, and this has a bearing on the significance of the copper plate.

I first became aware of this plate in the late 1970's when, as a new mason, I was shown some of the objects displayed in the cabinets in the anteroom to the Lodge Room at the Masonic Hall in Hinckley. At the time the plate was quite dirty and encrusted (as it turned out) with dry ink. It looked fairly insignificant and the engraved designs were difficult to discern. Since I was then only a member of a Craft Lodge, the symbols had little meaning to me.

Some time after this, in the 1980s, W. Bro. Stan Chancellor, who was a regular visitor to the Lodge, arranged for the plate to be cleaned and subjected to a metallurgical analysis. This showed the plate to be made from a copper alloy in use in the earlier part of the 19th Century, but at the time no further conclusions were drawn as to its provenance or intended use.

We discussed this object from time to time, and W. Bro. Alan Pickering arranged for several paper copies to be taken from the plate in late 2000. At the time we were preparing a revised Lodge History in preparation for the Bi-Centenary of the lodge in 2003, and this item was a significant property of the lodge. The general feeling at the time was that the plate had been used to produce paper copies in the early days of the lodge, which may have been for general instruction or associated with the production of Masonic Summonses.

When I was conducting a search for archive material for the History in early 2001, I came across a collection of papers that had previously escaped recent notice. On reading these I noticed letters from a W. Bro. J Thorp to the Secretary of the lodge at that time. W. Bro. John Thorp, who was a great Masonic historian around the turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries, had expressed interest in the copper plate and taken it to show fellow members of the Ars Quatuor Coronati Lodge, the Premier Research Lodge, No. 2076. He stated that it had aroused great interest in collectors of such items and some paper prints had been taken for them. Unfortunately it did not state the conclusions that had been reached as to the use of the plate. However, in spring 2001, I was at the Syston Masonic Rooms, and, hanging on the wall of the robing room, was another print from the copper plate. On the label below it stated that W. Bro. Thorp had presented this print, and it was taken from a copper plate belonging to the Knights of Malta Lodge and was originally used to print Masonic aprons. This seemed fairly conclusive, but I felt we needed to see if we could find an example of such an apron and compare it to the design on the plate.



The Hinckley Copper Plate.

Somewhat fortuitously, the members of the Knights of Malta Lodge were invited to attend the meeting of Enoch Lodge, No. 11, which was planning to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the formation of the Antients Grand Lodge in 1751. In the end, W. Bro. John Gilbert, W. Bro. Mark Nickerson and I travelled down on 17th July, 2001 to attend this event at the Indian Temple, Great Queen Street, London, where we met with many representatives of other lodges having an Atholl connection. We were asked to bring along anything of interest to display at the meeting, and so took a framed copy of a print from the plate. Before the meeting we spent time examining the articles in the Museum and Library at Great Queen Street and, of course, paid particular attention to the aprons. On show was an apron that looked of virtually identical design to the print and the following information was gained from the label.

According to the description in the museum, Bro. Berring of Church Street in Greenwich produced the apron on display there. This brother printed and sold aprons circa 1798 and the design was of the Antients pattern. Bro. Newman, who was a London mason of that era and specialised in engravings, produced the original engraving for the copper plate used for the printing.

When we were afterwards able to compare the designs of an apron on display at the meeting of Enoch Lodge with our print, we were able to confirm that the design was in fact almost identical. I must say that to my eye the Hinckley engraving looked less well finished and some of the details of the facial features not so well executed. Nonetheless it is quite apparent that the plate was used to print designs onto lambskin or other fabric to produce aprons. These designs could then be coloured in or left as black and white.

Working aprons had clearly been replaced with 'special' aprons for public ceremonial occasions in the 19th and 20th Centuries, at least, and fortunately W. Bro. Thorp delivered an excellent paper back in 1895 in which he traced the development of Masonic aprons and discussed some of the examples he had collected.

The apron of a speculative Freemason is directly descended from that worn by his Operative predecessor. Until quite recent times, Operative masons wore long leather aprons reaching nearly to the ankles, with the fall held up by a thong of leather passed round the neck and fastened by two thongs tied around the waist in front. The fall or flap could be buttoned up over the chest to protect the clothes and this has developed into the triangular fall now in use.

The Premier Grand Lodge issued instructions on aprons in 1731, which gives us a very good idea of the form of the apron in those days. 'None but the Grand Master, his Deputy and Wardens shall wear white leather aprons with blue silk, which sort of aprons may also be worn by former Grand Officers. Also Master and Wardens of particular Lodges may line their white leather aprons with white silk and the Stewards of the year to line their white aprons with red silk.' Only gradually did the well-known very neat, square version emerge. For example, a Hogarth engraving, 'Night', drawn in 1738, shows a drunken Freemason heading home still wearing a ribbon with square attached and a long, possibly white, apron. (A copy of this print is on display in the Museum at London Road, Leicester.)

Following the erection of the Antients Grand Lodge, their Grand Secretary, Bro. Dermott, ridiculed the fashion-conscious, as he called the 'Moderns', by claiming they were loath to wear aprons at all, as it caused them to resemble 'mechanicks'. Unable to avoid doing so inside the lodge, the gentlemen apparently turned the offending items upside down.

Describing their innovations he said they fastened the lower part round the abdomen and the bib and strings hung downwards in such a manner as might convince the spectators that there was not a working mason amongst them. He goes on,

> ‘Agreeable though this alteration might seem to the gentlemen, nevertheless it was attended with an ugly circumstance: for in traversing the lodge, the brethren were subject to tread upon the strings, which often caused them to fall with great violence, so that it was thought necessary to invent several methods of walking, in order to avoid treading upon the strings.
>
> ‘After many years’ observation on these ingenious methods of walking, I conceive that the first was invented by a man grievously afflicted with the sciatica. The second by a sailor, much accustomed to the rolling of a ship. And the third by a man who, for recreation, or through excess of strong liquors, was wont to dance the drunken peasant.’

Brother Dermott was often the subject of some unworthy attacks by his Brethren in the Moderns’ lodges and it is unclear if this passage was based on truth or if he had greatly embellished a passing fad in one lodge.

In 1767 the Premier Grand Lodge issued a further instruction which allowed members of particular lodges also to line their aprons with white silk. Notwithstanding these strictures from Grand Lodge, it is apparent from engravings and reports of the time that many Brethren, Grand Officers or not, were edging their aprons with blue silk.

It is also of interest to note that the method of wearing the apron was customarily different for the Brethren in the three degrees. The Entered Apprentice wore his with the flap turned inside so that it was invisible. The Fellow Craft wore his with the flap up and fixed to one of his waistcoat buttons, while the Master’s flap hung down on the outside. Such traditions continue in some parts of the country, and I have attended lodges where the Fellow Crafts wore their aprons with the flap up.

Reports from those days also indicate that on the Grand days, the Grand Officers’ aprons were finely decorated.

After 1760, the ornamentation of aprons rapidly increased, and it evidently became fashionable for masons to adopt more flamboyant designs on their apron. Certainly by the early 1800s some masons had aprons printed, which contained symbols from other side Degrees etc. In the case of the Antients this was a practical approach as the Craft Lodge could also work other degrees, such as Royal Arch, Mark, Royal Ark Mariner and Knights Templar. This was certainly the case at Hinckley after the lodge was consecrated in 1803, and many of the Brethren progressed through the full set of degrees.

Some wonderful examples of aprons are preserved both in our Museum at London Road and at other Masonic Centres around the United Kingdom. W. Bro. Thorp points out that some of these aprons were extremely costly and it was reported in the Freemasons’ Magazine of 1793 that ‘at the consecration of the Shakespere Lodge, No. 516, Stratford on Avon, many wore aprons from 5 to 10 pounds each’. In modern terms that would be many hundreds, if not thousands, of pounds.

One last example should be brought to your attention. That is the Moira apron issued in 1813 before the Union of the two Grand Lodges. The Earl of Moira was a famous general and also Acting Grand Master of the Moderns Grand Lodge. We would term that office 'Pro Grand Master' today. To recognise his sterling efforts for the Craft this new design was issued before he left the country to serve as Governor General in India, which he did with the utmost success. (An example of such an apron can be seen in our Library and Museum at London Road).

This diversity was forbidden after the time of the Union at the end of 1813 and the aprons we see today are more or less standard from that time.

Let us now take a look at the design of the Hinckley plate and try to decipher some of the symbols and illustrations as shown.

GRAND WARDENS

Standing to the left and right, upon the chequered floor, are two figures, which I take to represent the Junior and Senior Grand Wardens. Certainly the figure on the right, with a very distorted hand, has the emblem of Senior Warden suspended from his collar. The aprons that the Wardens wear are perhaps representative of the style of apron produced from the plate – without the full detail reproduced. It is noticeable that the equilateral triangle is printed on the top of the apron and adorns the angle of the collar. The figure on the left points to the base of a column, which is of the Ionic order. The base of this column, and that on the right hand side, are each engraved with two female figures. The figure on the left of the left-hand column can be seen to carry the scales and sword of Justice. I presume the others are Prudence, Temperance and Fortitude to complete the four virtues. The right-hand column is of the Corinthian order. On each column, partly hidden by the female figures, are the globes we would expect to be there. That on the left should be the terrestrial globe and that on the right the celestial globe. Also seen reaching up from the left-hand column is a ladder, namely Jacob's ladder, with the usual three rungs.

There are words engraved at the top of each column, but these are difficult to distinguish. Certainly on the left-hand column I can read 'Be Virtuous, Be Silent' and on the right in ascending order up the column are 'Wisdom, Strength and Beauty'. Beauty is certainly the correct label for the Corinthian column, because it is the most beautiful of the ancient orders of architecture. Hiram Abif is also said to be represented by the column of Beauty because of his skill in decorating the Temple.

Standing atop both columns are figures representing Faith, with the cross, and Hope, with the anchor. In the 19th Century there was a strong Christian influence in Masonry and it was quite usual for the figure of Faith to be represented in this way. Charity appears as the female figure between the columns and is seen comforting three small children. This is the usual representation again, although sometimes only two children are shown.

Between the columns are shown a variety of objects. Looking from the

left we find a plumb-rule leaning against the column. This would be the emblem of the Junior Warden and thus I conclude that this is the meaning of the figure shown. Next to it, in my opinion, lies a maul. Many lodges are equipped with setting mauls, rather than gavels, for the Master and Wardens to use in keeping order. The ritual states that these are gavels but in Number 50, along with other Antients lodges, the setting maul is the implement used. Next along is one of three columns bearing candles. These would, at one time, have been situated in the centre of the lodge room and so it is perhaps appropriate they are shown so on this design.

In the centre, between the candle-bearing columns, is a representation of the Volume of the Sacred Law, upon which are the Square and Compasses, as we would expect. In front of the book is a symbol to which I will return. Moving on again, we next come to a twenty-four inch gauge, partly hidden by a Level. The Level, the emblem of the Senior Warden, leans against the right hand pillar.

Let us now return to the symbol at the middle front of the chequered pavement. This system of conjoined equilateral triangles must refer to the Holy Royal Arch. The Antients had always considered this to be an integral part of their system and designated it the Fourth Degree in Freemasonry. This symbol, doubtless representing the method of sharing the word, would have been a natural addition to their layout.

On top of the dais in the centre and to the right of Charity is a beehive. This is a symbol used quite often in Freemasonry and also by many ancient religions. It, of course, represents industry, and also alludes to honey, an item used in many of the mystery cults.

To the right of the dais a small plant is growing and I suggest this is representative of acacia. Just to the left of this is a grid like object, and this is difficult to interpret but it may refer to the breastplate of the Chapter.

To the right and slightly further back behind the right–hand column is a rough ashlar. Behind this ashlar appears to be a group of three people, one of whom is apparently using a very long shovel. This must allude to the three sojourners at work on the vault. Behind this group is a large building with the Square and Compasses prominent on the arch at the front. Does this represent the Temple or, more likely, King Solomon's palace? I think it is likely to be the latter, as it bears little resemblance to the layout of the Temple, and, with the emblem on the front, we can assume it to be the Grand Lodge occupied by the Grand Master, King Solomon.

On the roof of this building is another small group of workmen lifting a stone to the parapets using a derrick. Again this appears to be an allusion to raising great weights to certain heights. This obviously alludes to the Mark Degree.

On the left of Charity there is a very intriguing group of scenes. The most prominent of these objects are the skull and crossbones. This may be an allusion to the Third Degree in the Craft or, as it stands in front of a number of tents or encampment, it probably alludes to the Degree of Knight Templar. Early seals in use in Hinckley for this degree have the

same symbol. I am not a member of this Order and therefore cannot say if there is any further interpretation that can be put on the figures standing to the left of the skull and crossbones. One of the figures certainly is wearing a crown and could allude to Zerubabbel. Equally, it could allude to a character in another degree, or indeed to King Solomon or to King David. We can also discern what appears to be a lake and a building beyond. Leading away from the lake there appears to be a watercourse, wooded on its banks, leading to a mountain, probably the fall of water and maybe the plants just to the left of the steps are the ears of corn. In the far distance we see what is, apparently, the sea. On the edge of the shore there are a number of towers and out at sea we can distinguish the Ark. Just to the right, and above the Ark, a dove is stooping down carrying an olive branch in its beak. On the right of this sector are what appear to be steeply sided pyramids and these must refer to Egypt. Flying overhead is an angel with a trumpet bearing a banner proclaiming 'Masonry Universal'.

So here, in this portion of the print, we can find references to at least two other degrees, those of Knight Templar and Royal Ark Mariner. With the Craft, Chapter and Mark allusions, they would have helped to remind the mason of the 1800's of all the degrees he could take within an Antients Lodge.

Above the figure of Charity we can find the Arms of the Antients Grand Lodge. The arms incorporate figures of the Lion, Ox, Eagle and Man, well known in Royal Arch Masonry today as they appear prominently in the Chapter. The figures to the side are probably best described as Cherubim. Cherubim are the second order of angelic hierarchy, ranking below Seraphim. Some writers, taking their inspiration from Ezekial, Isaiah and St. John, described them as having the face and breast of a man, the wings of an eagle, the belly of a lion and the legs and feet of an ox. This seems to describe the shape of the two supporters of the arms perfectly, and so we suppose them to represent Cherubim. Beneath the Cherubim is another banner proclaiming 'Holiness to the Lord'. At the head of the Arms is a representation of the Ark of the Covenant. Moses made the Ark in obedience to the commands of the Lord. The Lord ordered that the Cherubim should cover the mercy seat with their wings and that their faces should look towards each other. It was between these two Cherubim that the Shekinah, or divine presence, rested, and from which issued the voice of the Lord. Moses made the Cherubim in the form in which he saw them about the throne of the Lord.

Above the Ark of the Covenant is a line of writing in Hebrew. This is the Tetragrammaton, which represents the incommunicable name of God. Tetragrammaton is a Greek description for a word of four letters.

Between the figures on the columns are insets representing the sun and the moon with seven stars surrounding the moon. We are, of course, well aware of the significance of the sun and the moon in masonic ritual and they are well described in the Charge after Initiation.

The seven stars appear in many Tracing Boards and are also found engraved on the Chair occupied by the Junior Warden in the Hinckley lodge room. Seven is a sacred number in many religions and frequently

recurs in Scripture. It is the sum of two perfect geometric figures, the triangle and the square, which are of great importance in Freemasonry.

At the head of the engraving is the equilateral triangle enclosing the All-seeing Eye of the Most High. On two sides of the triangle are the words 'Let there be Light and there was Light.'

It goes without saying that this symbol is of prime importance to the Royal Arch.

Shining from the triangle is a shaft of light emanating from the Most High and shining down through the Tetragrammaton onto the Ark of the Covenant. From here the rays are dispersed all over the scene below.

Over most of the upper parts of the picture lie heavy clouds and the Light from Above doubtless represents the beneficial influence of the Most High on mankind through Masonic Fraternity and thought.

One last allusion to the Royal Ark Mariner Degree can be taken from the rainbow sweeping down on the right-hand side.

This is as much as I can deduce from the engravings on the old copper plate. No doubt other, more expert, masons can add to the detail, and I hope that any comments can be used to improve this paper at some future time.

From the way in which this plate was designed, and knowing it was for the Antient lodges, we can easily see how important the Royal Arch Chapter was to Antient Masonry in those days. The design includes many Chapter symbols and can be said to depend for much of its makeup on the Royal Arch. However, in addition to the Royal Arch, we can see definite allusions to the Mark, Royal Ark Mariner and Knight Templar Degrees. In Hinckley the Brethren used the original Craft Warrant as their authority to work all these degrees and submitted returns to the Antients Grand Lodge to show which degrees each Brother had taken. So some of the Brethren would have been Made (initiated), Past, Marked, Raised, Past Chair, Arched (Ould), Arched (New), and Templed.

Thus, the Fellow Craft would have been admitted a Mark Man, been raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason, taken the Passing the Chair ceremony to entitle him to be admitted to the Holy Royal Arch, of which there were two ceremonies, old and new. Eventually the last step would have been the Knight Templar Degree. It is not sure if the Degree of Mark Master was awarded at the Arched Ould or New Stage, or at the Mark stage. In Scotland the Degree can be given in either a Craft lodge or a Chapter, but the Inner Secrets of the Mark in Scotland can only be given to a candidate to the First Principal's Chair.

Finally, what relevance has this plate to the modern Mark, Royal Ark Mariner or Chapter as practised in Hinckley?

Although the United Grand Lodge instructed all Craft Lodges to confine themselves to the three degrees of Symbolic Masonry itself, this ruling took a long while to be accepted in Hinckley. Until the latter part of the 1820s all degrees as listed above were still being worked. Eventually the Mark Masons formed an independent Mark Lodge and that carried on working continuously until 1870 when it allied itself to the newly formed

Mark Grand Lodge. At this point the Mark Lodge then had to stop working other degrees and undoubtedly the Royal Ark Mariner degree ceased at about that time, if not before.

Fortunately, thanks to the wisdom of W. Bro. Ted Herbert, it was possible to gain enough enthusiasm to form a Royal Ark Mariner Lodge in 1988 and to bring back to Hinckley part of the full sequence of degrees enjoyed by our ancient Brethren in the early 1800s. It now remains only for some equally determined Brethren to restore the degree of Knight Templar to Hinckley and the story will have gone full circle.

FOOTNOTE

This copper plate and the other two important articles belonging to the Knights of Malta Lodge (the Tracing Board and the Ark or Lodge chest) obviously date to about the same period, that is the turn of the 18th and 19th Century, when the Antients Grand Lodge was operating as an alternative to the Moderns. The Antients were committed to the Chapter and also promoted other degrees under their warrant. Unfortunately we have never been able to discover from where these articles came. It has been suggested that the Tracing Board came from the lodge in Macclesfield to which the Warrant now held by Knights of Malta had originally been issued. The Brethren in Macclesfield, although surrendering their Warrant, carried on working under a Moderns Warrant, and I cannot believe they would have surrendered any Masonic furnishings.

My alternative suggestion is that these furnishings came from Lodge 91 in Leicester. This lodge was the sponsor for Knights of Malta Lodge, and helped them to obtain their Warrant, No. 47. The reason that a daughter lodge got a Warrant with a lower number than the Mother Lodge is that Warrants were being reissued at that time to comply with the wording of a piece of parliamentary legislation that was framed to stop the spread of secret societies. No less than five of the original seven Brethren who signed the request for a Warrant were from the Leicester lodge. After the Hinckley lodge had commenced operations the Brethren from Hinckley and Leicester maintained close contact and visited each other's meetings. However, not long after the Union, probably in 1814 and certainly before 1820, the Antients lodge in Leicester ceased operations. I suggest that, at this point, the furnishings could have been transferred to Hinckley where the old traditions were being maintained and with which many of the Leicester Brethren had close links. If my belief is correct then some of these items may represent some of the earliest Masonic furnishings in Leicestershire. The Antients lodge in Leicester, Number 91, was founded in 1761 and erased in 1821 after failing to submit any annual returns for several years. The Tracing Board, if accurately dated, could be the very earliest Masonic item to come down to us through the years in Leicestershire and Rutland.

MASONIC HUMOUR

W. Bro. John T. Harrison, PPDGDC

Masonic humour does not appear to be a popular subject to record. There is little evidence to show that any attempt has been made to collate such material. Perhaps 'Humour in Masonry' may provide a more likely source of research.

I turned to W. Bro. The Rev. F. de P. Castells, who, in his book, *The Genuine Secrets of Freemasonry prior to A.D. 1717*, published in 1930, stated that a friend of his recently invited him to state his view of what should be the aim of those who engage in Masonic Research, and his answer was, 'Historical investigation on methodical lines in order to ascertain what was the nature of our Speculative Science in the past and what it was designed to do for the Fraternity.' A good sentiment but there is no mention of humour.

I have done my best to follow his advice and included items taken from over a century of Freemasonry, and trust my efforts may be acknowledged as a brief record of humour in Masonic history.

We read books and newspapers, listen to lectures, but rarely do we question the facts, accepting so much of what we read and hear as 'gospel' rather than taking it with a 'pinch of salt', which brings to mind the story of Lot's Wife. All she did, like any other lady would have done, was to turn round to see what all the commotion was about and ended up as a pillar of salt. But who witnessed it? How many other ladies were present? How many more pillars of salt?

The Festive Board would seem a likely place to start, although time would appear to have changed from the former witty and eloquent style of humour of the past. Let us hope that it does not portray any decline in the quality of the present Freemason.

Humour, like Art, is in the eye of the beholder. We each enjoy it in our own way and it can be occasioned at any moment in time, for a variety of reasons, even the everyday practice of visiting a lodge, as W. Bro. Harry Carr records in *The Freemason at Work*: 'The practice of visiting is one of the oldest customs in the craft, records date from 1583 onwards, indeed, in 1723 Grand Lodge, in the First Book of Constitutions, strongly advocated inter-lodge visiting.'

In 1726 the lodge at the "Swan and Rummer" in Finch Lane, London had a by-law requiring all visitors to pay 1 shilling and record their names and lodges – 'to give us an opportunity of returning the visit'. Lodge No. 52 at Norwich in 1810 resolved to charge visiting brethren the price of a bottle of wine.

In 1919 the Book of Constitutions continued to encourage visiting but enjoined that only the Master and Wardens should do so. This was possibly because it was rumoured that the old Scottish custom of 'paying the club', or sharing the cost, was being re-introduced under the guise of a foreign system of 'going Dutch'. Visiting was one of the topics on which W. Bro. Stainer in 1857 offered this advice to a Master Elect. 'As Master of your lodge you will be an "important person". You should therefore

provide yourself with a new suit of clothes as you will frequently be invited to dine, make sure that the waistcoat is of ample girth. At the Festive Board you will be delighted to discover that you will be the first person to be served. However, yours will be the first plate that the waiters clear away at the end of the course, and it may be that an over-zealous waiter will remove your dinner before you have done with it. You are therefore advised to keep your knife on your plate whilst your fork is in your mouth; and keep your fork on your plate whilst your knife is in your mouth. You will frequently be called upon to speak. Your delivery will greatly improve if, beforehand, you consume a bottle of good claret and some brandy. A similar precaution is advised to each of your listeners. Do not speak overlong; forty-five minutes may be considered quite adequate. However, at your Installation you may safely exceed one hour.'

The Masonic Publications are varied and interesting. One edition of M. Q. Magazine made mention of a Master Cuff. John Jackson Cuff held the tenancy of the Tavern in Great Queen Street. He took charge there in 1808 and ran the business as a 'Tavern and Coffee House' and a venue for Masonic meetings. This was at the time when 'refreshments' were readily available during lodge meetings so it came as no surprise to see him mentioned in the following item.

An interesting record was found in the *Transaction*s for 1932–33 of The Lodge of Research, No. 2429, Leicester, where an explanation of three aprons and a rare jewel were given, the 'Jewel of Lodge No. 4'. The jewel was described as 'oval in shape. The Obverse bears the arms and coronet of his Grace the Duke of Somerset in gold on Garter blue. On the Reverse are a Horn in gold, and on a Riband enclosing the whole, the words "Immemorial Constitution" and "United with the Old Horn Lodge No. 2, 10th January 1774". Engraved on the rim are the words "Royal Inverness Lodge, No. 648. The first Lodge consecrated "under the United Grand Lodge, by the Most Worshipful the G. M., H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex, 1814."

'This Lodge, No. 4, has a delightfully interesting history 'acting by Immemorial Constitution, and on the revival of Masonry in the South of England, A. L. 5721, A. D. 1717 held at the "Rummer and Grapes" Tavern in Westminster, was subsequently designated the Old Horn Lodge, No. 2, which rank it attained on the extinction of the two Lodges originally holding Nos. 2 and 3. On 10th January, 1774, it was united with, and took the name of, the Somerset House Lodge, which, at the Union of the two Grand Lodges of England, on Saint John's Day, 27th December, 1813, again became Lodge No. 4, and on 25th November, 1828, it was united with the Royal Inverness Lodge, taking, by permission of His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, M. W. G. M., the designation of The ROYAL SOMERSET HOUSE AND INVERNESS LODGE No. 4, acting by Immemorial Constitution.'

In the minute book of the lodge are to be found some interesting items:

December 12th 1814: 'The ceremony of Initiation was gone through for the edification of the Brethren.'

February 13th 1815: 'Cuff, the Master of the Tavern, was called before the Lodge and admonished with regard to the poor quality of the dinners and wines.'

February 27th 1815: 'The wines having been removed from the table on the opening of the Lodge, contrary to the former custom of this Lodge, Bro. Thomas Spencer, J. D., moved that, as no New Regulation had been promulgated, the Ancient and accustomed course of this Lodge shall be followed and that the wine should be brought back to the Table.' This motion was carried and the wine replaced.

The Masonic Square magazine was the source for the following two items.

What is Freemasonry?

In his address at the London Craft Investiture on 30th October, 1989, the then Assistant Grand Master, R.W. Bro. the Rt. Hon. Lord Farnham, asked for suggestions for a short description for use when we are asked, 'What is Freemasonry about?'

The usual answer, 'A peculiar system of morality' goes down like a lead balloon and something shorter and livelier is needed to engage and retain the listener's interest. Lord Farnham offered a bottle of whiskey for the best answer and the winner, W. Bro. G. M. Sullivan, suggested as follows: (in reply to the blonde on my left) 'By rites – it should be fun, by its charity – it's concerned, by its morality – it's a force for good in society … and if it's all the same to you, I'd prefer wine …' Unfortunately at this point my meaningful conversation was forcibly directed to the character on my right – my wife – who felt that too much time had been spent on matters Masonic (and on the blonde on my left).

Installation Hiccup

The history of Phoenix Lodge, No. 914, consecrated in Jamaica in 1862, has a strange story about an incident which brought about a change in the Rules. When the Senior Warden, Bro. W. R. Hannon, who was Chief of the Kingston Fire Brigade, was Master Elect he announced that no alcohol would be served during his year, even at the Installation banquet.

There was much protest, but as Bro. Hannon was adamant the Brethren got together to try and find a solution. At the Installation meeting, the Lodge was opened and the Minutes read but nobody would move their confirmation. As a consequence under the Rule of that time, the ceremony could not proceed and Bro. Hannon was not installed. However, the Brethren did partake of the sumptuous repast which Bro. Hannon had provided at the festive board.

Since then there has been an amendment, and Rule 105 provides that a Master, once elected, shall be duly installed at the next regular meeting unless a motion otherwise has been handed in at least 14 days before the meeting, and duly moved and carried.

Another article in an issue of M. Q. magazine by V. W. Bro. The Rev. Canon Richard Tydeman, referring to a visit he made in the company of the late Lord Swansea, shows a little Masonic ingenuity and reads: 'We shall particularly miss his delightfully dry sense of humour. We were in the West Country for a consecration. It was warm weather, so we travelled in casual wear and changed into formal attire on arrival at our hotel. To my horror, I discovered that although I had packed a suit and a black shirt, I had forgotten to pack a clerical collar. What was to be done?'

> 'Well', said Brother Lord Swansea, 'I have a spare starched collar, perhaps you could wear it back to front'. We tried it, and amazingly enough, it worked! 'Of course', murmured Lord Swansea, 'you can always say 'The Lord will provide.'

I recall, as a young, very self-conscious young Master Mason, one occasion when I invited as my guest W. Bro. Frank, a senior Mason with Provincial Grand Rank. The ceremony went well and, after cocktails, we sat down to dine. We had just started the main course when I observed the Director of Ceremonies on his feet, then he was standing behind Frank and softly enquired 'Worshipful Brother, would you please reply to the visitor's toast?' Frank calmly accepted.

I need not have worried. My experienced Masonic friend had done it all, and he duly thanked the proposer of the toast and proceeded to relate the following tale:

> 'An elderly Mason and his wife had just lost their old pet dog, and knowing how much his wife relied on the company of the pet while he was at his lodge meetings, he decided to seek a replacement. After looking around the various pet-shops and charity-aid kennels he returned home with a cat. For the first two weeks or so the cat was ideal, providing the companionship his wife required. Then to her dismay the cat started to wander off in the evenings, so the mason decided to take the animal to the vet in the hope that a little 'adjustment' would cure the problem. The operation proved successful for a time until once more it resumed its nocturnal wandering. The frustrated man then decided to follow the cat when it next ventured forth and find what had captured the cat's interest. The following evening the cat went out followed by the curious man. Down the garden path went the cat, then through a hedge and onto their neighbours' lawn, where the surprised Brother observed the cat in the middle of a circle of very attentive younger cats. 'And that', said Frank, 'is the end of the story, but it does have a moral and the moral is: "Even if you have lost your working tools, you can still be a Preceptor at a Lodge of Instruction."'

This paper of Masonic Humour so far has been that of the 'recorded minutes, documented and personal observations' from the past rather than

the present and usual 'after dinner' tales of today. However, there does not seem to be any valid reason for omitting such examples because they will show the more complete picture of Masonic humour, like the one about the Knight who rides out each evening for a little revelry and, despite repeated warnings from his wife, who threatens to raise the drawbridge and lock him out, continues to arrive home late until finally seeing the drawbridge being raised, urges his trusty steed to achieve the impossible, and, failing, utters those well known words, 'so moat it be'.

A Director of Ceremonies' nightmare

At a meeting of the Lodge of Gratitude, No. 6514, the candidate, having been advanced to the East in due form, was instructed by the Worshipful Master, 'to kneel before the pedestal', the candidate proceeded with incredible agility to do as requested – unfortunately, not on the kneeling stool but on the pedestal. The Deacons, having lowered the now bewildered man, had to explain that he really was aiming too high for this degree.

One particular Ladies Festival of the Grey Friars Lodge, No. 6803, the committee decided to present each lady with the gift of a 'lodge' plate. The package duly arrived and each beautifully decorated plate had emblazoned on it 'The Gery Friars Lodge'. Fortunately replacements were obtained in time for the evening.

Even Provincial Grand Chapter has inadvertently raised a smile. A recent Annual Report of the list of Chapters clearly includes a 'St. Martini's Chapter, No. 3431'. One is led to wonder what else will be tried to increase the number of members.

Many years ago at a 'Gentlemen's Evening' held by a Lady Mason's lodge at the Grand Hotel in Leicester, the guest speaker was W. Bro. Lawrence Jackson, former Provincial Grand Chaplain, a member of the Order of Water Rats and a Canon of Coventry Cathedral. He proceeded to deliver one of his usual witty and amusing speeches, in which he recalled the time when an incendiary bomb fell on the church and how the parishioners so bravely formed a bucket chain, while the maiden ladies also assisted by passing water at the font.

More recently, at a meeting of the North Norfolk Lodge, No. 9156, the J. D. had been guiding the Initiate in a most impressive manner until proceeding to the E when, upon reaching the Tracing Board, he came to an abrupt stop. It only was then that the watching Brethren observed his apron very slowly slide down his legs and settle gently around his ankles. After his 'personal comforts' had been restored the ceremony continued.

Shortly after this the ADC, directing a newly invested Steward, decided to execute a double perambulation of the lodge before returning him to his seat. The Brother who later replied to the visitor's toast informed the Initiate that he had received a particularly unique ceremony that had also included a Masonic 'Strip and Square Dance' ritual.

I return to W. Bro. Stainer, who also had some of his unique advice for those Brethren about to visit a lodge: 'As a visitor you will be an honoured guest. It therefore behoves you to behave with perfect etiquette. Do not arrive drunk. For courtesy to your host, wear a clean shirt. If you forget your gloves, sit on your hands. Do not put your feet on the seats in the lodge. Should any of the brethren taking part in the ceremony make some trifling error, do not shout out rude epithets; this is best left to the Director of Ceremonies. It is not considered good form to sleep, except during the minutes. In the first Degree keep awake, in the second you may nod off briefly, while the third affords the opportunity for fully forty winks. You are advised to arrange with your neighbour beforehand that should you snore, he will kick you. When the Alms dish is circulated give freely, by dropping all your small change in from some little height; the resulting clatter will give the impression of great generosity. At the festive table, praise the quality of both the food and wine, no matter how vile they may be. Eat and drink as much as you can; remember, your host is paying. When the speeches begin, laugh at all the jokes, funny or not. Applaud vigorously, but take care not to break the table. At all times keep a low profile, less the Master call upon you to speak. At the end, thank your host effusively, even if the evening has been a total disaster. After all, you can always invite him back to your Lodge, and revenge will be yours.'

Continuing the search for examples of Masonic humour we turn to 'Masonic toasts', where once again W. Bro. Harry Carr provides the following: 'Early minutes on the subject of toasting are extremely rare, but the following brief extracts may serve to indicate that the practice was not confined to Grand Lodge. In the minutes of the Old King's Arms Lodge (now No. 28) for 7 April 1735; 'The D.G.M. [Sir Cecil Wray] was pleased to recommend the Rt. Honbl [sic] John Lord Viscount Tyrconnel to be admitted a Mason at their convenience. This was seconded in the warmest manner and supported *and his health was drank to* with a partial regard'.

This was an early example of toast-drinking within the Lodge room, unusual only because they were toasting a *prospective* candidate. The incident had an amusing ending, however, because at the next meeting of the Lodge four days later, his Lordship; 'having changed his mind, did not appear, and it being suggested … that his Lordship desired to withdraw his claim the Lodge … ordered the Restitution of his Deposit'.

Soon after this there is evidence of the custom of toasting the Master Elect on the night his election:

> [6 March 1738] 'Our Brother Sir Robert Lawley, Bart, was this Evening chose Master of this Lodge unanimously and his Health was drank with the greatest regard in due form.'

'It is reasonable to assume that the Lodges generally were practising a fairly standardised list of Toasts at their banquets in the 1760's, both in France and England. No opportunity was missed to enlarge the number of

Toasts and 'Sentiments' which began to make their appearance in Masonic publications from 1766 onwards. One such is:

'To the King and the Craft, as Master Masons
To his Imperial Majesty (our Brother) Francis, Emperor of Germany
To the Right Worshipful the Grand Master
To all the Noble Lords, and Right Worshipful Brethren that have been Grand Masters
To the Worshipful Grand Wardens
To the Masters and Wardens of all Regular Lodges
To the memory of him who first planted a vine
To Masons and to Masons Bairns
And Women with both Wit and Charms,
That love to lie in Masons Arms
To the Memory of the Tyrian Artist
To the Memory of Vitruvius, Angelo, Wren, and other noble artists
To Prince God bless, The Fleet success, The Lodge no less
To him that did the Temple rear, & c.
To all those who live within Compass and Square
To all true Masons and upright, Who saw the East where rose the Light
To each charming Fair, and faithful she, That loves the Craft of Masonry
To each faithful Brother, both ancient and young
Who governs his Passions and bridles his Tongue
To the Memory of P.H. Z.L. and I. A. [i.e. Prophet Haggai, Zerubabel, and IoshuA]'

In conclusion I would particularly draw the attention of Brethren to another comment from W. Bro. Harry Carr:

> 'Many readers will doubtless hold other views, so much the better. The object of these notes is not to lay down the Law but to stimulate Masonic discussion.'

LODGE TRANSACTIONS

Surplus copies of the Lodge Transactions are available for disposal for a donation plus postage. Enquiries should be made to the Editor.

Cheques for copies of Lodge Transactions should be made payable to 'The Lodge of Research, No. 2429'.

NOTE ON TRANSACTIONS

Each year we try to include in Transactions, in addition to the three addresses at the regular meetings, articles on topics of general Masonic interest; and from time to time we have been able to add the title of Miscellanea, a section dealing with answers to questions submitted by the Brethren, short news items, and so on.

It will be appreciated that the continuation of this policy depends on the good will and enthusiasm of the members of the Lodge and of the Correspondence Circle, and we appeal for the co-operation of the Brethren in helping us to create a pool of material for future consideration.

While we cannot promise to publish every contribution, we have no doubt that any effort in this direction must add to a Brother's delight in engaging in lines of Masonic research for which our Lodge was established, and possibly provide both pleasure and instruction for his fellow-members.

THE 17th REGIMENT OF FOOT
THE 17th or LEICESTERSHIRE REGIMENT

The Lodge of Research, No. 2429, and the Provincial Library and Museum have a continuous research project into Masonic activity in the Regiment. The Editor, on behalf of the above, would like to be informed of the whereabouts of any original material either for purchasing, photographing, or copying. Any gifts would also be gratefully received.

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