

A MASONIC PANORAMA

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**Selected Papers of the
Reverend Neville Barker Cryer**

Introduced by Kent Henderson

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Introduction

The Australian Masonic Research Council (AMRC) is a co-ordinative body formally established in 1992 by almost all the research lodges of Australia. These lodges are affiliated to AMRC and through its aegis share knowledge and information of mutual interest. The Council meets every two years at a Conference, where a distinguished researcher from each State presents a prestigious *Kellerman Lecture*. These lectures are published in the Council's biennial *Proceedings*.

In the intervening years between Conferences, AMRC organises a national lecture tour by an internationally reputed Masonic researcher and speaker, and publishes a book of the lectures given. The first such tour was by WBro John Hamill in 1991 and his book was entitled *Masonic Perspectives*. In 1993 the Council organised a tour of eastern and southern Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong by WBro Cyril Batham, and published his book under the title *Freemasonry in England and France*.

Now, as the third of the series, AMRC is proud to have secured the services of Very Worshipful Brother the Reverend Neville Barker Cryer, no stranger to our shores. He is one of the

foremost Masonic scholars and lecturers in the world, Prestonian Lecturer (1974), Past Master and Past Secretary of the premier lodge of research, Quatuor Coronati Lodge No 2076 EC, and past editor of its transactions, *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*. Bro Cryer is the retired world head of the British and Foreign Bible Society, a Past Grand Chaplain of the United Grand Lodge of England, and has held high office in most Masonic Orders. He has written innumerable research papers and many books, notably a series on the Masonic Halls of England, Wales and Scotland, and has recently completed a lecture tour of Canada.

The present tour, from early September to late November 1995, will cover Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand and Africa. On the first leg of the trip Bro Cryer will lecture in Kuala Lumpur, Albany, Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Canberra, Launceston, Hobart, Newcastle, Brisbane, Toowoomba, Townsville, Cairns, Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland. This book contains the papers chosen for presentation on those occasions—and more. As may be seen from the table of contents, Bro Cryer's interests and areas of expertise are as wide and as varied as his travels. By its very nature, the book must be truly *A Masonic Panorama*.

Kent Henderson, PGSwdB (VC)
Secretary, Australian Masonic Research Council
August 1995.

THE CHURCHES' INVOLVEMENT WITH FREEMASONRY

The idea for this lecture first came to me some eight years ago when the Craft in England had been subjected to some fairly heavy criticism from first the Methodist Church and then the Church of England. As half my ancestry, that on my father's side, has been staunch Methodist and my mother's family derived from a priest at the Reformation, who could at last marry as a cleric of the Church of England, I felt the attacks with some force. It seemed to me, as one who had been ordained to the ministry of the Anglican Church in Derby Cathedral and initiated in Tyrian Lodge in Derby in the same year, to be manifestly ridiculous to admit that it was impossible to be both a good churchman and a regular Mason. I knew from a lifetime of involvement in both that it was entirely compatible for one to have deep faith and sincere Masonic commitment.

I wrote a paper called 'Faith and Freemasonry' to make the point, just as I had also written a paper called 'The Churches' concern with Freemasonry' to outline the history of how we had arrived at this sad situation. Yet I felt that there was another side to this whole story that was not being told. A chance word with another Past Grand Chaplain, Canon Richard Tydeman, recently

appointed Most Puissant Grand Commander of the Supreme Council 33°, confirmed me in my view. He felt, as I do, that what was being overlooked was the very long-standing involvement of churchmen and church fabric in Freemasonry and the very rich mine of material that there was available to prove the point. 'Why don't you write about that?' he said. I told him that I had already begun to do so. This lecture is the first fruits of that common conviction.

I must begin with a bit more autobiography. It was a few months after my ordination that I attended a Diocesan Conference at Matlock Bath. As I left the morning session I was called to one side by a gaitered and aproned cleric, the Venerable George Fitzherbert, Archdeacon of Derby. His family is of the same lineage as the morganatic wife of George IV. His first question was rather odd.

'Have you a good memory, young man?' he asked.

'Fairly good', I replied, to which he responded by inviting me to tea at his Vicarage the following Sunday.

All agog to learn what was afoot, I turned up at the Old Rectory and was served tea on the lawn. His wife withdrew and from an inside pocket the Archdeacon took a large piece of printed paper.

'This is something I want you to sign', he declared.

'What is it?' I asked, having had some experience of forms in the Army.

'It is your entry form into Freemasonry and we want you in. Your second is Canon Boorman at the Cathedral and he is pleased to support you'.

As I had never even heard of Freemasonry until that moment it was all a surprise, and yet what was my impression? Here was a senior Church officer, backed up by the Diocesan Secretary, eager to arrange part of my future. For them there was not the slightest problem about the twin membership of Church and

Craft and indeed it looked as if the step into Masonry was one which local Church leaders not only approved of but actively promoted. I signed up.

The connection with the Church seemed stronger than ever when I at last 'came to light' in the lodge temple. There, amongst the surrounding faces, I saw the Director of Diocesan Education, another Canon; the chief lecturer at the Diocesan Training College for Lady Teachers, the Rev Dr Daines; there were two other incumbents, and a visiting cleric, John Richardson, who was in due course to become the Archdeacon of Derby, following my proposer. Is it any wonder that I came into the Craft with the firm conviction that the Church was indeed very closely linked with our Order? Oh, and I forgot to say that amongst the laymen present was one of the churchwardens of the parish church in which I was serving as a curate, along with a lawyer who was later to become the Diocesan Registrar. Just to put the lid on firmly, I received from a cousin shortly afterwards a note saying that she was glad to know that I was a Freemason. Her dad, my dear uncle George Bailey, a senior steward of Bank Street Methodist Church in Hadfield, Derbyshire, had apparently been a Provincial officer. I hope that you now see why I grew up with the unquestioned belief that the churches were inevitably linked with Freemasonry.

Since then I have had many similar examples of such close ties. One of our Quatuor Coronati Lodge's most regular attenders as a Correspondence Circle member is the 82-years-old Provincial Archivist for Hampshire. Entering his local lodge at the age of 24 he found that, besides his proposer, the Baptist Church Bible Class leader, and his second, the Senior Deacon of the Church, there were the Baptist minister, the Sunday School head, two more Deacons and one of the Church's foremost supporters. Imagine his amazement some four years

ago when a new Baptist minister, fresh out of college, told him that unless he gave up his devilish practices as a Mason he would be barred from membership, after nearly 70 years of regular attendance.

As I began to get my own bearings and learn about the words, customs and history of this 'Society of Masons' to which I belonged, the connection with the Church became more and more evident. Not only was the Established Church's Authorised Version of the Scriptures appointed to be open in all the lodges I attended, but also it was a cleric of the Established Church in Scotland, Dr James Anderson, who was chosen to be the author of the first *Constitutions* by which this new growth of Freemasonry was to be regulated. Even more, a member of the Huguenot Church exiled to England, Dr John Desaguliers, was one of the first Grand Masters and so involved were the members of that religious community in this new body that many of the early Grand Officers are clearly recognisable as from that group. The Huguenot Lodge in London invited me to write a paper, on the phenomenon of such close association, for the 300th Anniversary of the Huguenot community in England some years ago and it was accepted as a subject for printing in their Society journal.

What was soon evident in the practice of private lodges up and down the land was the custom of a lodge processing to or gathering at the local parish church before the important occasion of Installation and the hearing of a sermon with prayers conducted either by the parson or the chaplain of the lodge—sometimes, of course, being the same person. Nor were these occasions without their opportunity for contributing either to the needs of the church attended or to some nearby charitable work which had the church's approval. As but one example at random, let me introduce you to the lodge at Barton-upon-Humber, not the most readily identifiable town in the United

Kingdom. What follows was unearthed when I included the Masonic Hall in my book about the buildings in the northern part of England.

'On 14 August 1816 the Revd. George Oliver, Vicar of Clee, P.M. of the Apollo Lodge No. 544 of Great Grimsby, and Provincial Grand Chaplain of the Province of Lincoln, preached a sermon at St. Peter's Church as part of the Provincial Meeting of the United Grand Lodge.' So runs a passage from a booklet about the occasion which, with the text of the sermon, is still preserved in the hall at Barton. The sermon includes the following: 'The Secrets of this truly valuable Art are of a nature so consonant with the mysteries of Christianity that whoever is possessed of the sublimities of the former cannot be deficient in the practice of the latter . . .' and he added in a footnote, 'It has ever been my religion; those we derive from Eden, from the patriarchs, and from the sages of the East, all of which are made perfect under the Christian dispensation', and that is not all that that lodge room reveals.

Let us move to another part of the country altogether. In 1985 I was in Poole, Dorset, to give a lecture. After the festive board a Past Master asked me if, before I went away the next morning, I would like to be shown round the parish church of St James's close by. He was one of the churchwardens and was rightly proud of the ancient building. I agreed and was indeed impressed with the beautiful condition of the fabric and the charming 18th-century style of its interior. The Brother especially led my eye to a number of fine wall plaques commemorating various men of note in the parish. There was also one panel for a notable lady.

When we had made the tour, the warden told me the following story. A new Vicar had come to Poole about six months or so previously and shortly after his arrival he found occasion to make a plain but somewhat ill-informed attack upon

the prevalence of Freemasonry that had come to his notice whilst visiting the congregation in their homes. He concluded by hoping—or rather praying—that those who followed this way would soon be led to recognise their errors and let their Church faith have sole sway. My companion had a word with his fellow churchwarden, who was also a Mason, and they asked the Vicar, a to meet them one evening in the church building. The Vicar, a trifle mystified at this request, turned up and was taken on the same tour as myself. This time, however, he was informed that more than three-quarters of the persons mentioned in the plaques had been Freemasons, including the son of the lady whose panel is there.

‘Without them’, said the Mason-wardens, ‘this church and its influence in society hereabouts would have been very considerably reduced. Perhaps, Vicar, you should consider in future those amongst whom you are preaching.’ It had, I was told, a rather chastening effect.

This story is paralleled in the present day by the complaint of the Vicar of Hampton who not long ago remarked to his curate, who was a Mason, that the Charity Garden Party for Masons the previous afternoon seemed to have depleted the attendance at the 8 am Sunday service. Respectfully the curate pointed out that the only men in the congregation that morning were Masons.

The mention of church fabric must surely lead us into the whole area of Masonic adornment of churches. Three years ago I had the sad duty of attending the funeral of the best man at my marriage, himself also a cleric and one with whom I shared my theological college days. He had spent his short retirement helping in the beautiful parish of Clare in Suffolk until he died with a crippling cancer.

As I sat in the large Parish Church pondering the life of my friend, my eyes were drawn to a huge Decorated-style side

window which contained lovely stained glass portraying the story of the good Samaritan. Far up the road were the figures of the Priest and the Levite and in the foreground was the Samaritan tending the wounds of the mugged Hebrew traveller, whilst a patient ass waited to receive its burden and carry him to the nearest Inn. The care which my friend has shown amongst Italian prisoners of war as their Commandant in North Africa, as a curate in the east end of London, and as the parson in a large country parish near Chelmsford—all seemed to be summed up in that picture.

When the service was over and we had seen his body laid to rest, I went back into the church and stood under the window again. What did I read at the foot of the glass panels? ‘This window was given to the glory of God and in loving and fraternal affection and memory of the Revd. Canon (and then his name), Deputy Provincial Grand Master of this Province for 15 years, by the brethren of Suffolk.’ I later discovered that not only had the Canon been sometime Vicar of this parish but also that it was here that he too ended his days. It was yet one more moving connection between the Church and Freemasonry and the beauty of that gift will be an ongoing inspiration as long as that building stands.

Examples of Masonic contributions for the enhancement of church buildings are so numerous that it is well-nigh impossible to know where to begin and to end. Whether it be the organ casing of the largest Parish Church in England at Great Yarmouth—duly inscribed as a Masonic gift for all to see—or whether it be the exquisite ironwork over the pilgrim chapel entrance and the huge west window in the Cathedral of Guildford, Surrey, the same message is still being proclaimed.

What the Church of the Middle Ages owed to the operative masons who carved the great vaults and raised the vast walls is symbolised by the Apprentice Pillar in Roslyn Chapel near

Edinburgh, whilst the Church today still owes much to the speculative Masons who seek to provide ornaments of quality that do honour and give glory to God's house and name. A symbol of this latter is the Masons' Pillar in the present Anglican Cathedral in Belfast, Northern Ireland. I forbear to stress the willingness of those having huge cathedral repair bills to accept the many gifts made by our Grand Charity—like the recent contribution made to re-stock the tools and improve the conditions in the Masons' Yard at York. Every time that sort of thing happens the link between the Church and the Craft is renewed—not begun—and the point I am trying to illustrate in this paper is made once more.

Finally, for this evening, I want us to move out of the church building into the churchyard that surrounds it. This area, called in the past 'God's Acre', has always been regarded as of special importance to the Church community and has been regulated with particular care. Even to the present day there are occasional newspaper items when a family is apparently in conflict with the local parish priest or church council about what can and what cannot be allowed in these hallowed precincts. I mention this requirement because it makes the appearance of memorial stones with Masonic emblems all the more significant. Clearly the Church in the past had no hang-ups about the inclusion of Masonic burials in the church's own cemetery.

Whilst it is of course possible that some of the emblems used on headstones could have both a purely Christian as well as a Masonic inference—I refer of course to anchors, open Bibles, two hands holding each other, and a dove bearing an olive branch—there are sufficient evidences of quite specific Masonic references for us to claim that the Church of England, at least, has interred with its blessing many a faithful brother.

In Winlaton churchyard, on Tyneside, we have just such an example. Here, let me first explain, we have evidence to show

that Industry Lodge No 48—one of the oldest extant lodges in England, let alone the North-east—was originally an operative lodge made up of the men who worked as stonemasons in Winlaton and Swalwell. Having roots at least back into the latter half of the 17th century, the lodge eventually responded to the blandishments of a new Provincial Grand Master appointed by the Premier Grand Lodge in London and became a ‘Moderns’ lodge.

It is therefore fascinating to wander through the local parish churchyard and find, at the north-east corner of the old part of the church building, a gravestone from 1832. It records how Andrew Kemp, Mason of Winlaton, was buried here with due honours. Above the name are a square and compasses and, in true operative fashion, these latter are set in the Fellow of the Craft position.

I have found similar and just as varied inscriptions all over Britain, as, for instance, with a sea captain buried in a Norman churchyard at Warblington on the south coast of England, who had Noah’s ark, the rainbow and the dove displayed and ‘a dutiful brother’ placed under his name.

Yet the prevalence of this connection of the Church with Freemasonry was especially born in upon both my wife and myself when we were last in New Zealand’s South Island. We had done the trip up most of the west coast there and then traversed the famous Arthur’s Pass in order once more to reach Christchurch. As we cruised into the outskirts we stopped at yet another churchyard and, as is our wont, we divided the area between us and started to look at the memorials. Almost at once my wife called me over. There, on a simple plinth with a granite cross above it, were a square and compasses and the description of the occupant of the grave it marked. He was not ashamed to have on his stone: ‘a long-standing and devoted member of the Church here and a faithful member of his Lodge’. The

connection between the two was once more re-affirmed for us, on the other side of the globe.

It is certainly true, as I have heard recently, that a zealous pastor has caused one of the chairs in his church to be publicly burned because it was once donated a century ago by a senior church official who dared to be a Freemason. It is equally true that there are some churches that have demanded that their ministers should choose between employment giving provision for their families and membership of a Masonic lodge—which is really no choice at all. Yet, for all this, the facts of our history stand clear for all to observe. Masonry and the Churches have for long periods been closely and faithfully linked. Members of both have given loyal and unstinting service. When such links are severed both can and indeed have already suffered. Could we perhaps here learn from the past?

WOMEN AND FREEMASONRY

It is some 15 years ago now that I was rung up one evening by a rather distressed wife of a Freemason who wanted my advice. She had heard my name mentioned by another wife and she therefore determined to make this contact.

‘Just what is this Freemasonry’, she asked, ‘in which my husband is so deeply involved but about which he will tell me nothing? In every other respect we are a normally married couple who share so much but in this regard he shuts up like a clam and refuses to say a word. You are a clergyman and a Freemason so I cannot believe that the movement is something disreputable. If that is the case then why cannot my husband share things about it with me? I am really upset about this and I would value your advice.’

I start with this incident not only because it touches on one important aspect of the subject on which you have invited me to talk to you today but also because I am sure that it represents, and has for long represented, a concern that women have felt about our Order. Not only will that heartfelt appeal never leave me, I then began to be, and have since been, all too well aware that to imagine that ‘Women and Freemasonry’ is a taboo

subject, or even an apparent non-starter, is seeking to avoid reality.

Whilst it may be a fact, and one that I believe will remain a fact for the foreseeable future, that our form of Freemasonry is one into which women will not be admitted *as members*, it cannot any longer be contended that Freemasonry has no place whatever for some participation by women. What I hope to have amply demonstrated, or it may be for some present ‘brought again to mind’, by the end of this talk, is that not only do we now need to involve women in this movement but also that for long enough they have established their connection with it. This lecture therefore now divides into evidence from the past, the present situation and some possible prospects for the future.

Glimpses of the past

It may not be generally known that in the Ordinances of the London Masons dated 1481 we find mention of a practice that was even then apparently well-established. The operative brethren were commanded to go to Mass *every year* on the feast of the Quatuor Coronati (the Four Crowned Martyrs) and *every other year* on the Octave (that is, a week after) the Feast of Holy Trinity, and following worship they were ‘to keep dinner or honest recreation . . . and any to have their wives with them if they will.’ The mason’s dinner cost twelve pence and his wife’s eight pence, and the two sums together represented just under half a week’s wages for a Master Mason. Having the ladies present was not therefore something idly undertaken. Medieval masons counted their coins just as we do.

By the 18th century we have ample evidence that not only were ladies often present at the Annual Service in the Parish Church on the day of the lodge Installation but they were also invited to the dinner that used to follow. Sometimes the minutes give a strange impression as to what exactly was intended, for

the Kent Lodge No 15 recorded that ‘wives’ were invited to dinner in 1797; the next year it was ‘sisters’; and the year following it was ‘partners or sweethearts’. You must draw your own conclusions about who came.

The brethren of the well-named *True Love and Unity* Lodge at Brixham in Devon met at the lodge room at 9 am on St John’s Day in 1811, opened the lodge, did essential business, closed it and then walked to church in procession *wearing regalia* ‘with their wives or such female or friend they may chuse to bring with them’, afterwards adjourning to the lodge room for dinner. In 1818 we know that for that occasion they had at least half a gallon of rum and half a gallon of gin. Moving further west and earlier, to Penrhyn in Cornwall in 1793, we are told that though the ladies only joined their menfolk after the former had dined, yet the 50 ladies were formally welcomed by the Master and brethren. Furthermore, ‘the M.W. Grand Master called for a Charge and on Bro. Turner to render the Entered Apprentice’s song, after which the M.W. Grand Master directed his Deputy to return thanks to the Ladies *with three*.’

Mind you, the brethren could sometimes be a little mean. At Redruth in Cornwall in 1815 it was decided that as the wine and fruit, provided on such an occasion for the ladies, increased the expenses of the day beyond what many in the lodge could afford, these items would be dispensed with in future, as the ladies come only to ‘behold their Husbands, Sons and Brothers met together for charitable purposes in Love and Harmony’ and not to eat and drink. Out of a total bill for the last occasion of £78 the ladies had cost them £2. Not very hospitable or charitable, methinks.

In some of the oldest lodges in Cheshire there was another interesting custom. On St John’s Day, 1789, and in the lodge at the Coach and Horses Inn, Chester, it was announced that a Miss Edwards was appointed Lady Patroness of the Society of

Masons, whilst in 1823, presumably on the former lady's decease or marriage, a Miss Mainwaring was nominated for this role by no less than the Rev Philip Egerton, a relative of the noble family that was to provide many of the Grand Masters of this Province.

In 1836 a new lodge was consecrated in Chester and this was immediately followed by a service in St John's Church, where the new floor cloth of the lodge was suspended from the pulpit. The Provincial Grand Chaplain preached from above this revealing object which was said to provoke much talk amongst the ladies, who also accompanied their men to the following banquet, albeit they sat at a separate pair of tables. In Cheshire, as in York and elsewhere, it was quite normal for the ladies to accompany their men when Masonic performances were given in local theatres and where not only did the brethren wear aprons but even took parts sometimes in the production.

Whilst these are examples of the 'social' engagement of women in their menfolk's activities, there are other cases of something that looks more involved. In the records of the Corpus Christi Guild at York in 1408 it is noted that an Apprentice had to swear to obey 'the Master, or Dame, or any other Freemason'; and, in case anyone should think that such a title meant perhaps only the Master's living partner, it is worth noting that as late as 1683 the records of the Lodge of Mary's Chapel in Edinburgh provide an instance of a female occupying the position of 'Dame' or 'Mistress' in a masonic sense. She was a widow of a mason but she exercised an equal right with other operative masons and took the same ceremonies.

In 1693 we have the *York MS No 4*, belonging to the Grand Lodge of York, which relates how when an Apprentice is admitted the 'elders taking the Booke, he or shee that is to be made mason shall lay their hands thereon, and the charge shall be given'. That this could have been the case seems all the more

likely in that in 1696 two widows are named as members in the Court Book. Away in the south of England we read in 1714 of Mary Bannister, the daughter of a barber in the town of Barking, being apprenticed as a mason for seven years with a fee of five shillings paid to the Company.

Of course it can be claimed that even these cases were rather with operative than speculative Freemasonry, but this is no longer so with some other women. The first, I am sure, you are well aware of. She was called the Hon Mrs Elizabeth Aldworth, though she is more frequently referred to by her maiden name of Elizabeth St Leger, daughter of the 1st Viscount Doneraile. The truest version of how this lady became involved with a lodge is that she was busy in her father's house when the lodge that he summoned was meeting in the next room. As the wall between the two chambers was being repaired and there were some loose bricks, she was not only able to hear but actually to see some of the activities next door.

When she had heard sufficient she tried to withdraw but, on opening her room's door, found the armed Tyler in the corridor without. He challenged her, whereupon she screamed and collapsed to the floor. The lodge members emerged and though some actually proposed death as a solution to the dilemma others, including the lady's father, proposed that she be obligated and thus held to keep inviolate what she had heard and seen. All this, states her tombstone, took place in the County of Cork AD 1712.

Another woman to discover some of the secrets was a Mrs Beaton who lived in Norfolk in the middle of the 18th century. She is said to have been able to enter a locked room next to the lodge meeting place and by careful hearing to have learned all the secrets of the first degree. She made her discovery known and was then offered initiation which she accepted—and paid for.

There was also the unscrupulous Mrs Bell, the landlady of the Crown Inn, Newgate, near Newcastle upon Tyne, who claimed to have discovered the secrets of Freemasonry by the following stratagem that was announced in an advertisement placed in the *Weekly Chronicle*:

This is to acquaint the public that on Monday, the 1st inst, being the Lodge or monthly meeting-night of the Free and Accepted Masons of the 22nd Regiment, Mrs Bell, the landlady of the house, broke open the door with a poker, by which means she got into an adjacent room, made two holes through the wall and by that means discovered the secrets of Masonry, and knowing herself to be the first woman in the world that ever found out the secret, is willing to make it known to all her sex. Any lady that is desirous of learning the secrets of Freemasonry may do so by applying to that well-learned woman who has lived 15 years in or about Newgate.

In Dorset, about 1779, a woman is said to have hidden herself in a clock case so as to overhear proceedings, whilst in Chatham a few years later another lady chose a cupboard as her silent witness-box. She was sadly discovered through her pet dog scenting her out and she also was made a member of the Craft to preserve her silence. Though the minutes of the Lodge do not record the incident, it is known that this latter event took place in connection with the Royal Kent Lodge of Antiquity, No 20.

It was likewise a native of Kent, England whose career in the Craft, though short, is revealed in a scarce print entitled 'The Freemasons Surprised, or the Secret Discovered: a True Tale from a Masons' Lodge in Canterbury'. The item consists of a poem below an engraving which shows the interior of a large tavern in which a Masonic meeting is in progress. On a central

table are three candlesticks, one overturned (or is it laid down to indicate a meeting in progress?) and one broken, a bowl of punch, glasses, rummers, pipes and tobacco. The ceiling has been broken through by the weight of a young woman who had been concealed in the loft. Her legs in stockings and shoes are exposed as far as her hips and suggest that she was struggling in mid-air above the astonished and confused Freemasons, some of whom are angry but others are convulsed with laughter.

Whether this was fact or fiction we cannot be certain, but there is no questioning the story of 1783 in New Brunswick where 10,000 refugees from the United States were settled. Meetings of Masons were held in private homes and James Sproule invited brethren to use his log cabin. This humble abode had only two rooms so when the men arrived James's wife, Mary, picked up her knitting and went through the curtains that separated off the other room. However subdued the working was that night, Mary heard enough to let it be known that she was acquainted with their doings and was herself subsequently initiated. She is said to be Canada's only woman Mason but she never attended another meeting, though her gravestone was adorned with the square and compasses. It is worth recording, perhaps, that one of her descendants became Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New Brunswick in 1954.

In the USA we have the story of Catherine Babington of Princess Furnace in Kentucky. In 1831 she began, at the age of 16, to hide in the pulpit [*sic*] of the lodge room, and did so for several months until at last found out by her uncle. She was entered, passed and raised in the blue degrees and when she died in 1886 it was claimed that she was the only female 'Master Mason' in the USA.

In Taylorsville, North Carolina, a woman named Catherine Sweet concealed herself at meetings of Lee Lodge No 253, for more than a year. When she was finally discovered she could

answer the whole of the extensive catechisms for the three degrees and in 1840 she was initiated in the lodge where five of her uncles were members. She never visited a lodge again but she is reported as having retained her interest in the Craft for the rest of her life.

Not all female acquaintance with Freemasonry is intentional. When waiting in a lodge dining room in a small town in Surrey, England, whilst the lodge opened in the temple above, I was addressed by the wife of the hall caretaker whilst she was beginning to set the cutlery for the later meal.

‘You know, Sir,’ she said, ‘That new Master always makes a mess of opening the Lodge. I sometimes think I ought to go up there and do it for him.’

Yet, if this is enough of such female ‘discoveries’, it is not the only kind of activity in which women were involved in ceremonies that had some kind of Masonic association and content. Time and space prevent our next section from being exhaustive but I hope that what I here describe will give the correct impression of the variety, the persistence and the enthusiasm with which forms of female Masonry flourished in the 18th and 19th centuries.

There first appeared in France in the 1730s a form of Masonry called Adoptive because it included certain degrees for the ladies who had male relatives in the regular Order. At that time there were already four degrees of Apprentice, Companion, Mistress and Perfect Mistress. The principal Officers were a Grand Master and Grand Mistress conjointly and they wore blue collars with a gold trowel pendant, white aprons and gloves. The jewel worn on the breast was a golden ladder with five rungs.

In 1740 we learn of an Order of Amazons that began its life in South America and then migrated to the northern continent where it flourished until at least 1800. There were lodges of men and women separately.

In 1745 there was again in France an Order of the Knights and Ladies of the Anchor where a nautical spirit prevailed. The Grand Orient was called 'the Roadstead', the Lodge was 'a Squadron' and the ladies made their voyage to the island of Felicity 'under the sails' of the brethren. One hesitates to ask what exactly was the content of their ritual.

The mood changed for others when in 1747 the Chevalier Beauchene (which name means 'Glorious Oaktree'), a famous Masonic Master in Paris, formed the Order of Woodcutters (or *Fendeurs*). It was open to both sexes and the forms of ritual were in many respects a copy of those used by the Italian secret societies called the '*Carbonari*' (or Charcoal burners). The Lodge here was a wood-yard which represented a forest, the Brethren were called Cousins, the candidate a 'Brick' and the whole rite was held in a garden at a place called 'New France' near Paris. The Father Master took up his place on a log, was crowned with leaves, and had a green cordon with a wedge of boxwood hanging from it, an axe in his hand and a pipe in his mouth. Largely patronised by the upper bourgeoisie, its aim was to teach virtue, caring love, friendship and help for poorer folk.

Adoptive Masonry was given a still stronger boost when it was formally taken over by the Grand Orient of France in 1760. Although we cannot here enter into the details of this form of association it ought to be said that each lodge of women was under the care of a male lodge and only regular Masons of the Grand Orient could be invited to visit the female units. The latter had a female President or Mistress to rule over them. That this was not merely a French phenomenon is shown by the following title page of a booklet published in London in 1765. It reads:

WOMEN'S MASONRY
OR Masonry by Adoption
Explaining the making of a Masoness

with the form and furniture of the Lodge
The working of their Lectures &c
with their signs, Tokens &c clearly explained
by a Sister Mason.

The booklet was printed for V Hookham in Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields (where the present United Grand Lodge has for two centuries had its headquarters) and V Street at the Bible & Crown, Little Tower Hill.

An early member of the French branch was the Duchess of Chartres, wife of the Grand Master of the Grand Orient. She was succeeded by the Duchess of Bourbon in 1775 and in 1780 the Grand Mistress was the Princesse de Lamballe, a personal friend of Marie Antoinette. The Princess was put in prison in 1792 and, on refusing to take the Revolutionary oath against the monarchy, she was torn to pieces by the mob in that same year. In due time the wife of Napoleon, the Empress Josephine, joined the Order, as later did her successor, Eugenie, the wife of Napoleon III.

Meanwhile, a society which was deliberately modelled on Freemasonry was founded at Versailles in 1784 and known as the 'Knights and Ladies of the Dove'. It was especially favoured by the Bourbon monarchy and, strange to say, was able to survive the Revolution and continued until the middle of the 19th century.

It can thus be seen that the Adoptive Masonry that began to flourish in the USA in the 19th century had a strong background of female interest and involvement to support it. Any idea that the share of women in bodies that were copies of, or closely allied to, Freemasonry is a 20th-century development is seen to be totally incorrect.

What developed from these early stages we shall now look at in more detail, but no one who studies the topic of 'Women and Freemasonry' should ever forget that as far as the speculative

Craft is concerned the ladies have been on the scene for a very long time—and some very influential ladies amongst others.

The present scene

There are those Masons in England and Wales who still speak today as if the idea of women being involved with Freemasonry is something quite unthinkable. This may explain why those who are critics of the Craft include some who point a finger of scorn at this ‘all male’ organisation and ask why there is no place for women in the operation. It is as well therefore that any paper on this subject should specify once and for all the fact that women *are already* involved in Freemasonry and there is really ample opportunity for more women to be so engaged if they wish.

It is not easy for an English Freemason to grasp that this is the case. I can well remember my surprise, as I went on a tour of some 80 Masonic Halls in Scotland, at noticing in almost all of them the provision made for ‘The Rite of the Eastern Star’. Some of the halls were actually set up on the day I called, for a meeting that afternoon or evening and I realised just how integrated male and female forms of Freemasonry were in that land. Here was an active Masonic movement in which the wives, widows, sisters and daughters of Freemasons were participating and on the very premises that were alternately occupied by their husbands, blood brothers and so on.

I knew when I was in North America that I had no need to spell out the details of this Rite (especially as some present would be members of it) but, just in case there are some present today who do not know anything about it, I think I should state that since the idea began in the mid-19th century there have been five degrees which cater in sensible fashion for a daughter, a widow, a wife, a sister and a general benevolent concern. For those who want to learn more may I commend the

comprehensive article which my late lamented friend, Roy Wells, wrote in the 1993 issue of our Quatuor Coronati Transactions. What is certain is that the 'Eastern Star' shows no signs of waning and is happily shining forth at least on both sides of the Atlantic as well as elsewhere.

Flourishing also in England and Wales today is the Order of Women Freemasons which provides, for women only, the almost exact counterpart to regular male Masonry. It has been growing steadily in the years since 1950 and most of the cities and main towns in the kingdom have one, if not two, lodges of this Order. What is interesting to know is that many of our keenest male Masons are the husbands of no less eager officers of this Fraternity and I am sure that there are some households in which the husband and wife do not need to rehearse their rituals by themselves. What is certain, from all accounts that I have been able to acquire, is that the women are, if anything, more particular than we men in insisting on the correct presentation of the degree rituals. Certainly I have first-hand knowledge of some of the ladies involved, and those who bear Grand or Provincial office take it very seriously indeed. What is absolutely clear is that this form of Freemasonry is here, and here to stay, and it is both odd and sad to note how some survey the Masonic scene in my land without accepting the fact that 'Women and Freemasonry' has here one of its strongest expressions.

There is of course also Co-Masonry in which men and women, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, can participate together in a form of Freemasonry, again very similar to our own. My first acquaintance with it was some 35 years ago when I was sent as part of a lodge deputation to interview a possible candidate, meeting also with his wife at their home. We were most graciously received, allowed to start asking questions, and then the wife said, 'I do assure you that my

husband would make an excellent candidate because I have seen him at work with ritual.' We were all flabbergasted and then, recovering, asked her what she meant.

'Well', she said, 'I am a Past Master in our lodge and my husband has just finished as Senior Deacon and that is how I know.'

She revealed, of course, that the lodge was a Co-Masonic one, which we had never encountered before. For us it was a conundrum, as no one who has participated in any other Masonic or quasi-Masonic organisation is normally allowed to apply for membership, let alone join. We asked for time to consider the matter, and discovered that the Province would allow his application if he gave up his Co-Masonic membership and if his wife was agreeable to this. She was, and the man has long since been through the chair of my first Surrey lodge.

The organisation was really begun in France and took its effective rise from the initiation of a Mlle Maria Deraismes in 1882. Lodges began to be formed into which men or women could be freely admitted and one of the added problems between our own Grand Lodge and the Grand Orient of France is precisely that the latter will accept 'members' of the Co-Masonry lodges as members also of their Order. That the Order of Co-Masons has persisted is evidenced by the production for them in 1982 of a bronze medallion to commemorate the centenary of Maria Deraismes's initiation. What is also interesting is that in 1918 Miss Alicia St Leger Aldworth, a direct descendant of our first woman 'initiate', was a candidate for the Order of Universal Co-Masonry.

Looking at the present-day scene, then, confirms that in addition to the organisations in the USA involving wives and daughters socially, and allowing for those wives still in England and Wales who cook the meals and in some case wait at table on their menfolk, there is plenty of scope for Women in

Freemasonry. What needs to be recognised by those outside our movement is that such opportunities already exist.

Three points for the future

Is there yet a way forward, in addition to this present involvement? I believe that there is and here, of course, I can only speak from an English and Welsh point of view. Any comments that you, the audience, may care to add as to possible Australian developments will be welcomed for my general enlightenment.

1 I am sure that the wives and relatives of present day Freemasons deserve more involvement than simply as cooks, dancing or dining partners on Ladies' nights, or organisers and helpers at charity functions. In my present Province of Yorkshire, North and East Ridings, the ladies are invited into the temple, sit with their husbands who are in full regalia and in their normal places in lodge, and someone like myself explains to them basic facts about the Craft and its history or meaning. After 13 such presentations in two years I know that this works and the wife whom I first mentioned would now be much more satisfied.

2 The time surely has to come when we recognise the Order of Women Freemasons. In 1933 Elsie Anderson wrote as follows:

So far the United Grand Lodge of England has not officially recognised Women Freemasons. I am sure, however, that their attitude cannot be maintained forever. The Honourable Fraternity would only wish to be recognised as the Women's branch. They have no wish to actually work with men in the lodges. After all, if a woman is good enough to be the wife, mother, sister or daughter of

a Mason she ought to be good enough to be his ‘brother’. The Men’s Order recognises the coloured races but refuses recognition of their own kith and kin.

Perhaps the new decision of our Grand Lodge to recognise Prince Hall Masonry may be just the step that will open wider the acknowledgment that would embrace, if not admit, Women Freemasons. I personally hope so.

3 Lastly, I am sure, the new social atmosphere, in which husbands and wives naturally share more of their time, possessions and interests than was the case even 50 years ago, will—unless women are allowed to participate and learn more fully about our Movement—result in fewer candidates, much more heartache and unnecessary antagonism. What is needed is a broader mind, some inventive programmes and the awareness of what speculative Freemasonry sought to achieve at the very outset—to enable those who might otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance to be drawn into regular fellowship.

That once referred to sects and political opinions; now it also includes gender.

THE INFLUENCE OF OPERATIVE ON SPECULATIVE FREEMASONRY

The subject which it is my privilege to present to you today is really too extensive for the lecture I am to deliver. I make this attempt, however, for three reasons. First, because I believe that what I shall say may be a spur to fresh thinking about the early stages of our speculative Craft. Second, because there will be a chance for points in it to be debated later; and third, because three Masonic scholars whom I respect have already encouraged me to test the waters and secure reactions to what I propose. On those grounds I launch myself into the subject.

A year ago I was granted a rare privilege. Armed with some books from the library of the Manchester Association for Masonic Research I was allowed to read and take notes from them in their private office. Whilst I was there I noticed a complete set of their *Transactions* and for the first time I was able to scan the contents of volumes 1–5. They opened up for me some new paths and insights into early Freemasonry and I have to tell you that the first results of what then struck me will also be shortly appearing in a new book on the origin, development, meaning and practice of the Mark and Ark Mariner degrees.

The first contribution was a paper by a Bro Thomas Carr in volume 2. The paper was entitled ‘The Operatives’ and in it he suggested something that one had always heard and read but never seriously taken on board, namely that the first attempts of the Grand Lodge of 1717 to bring fresh order to the speculative form of Freemasonry, albeit at first within a very limited area, in and around the City of London, were derived from, and based upon, operative masonic teaching and practices. It was in pondering what Carr wrote that I experienced a quite new awareness of the reality of 1717 and its aftermath. These are his words:

When Anderson formulated Modern or Speculative Freemasonry ... he and those with him based their rites and ceremonies on those of the Lodges of Operative Freemasons which then existed. It is quite certain that when this revised and *modified* Masonry was founded there were many essential points in Operative Masonry which were *not carried over* into the newer ritual. I especially refer to the fact that the old Operative or Trade Lodges were ruled by three Grand Masters and that many actual Trade or Guild Secrets were entirely omitted.

‘Doubtless’, he continued, ‘some of these omissions were wise and calculated to facilitate the establishment of Moral or Speculative Masonry ...’

He added one more passage (volume 2, page 5):

Anderson and those associated with him were chiefly concerned to embody references to such trade methods and trade tools as to their mind the more readily lent themselves to symbolism or to allegory of a moral kind. But unfortunately much was left out which it is necessary to know in order to understand some of the symbols themselves and

to properly grasp the meaning of some of the references which remain in the ritual.

That this is not just a fanciful notion seems to be supported by the view of a previous Librarian of Grand Lodge, Henry Sadler, who contended that in 1717 Freemasonry was still largely a trade-oriented society and that a struggle for control took place in the 1720s between *the original operative members* and those brought into the lodges under the influence of Dr Desaguliers, a close associate of Anderson's.

It may at first seem somewhat odd that in a paper which suggests the *contribution* of operative to speculative Masonry I should so early refer to what looks like a case of exclusion. That may be the impression but I would ask you to be patient and to consider some other facts in that important period before jumping to any conclusion. For I would next draw to your attention the subject on which Thomas Carr further wrote: 'The Ritual of the Operative Masons'.

There are those, of course, who hold that the primitive operative craft ritual was of such a simple, bald, unattractive, or even commonplace character that it was quite incapable of providing any pattern for the developing forms of the early 18th century. An opposing view is that those who object to the claim of the Operative Free Masons, that they were always divided into *seven* grades, on the ground that that is *too elaborate a division* and suggests *too involved a ritual* for the ancient masons to have invented, are using 'an argument too futile for words'.

Just consider, continues this latter view, who these ancient masons were and what buildings they erected. These were the men who built our Cathedrals and churches, hundreds of which still stand to testify to their skill (and that of) the bishops, abbots and priests who were associated with these masons (and) were themselves often the architects. That anyone should dare to

suggest that such men as these could not invent or, as is more likely, perpetuate and develop a system such as the present-day Operative Free Masons practise, is incredible to anyone who knows the work these men did and the manner of men they were.

Despite the apparent contrast between these two points of view Bro Gould is on record as saying that 'the importance of the Mark Degree as a connecting link with the operative masons' *customs and traditions* prior to the formation of the premier Grand Lodge is not always fully appreciated, particularly by (English) Freemasons.' Perhaps Gould has here pointed us to the missing factor in our search for origins. He speaks of 'customs and traditions' *rather than degree ceremonies*, suggesting not that we can derive from some ancient ritual texts a form of ceremony such as we are accustomed to today but that, lying-in-wait to be so employed in speculative Freemasonry, there were long-standing forms of instruction as well as customary practices that could be so shaped. Eric Ward, another distinguished scholar Freemason, wrote in 1962 of a realisation amongst Masons that 'material once possessing infinite mystical value had somehow been discarded (and) was capable of revival and expansion into a rite *purporting to restore* the genuine secrets.' He also went on: 'One of the peculiarities of ritual growth is that customs *discarded in one place turn up surprisingly in another* at a much later date.' That is a profound insight into the development of speculative Masonic practice that deserves much more comment but which again cannot be pursued here.

The operative free masons, I contend, retained enough tradition that by the second quarter of the 18th century they also had their own catechisms, lectures and rituals which embraced the legends, customs and practices from which the speculative Masons adapted their own more restricted models. We now have

access in the North-east of England to lecture material from about 1740 which illustrates just such a claim.

For those who know nothing of the past in this connection it should be noted that a Guild of operative free masons flourished in England until about 1870. It then diminished owing to altered economic conditions and the growing influence of the Trade Unions. By the time of the First World War there were only a few of its lodges existing and it was from a lodge of over 300 members at Bardon in Leicestershire that there came that same Thomas Carr whose work we have already encountered. He was greatly helped in his presentation by Clement Stretton, who was a senior member of the Leicestershire operatives, and it was his copy of the ritual which was eventually presented to myself by a Past Third Grand Master of the present speculative Order who had himself held it for much of his lifetime. It was only in preparing my recent book that the full significance of what I possessed suddenly began to dawn upon me.

The full title of the originally operative body with which we are here concerned was 'The Worshipful Society of Free Masons, Rough Masons, Wallers, Slaters, Pavors, Plaisters and Bricklayers.' And it is in the City of Durham that we find exactly the same trades combined as in the overall parent Society.

In 1594 the Prince Bishop of Durham, Matthew Hutton, had incorporated the Rough Masons, Wallers and Slaters, whilst in 1609 Bishop James confirmed the bylaws and ordinances of a body that had added Pavors, Tylers and Plaisters. Finally, on 16 April 1638, Bishop Morton, acting in his capacity as a Count Palatine, gave a new charter to 'The Company, Societe and the Fellowship of Free Masons Rough Masons Wallers Slaytors Pavars Plaisters and Bricklayers'. These operatives became Freemen of the City of Durham and many of the gentry of the

County became Honorary Members of the Company, regarding it as an honourable distinction. The same is still true of professional and business men joining the Honourable or Livery Companies in the City of London to this day.

In the year 1677 'The Worshipful Society of the Free Masons of the City of London (note: *not* the Company) issued a map of England on which was shown the division of the operatives into 8 districts:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (1) City of London | (2) Westminster |
| (3) Southern | (4) Bristol |
| (5) Chester | (6) Island of Anglesea [<i>sic</i>] |
| (7) Lancaster | (8) York |

These divisions are of singular interest to the Masonic student as they indicate the areas in or through which Antient Masonry later developed.

From their earliest period of existence the operative masons were divided into two classes: Straight or Square Masons, and Round or Arch Masons. The reason for this was that the straight work needed less skill, and hence was able to command less wages, than the art of making arches, bridges and all kinds of curved, carved or graved work. The two classes were each divided into seven grades:

Apprentice to the Craft of Free Mason.

Fellow of the Craft of Free Mason.

Super Fellow, who had his mark.

Super Fellow Erector, who worked on the stone.

Super-Intendant of the Craft, or *Menatzchim*.

Passed Master of the Craft, who had literally 'passed a technical examination' to attain the position of a Master, as Masters of sailing vessels still have to qualify. He was thus a properly certificated Master who was also known, especially in the North-east of England, as a *Harod* (plural: *Harodim*).

Master Mason, or Grand Master of the Craft of Free Masons.

The traditional reason given why the operative free masons need to be thus graded was because when Solomon began to build the temple on Mount Moriah he needed specific persons for its different stages and tasks. Thus he could ensure that 'the house shall be built of stone made ready before it was brought hither: so that there shall be neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building'. That required careful planning and strict administration to ensure that every stone was made to a required size and gauge in the 2° stone-yard. It was then fitted and marked by the Mark Men in the 3° yard so that the erectors on the actual building site could quietly set each stone in its indicated place. Anyone who has wondered where the idea of the *Silent Temple* came from can now appreciate its operative source.

A man was allowed to belong to only one of the two classes (i.e. the Square or the Arch Masons) but he was allowed to transfer from one to the other if the Masters so ordered it. When a young man was apprenticed, at the age of 14 after 1663, though previously it had been at 12 or 13, he chose in which class he wished to serve. Whilst the Craft after 1717 gives the impression of restricting entry merely to 'squaremen', it is worth noting that Arch work was known and might thus be involved later.

It is also to be noted that an apprentice was not regarded as being a member of the Craft. Indeed a General Assembly was held by the operative rulers in Wakefield on 8 December 1663, where they agreed that no person should be accepted a Free Mason until he was 21 years of age. You do not need me to remind you that to this day the Craft in the USA does not accept an apprentice as a full member of the lodge. Here again we have the direct influence of operative practice, just as we do in the

way that Scottish and Irish Masons wear the apron under and not over their jackets. If the young man decided to be a Straight Mason he was given a square and if an Arch Mason the compasses. If, therefore, you might want to find a hostelry where both classes of working masons would congregate, you looked for an inn with the sign of the Square and Compasses. The very combination of these implements in present Freemasonry reveals that materials and customs from both classes were adapted in order to form the new practices after 1717.

The ultimate secrets (which were more than handshakes) and the whole ritual of the operative 'Masters' could not be given, as but few knew them: namely, only those who had actually been one of the three Grand Masters (Seventh degree) by whom the operatives were ruled, and though Dr Anderson was once a Chaplain in an Accepted Lodge *he was not privy to all its secrets*. Even so we do have an interesting, and for some a still puzzling, feature. In the first 15 years of the Premier Grand Lodge we note a regulation stating that no one might adopt the grade of 'Master' of a Lodge until he had received a certain ceremony in the Grand Lodge when three Grand Officers, themselves reigning Masters, were in the principal chairs. When you know the operative practice you at last understand why, but to grasp the full implications of this practice needs another lecture.

The three operative Grand Masters were, of course, the same for both Square and Arch Masonry and hence their non-involvement elsewhere, in any plans for the new type of Craft Masonry, meant that much was left out that would have helped to explain the omissions that were soon noticed by older operative members. This, and Irish tradition (and that is a subject needing a lecture all on its own) is what helped in the formation of Arch Masonry (another neglected topic) and

subsequently the practices of the Antients from the 1750s. Yet why was Desaguliers holding a lodge (or was it chapter?) of Super-excellent Masons as early as 1735?

The colour of the Square Mason was blue, whilst the Arch Mason was distinguished by red. A lot of time and ingenuity in discussing the origin and appropriateness of Masonic colours could have been saved if only this traditional fact were better known. These colours are clearly illustrated if one examines the original Arms of the Society of the Free Masons granted by Edward IV and which eventually had two supporters. The one on the right side was a mason with a *square* in his hand and with *blue* facing on his jacket, whilst the figure balancing him on the other side is an Arch mason with, yes, *red* facings and holding a *pair of compasses*.

The operatives at work

The lodge room for the operatives' working up to the old fifth degree was oriented so that the Masters were in the *West* in order to *face* the rising sun. The Junior Warden sat in the *North* to *see* the sun at its meridian, and the Senior Warden sat in the *East* so as to *observe* the setting sun. This was the same orientation as of the Holy Place in the temple at Jerusalem and it also explains why the Antient Freemasons insisted on this type of lodge formation for the principal officers in the initial degrees.

When you learn that in the higher operative degrees the officers sat either with the Right Worshipful Master at one end and the Wardens facing him at the other or that the Grand Masters sat side by side, then you begin to grasp why we adopt the former in the Ark Mariner degree and the latter in the Holy Royal Arch.

The altar was in the centre of the lodge (another Scottish, Irish and American custom, still) and there were three Deacons,

the Master also being so served. There are still Craft Lodges in England where there are vestiges of the three Deacons.

The entry of the *Apprentice* in such a lodge is to be noted. He was hoodwinked, clothed in a white cloak, but he also had a blue cord around his middle, the ends held taut by two brethren, one on each side. In addition, one man in front and one behind held the ends of another blue cord around his neck. Here we have the origins of a cable tow about the neck but also the Antients' use of the cord about the middle to signify our being qualified Masons. Thus was also formed a *diamond of five points* which had not only operative but subsequent Mark significance.

When asked how he hoped to obtain admission, he claimed the help of El Shaddai (a term not restricted to the Royal Arch) and used another phrase familiar to us in this context, which is actually the password of the first degree. When he came to his obligation he knelt at the central altar, which had a rough ashlar to the east of it, and placed his left hand flat under the Volume of the Sacred Law whilst laying his right hand flat upon it. This is, of course, still preserved in lodges under the Grand Lodge of Scotland as the 'due guard' sign.

The candidate then took an obligation which remained the same from when it was first written out and signed by Robert Padgett, Clerk to the Worshipful Society of Free Masons of London in 1686. One copy is supposed to have been taken by Dr Anderson but is now in the possession of the Lodge of Antiquity. A similar oath is found in the *Kilwinning MS No 4*, which only serves to emphasise its antiquity. Once again we see the provenance of Grand Lodge practice in operative custom.

Moving on to the *Fellow of the Craft* degree, the candidate had to prepare a rough-dressed ashlar as a specimen of his work and the Inspector of Materials had to pass it before he could proceed. He also *had to have this specimen with him* when he

entered the lodge and had to declare that it was all his own work. He was obligated, given the sign with the right hand flat, and the word *Banai*, meaning 'Builder'. If we wonder where the substituted word of the 3° came from, we are here given a clue.

The Charge that was delivered was one that was also produced by Robert Padgett in 1686 and signed by him for use in all the eight divisions of the country. Two of its provisions are noteworthy:

(1) You shall honour El Shaddai and his Holy Church: that you use no Heresy, Schism nor Error in your Undertakings, or discredit wise Men's teachings.

(4) You shall keep Secret the obscure and *intricate Parts* of the Science, not disclosing them to any but such as *study* and use the same. [We all know what is the present object of the Fellow of the Craft degree.]

The candidate then received the sign and word as above but in addition to the usual tools he was also given another straight edge, the two-foot rule, and the perfect Ashlar Square. The latter was a wooden frame with overlapping corners which was the exact size of a Royal Cubit. He was then a Free Man and a Free Mason and was directed to begin work in the north-east corner of the yard where he was required to make his rough dressed Ashlar into a stone true and polished. Do you again wonder where the origin of the north-east charge and practice began?

When completed, his work had to be submitted for inspection and tried so that, if satisfactory, he might receive a word, *Giblim*, which meant 'stone squarer' or 'expert mason'. Interestingly, the words of this operative degree suggest how the adaptation and rearrangement took place after 1717. It is known that Dr Anderson was aware of these words because he mentions them in the 1738 edition of the *Book of Constitutions*

but because, as we have noted, he had an imperfect knowledge of their place and use he and/or others used them differently.

The mason having made his test piece, he had it approved by the Inspector of Materials and, having served another year as a Fellow, he was then eligible to apply for the degree of Super Fellow. Notice having been given by a form posted in the yard, and the sign, word and work having been presented, the candidate entered into what the speculative Mark Mason of today would recognise as the degree of Mark Man. The Super Fellow was allotted his Mark and charged to produce 'fare work and square'. He was led round the lodge three times and took his obligation kneeling on his bare knees and *on the polished stone* he brought with him.

His next step was that of Erector and here we discover that an interesting distinction occurred. The stone that was found to be missing amongst Square masons was the *chief cornerstone*, whilst among the Arch masons it was the *keystone*. The moral that was pointed up was the same in both ceremonies. We again have the origin of the Craft Mason standing at the north-east corner, whilst for the English Royal Arch Mason we have the solution of what seems in our present working a surprising new feature, the keystone, that is never clearly explained.

The candidate took his obligation, this time kneeling on a perfect polished stone, was led *four* times round the lodge and the word and sign given were those of the degree today. If one again wonders why in a few very old Chapters in England the candidate is led four times round the Chapter room before he approaches the keystone we are again enlightened. This was as far as most operative masons ever went, since considerable technical knowledge was required before proceeding further. What is to be noted is that every operative mason did have all the *Mark* knowledge that awaits us today. If there are those in speculative Freemasonry who wonder at those, as in the York

Rite, who claim a place for the Mark in the Masonic scheme it is because that was the natural development in the old craft. There were also in the remaining operative customs some features that we need to take note of. The term 'Superintendent' came from their fifth degree, thus showing its subordinate status to that of the Grand Master in the Arch class, whilst for Mark Masons the word of the degree, *Menatzchim*, has a more familiar ring.

The 'Passed Master' or sixth degree required that a candidate should be able to '*lay schemes, draw plans, and take charge of a department*'. With this step, which was equivalent to that of a present reigning Master, it can be understood why the Antients insisted that here one had a *separate and essential* degree before moving on to Arch Masonry. Moreover, the senior Passed Master was called 'Adoniram' and the word of this degree was *Harod* or *Harodim*. From the limited lodge of 15 members in this grade, *three members only* were able to proceed to the long-serving degree of Grand Master. They were led round the lodge room seven times and, according to the class they were in, they represented either the Craft Grand Masters, Solomon, Hiram, and Hiram Abif, or the Three Principals as we know them in a Royal Arch Chapter today (except in Ireland).

In the lodge room a new arrangement was then adopted with the three Grand Masters sitting together in the west but at the top of seven steps. Here is also the reason why seven steps are provided in some old lodge rooms in England for the Worshipful Master's Chair. Below the steps sat Adoniram and in the east were the two pillars with Passed Masters behind them, facing west. Boaz was on the left facing east, and Jachin on the right, and that should help anyone who wonders which is the correct placing of the great pillars.

In addition the Masters were thought to be seated on Mount Moriah, the pillar Boaz was considered to be Mount Tabor and Jachin was Mount Sinai. It is from this arrangement that the

names of the situations used in Grand, District and Provincial Lodge meetings are derived. On the occasion of the *Annual Assembly* the three Grand Masters did not open their lodge privately *behind a veil* as usual but did it openly, assisted by the 6th degree Passed Masters. During this ceremony the 18 formed into groups of three and said the word of their meeting by syllables. The word was *san-he-drim*. Royal Arch Masons will be suitably aware of its relevance. It was at the Foundation Commemoration Day each year in April that the First Grand Master would inaugurate the ceremony of the death of Hiram the Master Architect.

I have no doubt that there will be some readers who will query whether the *operative* society did not receive its forms and title from the *speculatives* and not the other way round. *If that were so* then we have two further and apparently insoluble questions to tackle. The first is: ‘Where did the *speculatives* get their original information and basis of practice from?’ and the second: ‘Why are there differences between the two systems, with the *operatives* having material that is not used by the *speculatives*, and with the latter always employing material that is much more logically explained when set within the larger operative scheme?’

Nowhere that I have been able to find is there even an attempt to face and wrestle with these necessary issues.

On the contrary there is something else. On 6 January 1911, an historical note was published by the United Grand Lodge of England. It read as follows: ‘The Ritual of Freemasonry, as far as the First and Second Degrees are concerned, *is in part no doubt derived from the ceremonies of the early operative Guilds.*’ Hence at last we have the admission of the sequence and source of derivation, *and from the Grand Lodge itself.*

We might also usefully reflect on these words from a History of Freemasonry published in 1865: ‘Originating from the

Fraternity of Operative Masons, the Craft has borrowed all its emblems and symbols from the Building Corporations to impart to its members moral truths and the rules of the Royal Art.' Though there is much more that could be said, I hope that I have at least planted firmly in your minds the conviction that the speculative owed a great deal to the prior operative Art.

THE DIFFERENT ORIGINS OF ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH FREEMASONRY

Before launching into the main substance of my subject I think it is only right to make clear that I would rightly be considered both foolish and dishonest were I thought to be claiming that this is to be the definitive and conclusive expression of opinion on this very important subject. I am making no such claim and indeed it would be impossible in a paper of this limited length to state all the evidence that could, or should, be produced to bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion. All that I am seeking to do is to clear the ground of some possible misconceptions that have previously been regarded as the last word and re-stating some facts that may not have been fully appreciated in the search for an adequate solution. By doing this I hope that we may begin to focus our attention on the remaining areas that need research and which may ultimately lead us to recognise fully the different origins of English and Scottish Freemasonry.

The very title of this lecture would, or course, have disappointed if not disturbed that doyen of all modern Masonic researchers, the late still-lamented Bro Harry Carr. Meticulous in his studies as he was and vigorous, as well as entertaining, as he could be in his presentation of what he had discovered, the

lasting conviction of his life, in this particular connection, was that Scotland and England were alike in their Masonic origins. For 600 years, he contended, we have evidence of how, slowly but steadily, the old operative stonemasons' lodges, with their definite Craft traditions and practices, became transformed into the newer speculative bodies from which all our present Freemasonry descends.

Scholars of the 'authentic school', such as Carr, and here I quote the words of the present Librarian of the United Grand Lodge of England, 'found (in Scotland) undeniable evidence of the existence of lodges of operative stonemasons, lodges which were geographically defined units controlling the operative trade with the backing of statute law. They also traced undeniable evidence that these Scottish operative lodges began in the 17th century to admit non-operative members as accepted or gentlemen masons and that by the early 18th century in some lodges the accepted or gentlemen masons had gained the ascendancy; these lodges became, in turn, speculative lodges, while others retained their purely operative nature.' (*The Craft*, p 18)

Putting together all these facts, along with evidence that pointed to a 'Mason Word' and some known tokens of recognition, the case seemed made for a gradual transition from operative to speculative Freemasonry, at least in Scotland. Harry Carr died in the firm belief that this was the case and that what had transpired so clearly in lodges north of the border was no less the case in England. His dissemination of that theory was so effective that many Masons still believe that the matter is settled once and for all. Sadly, despite great regard for Bro Carr, it has to be said that that theory is not the end of the story.

In 1988 a non-Masonic Scottish historian, David Stevenson, produced two books which were calculated to ripple Masonic waters. They were given very specific titles: one was called *The*

Origins of Freemasonry, Scotland's century and the other *The First Freemasons*. Stevenson was bound by historical evidence but was also unashamedly Scottish in outlook. Let us hear some of his own words:

The legacy of the Medieval masons obviously contains much that is later found in freemasonry . . . Yet (as most masonic historians now readily accept) it would be misleading to claim that this was already freemasonry . . . Moreover, there are major problems in linking this Medieval legacy directly to the emergence of freemasonry. The situation has [also] been unnecessarily complicated by two prevailing misconceptions. The first is the assumption that the emergence of freemasonry took place in England, a belief maintained in the face of the overwhelming preponderance of Scottish documentary evidence relating to the process, evidence which is often . . . explained away . . . and then used in an English context to make up for the lack of English evidence. The second misconception lies in assuming that freemasonry evolved gradually and steadily from the Medieval legacy in a supposedly continuous process, though this cannot be traced in the surviving evidence.

(*First Freemasons*, p 3)

It can thus be seen that already there are rifts in the 'authentic' theory and the idea that there was a steady 600 years of transition from operative to speculative Freemasonry can no longer be maintained. Yet despite the significant difference in view between a Stevenson and a Carr about the manner of development—and we must return shortly to that issue—there was one ground on which they both stood firm. What took place in Scotland was relevant to the process in England.

Stevenson, however, was much more downright. He continues:

Thus the freemasonry born in 17th century Scotland ... proved capable of being exported successfully. The development of Freemasonry in England in the 17th century is highly obscure, but the fragmentary evidence suggests that in the closing years of [that] century and the opening ones of the 18th it was transformed by an influx of Scottish influences, introducing for the first time permanent lodges, the degrees of *entered* apprentice and fellow craft/master, and the rituals of the Mason Word (though that term was little used in England). Thus many of the essentials of the freemasonry which developed so fast in early 18th century England derived from earlier Scottish freemasonry. English leadership of the movement was to develop and elaborate it in new ways (and indeed to give it the very name freemasonry), but to this day craft freemasonry bears clear evidence of its Scottish origins. (*First Freemasons*, p 11)

This was at least another well-reasoned and researched point of view and stated the position clearly. Before subjecting it to critical examination we must return to the other point Stevenson made regarding the nature of the Scottish masonic development. It deals with events *circa* 1600.

In 1583 a William Schaw was appointed Master of Works by King James VI of Scotland, supervising all building work undertaken for the Crown. In 1598 he was calling himself not just Master of Works but General Warden of all masons in Scotland and it is as such that he issued two codes of statutes in that year and the next. The effect of these statutes was immediate and significant. Not only did he affect the

administration and control of each lodge but there is also a 'very strong case for arguing that he was doing much more, reviving and developing Medieval masonic mythology and rituals in a Renaissance atmosphere. But naturally this secret and esoteric side of his work was not committed to writing in his Statutes.' (*First Freemasons*, p 4)

It was within months of the appearance of the first of these Statutes that we have the very minutes of Aitchison's Haven and Edinburgh Mary's Chapel which were lodges of this new type. In 1600/1 Schaw also signed the first St Clair Charter which meant that William Sinclair of Roslin was acknowledged as the patron of all Scottish masons, a position re-affirmed in 1627/8 for Sinclair's son. Though that claim was questioned, and not asserted, in the latter part of the 17th century, it is worth noting that when Scotland's Masons finally agreed in 1736 to have a Grand Lodge like England, the first Grand Master chosen was a Sinclair of Roslin. (Roslyn, you surely do not need me to remind you, is the site of a chapel with a legendary Apprentice's Pillar.)

To sum up the Stevenson case: Whilst there was a residue or memory of medieval masonic lore and practices it was only with the 17th century that Scottish Freemasonry began to acquire a shape and tradition that would emerge a century later as the beginnings of speculative Craft practice. With the withdrawal of the guiding hand of William Schaw it is not surprising that some variety in lodge customs should have developed and yet there is a noticeable similarity in essentials, despite the fact that there was no central governing body, and lodges were often fiercely and locally independent. Looking at the surviving sources it would appear that the Freemasonry which was emerging in England by the end of the 17th century was overwhelmingly Scottish in character.

That is a well-reasoned and apparently proven thesis but whilst it makes some allowance for English differences—for

example, the fact that the word 'Freemasonry' itself was of English derivation and that Scotland never had any Ancient Charges—it still supports the persisting view that England's Masonic origins were really derived from Scotland.

There are of course certain items of circumstantial evidence that seem to point to the same conclusion. The first record of a Masonic initiation in England is that of two Scottish generals at Newcastle in 1641, even though that ceremony was carried out by the Lodge of Edinburgh. One of the most often quoted examples of early Masonic catechism is that of the *Edinburgh Register House Manuscript* at the end of the century, whilst two of the earliest lodges recorded in England were operative ones in Alnwick, in the Borders, and Swalwell, on Tyneside.

Again, the person considered most suitable for compiling a Masonic history and the appropriate Regulations for the new English Grand Lodge was a Scots divine who had belonged to an Aberdeen lodge, whilst we know that when Dr Desaguliers was engaged on a scientific visit to Edinburgh in the 1720s he had no apparent difficulty in either proving himself a brother Mason or taking part in their ceremonies. Similarity of origin seems still more likely.

Yet even when all this has been said and we acknowledge the comparative paucity of 17th-century English source material, there still remain some unanswered questions. The first one has to be this. Why, if the English Craft really derived from a Scottish initiative, was there in England this very persistent phenomenon of the masonic Ancient Charges from at least the late 14th up to the 18th century when nothing of the kind appears in Scotland? Why, moreover, does any English Freemasonry of the 17th century suddenly appear as if it had come from nowhere, with no obvious operative connections, with a preponderance of genteel, professional or trade members, and meeting in what are recognisable lodges? How can this

apparently *ad hoc* attachment to a movement called Freemasonry be recognised by such a non-Masonic commentator as Dr Plot as an organisation that appears to spread across the nation?

What, moreover, are we to make of even Dr Stevenson's admission that 'whereas freemasonry began in Scotland with the foundation of lodges around 1600, in England it began with individual initiates, sometimes deriving their ritual and secrets from English operative masons'? Where did that information come from? What do we make of his further statement that 'whereas most Scottish lodges long retained close links with working stonemasons, who usually indeed still formed a majority of members ... the English lodges were founded by gentlemen enthusiasts who felt little or no need to seek legitimacy by developing links with 'real' stonemasons.'? (*First Freemasons*, p 160)

It is when we make an attempt to grapple with these remaining, and yet essential, questions that we can perhaps begin to discern some of the features that suggest a different origin for Freemasonry in England as compared with Scotland.

That Scotland's experience and understanding in these matters did have some influence on how English Freemasons conceived the Craft may be admitted. Interestingly, even Stevenson admits that this was at *the end* of the 17th century and not at its beginning. There is clearly no time or space in this presentation to reflect adequately on the attitude of Englishmen to the Scots from the time of Mary, Queen of Scots, to the later Stuarts. Even James VI of the Northern Kingdom had to become James I of England and, cautious as he was in preserving his dual crown, he knew that little love was lost between his separate subjects. Charles I was inept in his treatment of his Scottish subjects and the Civil War in England did little to endear the two nations, despite some Protestant similarities.

It is in this fraught context that we have to put the initiation of Moray at Newcastle and recognise that whatever the Scots might do in such a case was unlikely to be accepted automatically as a guide by English brethren. The restoration of episcopacy and even pro-Romanism under the Stuart Restoration did nothing to improve national relations, whilst the despatch of the Stuart line from 1688 started a fear of Scottish reaction which was to last until the middle of the next century. To pretend, along with appallingly bad roads, that communication with Scotland was constant and influential is to misunderstand the circumstances of the time. In the 18th century anything beyond York was thought of as 'Northern Britain' and that included the whole of Scotland. It was not until a Union of the two countries was imminent, or created, that real interchange of ideas and culture was developed. Desagulier's visit to Edinburgh makes the point, whilst Dr Johnson's visit with Boswell was to cement it.

What we have to face up to is the point well made by John Hamill in his book *The Craft*. Speaking of the 'authentic school' of researchers like Harry Carr, he says: 'Above all they overlooked, or ignored, the fact that non-operative masonry was developing in England when the Scottish operative lodges began to accept non-operatives. If the Scottish operative lodges formed the medium of transition, how could purely non-operative masonry already have existed in England?' (*The Craft*, p 19)

Perhaps the most significant difference to be noted as between early English and Scottish Freemasonry is that whilst it is clear that there were continuing and established operative lodges in Scotland, the 17th century saw the emergence in England of *ad hoc* or temporary lodges which met only for as long as their occasion for meeting existed.

Once we accept that this is a major point of difference then we can begin to account for several pieces of evidence in 17th-century England that seem otherwise disconnected and

confusing. We can appreciate why there are disparate dates for Freemasons visiting and existing in York. We can appreciate why Ashmole speaks of attending a lodge at Warrington which seems to be a 'one-off' occasion. We have evidence of a lodge in Chester though it does not meet regularly. We have the 'Acception' lodge connected with the Company of Masons in London which also met irregularly. We might even begin to wonder whether it was precisely because they wanted to meet more regularly to develop their 'system' that led the four pre-1717 lodges in London to ask for a Grand Lodge, when in York already it seems that Freemasons there had begun to consider a Grand Lodge of All England. Whether or not it was the fact that Scottish lodges did so meet that led to this development is still a matter for speculation. What is clear is that the development of Freemasonry thus far south of the border had followed a different path to that north of it.

There are three other factors that have yet to be still more fully researched before we can come to any more conclusive judgement. The first reflects the tortured nature of English society throughout the 17th century. It was not just that there were conflicts between Englishmen and Scots. There were bitter feuds between Protestants and Catholics, Anglicans and Presbyterians, Radicals and Conservatives, Royalists and Parliamentarians, landed gentry and men of business. In the midst of all this religious and political controversy there were those who yet longed for a 'place of repose' (Plot's 'meeting on the moors?'), where honest men could meet their counterparts even from opposing camps.

Francis Bacon was but one protagonist of this sort and the fact that he produced the ideal of Solomon's Temple must have suggested the kind of concept that others could build on. Freemasonry in England would hope to create just that kind of neutral meeting ground which the Royal Society later enjoyed.

That kind of social melee did not exist in contemporary Scotland.

Secondly, even Dr Stevenson mentions that at this period 'men hoped to unlock the mysteries of the distant past. But the search was not simply historical and scientific; in its essence it was a spiritual quest, and so purification and spiritual enlightenment were essential to success...' (*First Freemasons*, p 6) The effects of the Renaissance were also beginning to be felt in England and the emergence of new groups of landed gentry free to read, travel, and study, alongside even better educated tradesmen and persons in the professions, caused circles of study and enquiry to be formed in which just such 'searches of the past' could be pursued. We even have the evidence of one letter from an émigré German scholar who tells his gentlemen friends that they would do well to sit at the side, or even the feet, of some of their employed craftsmen and acquire their skill and their secrets. The seven liberal arts were being rediscovered. Do we perhaps need to learn much more than we already know about the 'circles' in such houses as those of the Percys, the Herberts, the Cecils or the Sackvilles, to mention but a handful. Have we really exhausted what their family records could tell us? Or what about the diaries of the 'City fathers'? Were there more occasional lodges than we have so far uncovered?

Thirdly, we need to recognise that there may still be an untouched source in late 17th-century England. The present received wisdom is that there are no such records to be uncovered and yet in 1911 the United Grand Lodge of England is on record as stating that undoubtedly part of the working accepted by the Premier Grand Lodge was taken from existing operative practices. Did that mean Scottish operative working, through Dr Anderson, or was it an English source as well, or alone? Recent work of my own suggests that there was some

kind of residual operative organisation leading to at least the lodges that appeared in York and Hull in the 18th century. We know of the operative influences between Teesside and the Border and we know something else. There is the fact that whilst it is true that the lodges that met in Warrington and Chester were made up largely of non-operatives, there were operatives in them. This does not mean that English 'lodges' derived from operative ones but it does lend credence to the idea that an operative member or two could assist these gentlemen or traders in the right formation of the gathering which they were creating, for whatever occasional purpose. Even if these were new kinds of Masonic lodge they had to have some obvious connection with past or present lodge practice, otherwise why call them 'lodges' and how could they be recognised as such?

I said at the outset that this would not be a definitive paper. By the very nature of our still limited knowledge it cannot be other than an investigation. What I hope I have done is to clear the ground still further for more useful construction work to be done. What at least seems much more acceptable today is the affirmation that the origins of Scottish and English Freemasonry were different. Exactly how different is the subject for more papers.

WHAT IS THE POINT OF OTHER THAN THE CRAFT DEGREES?

As may be apparent to anyone who has consulted my *curriculum vitae*, I have some justification for claiming to know something about the degrees practised 'beyond the Craft'. The manner in which I came to be associated with so many and at a fairly early age is a story in itself but one that I cannot tell here. Suffice it to say that without, at that point of my life, understanding the relationship of all the steps I was taking there were those who were, unbeknown to me, guiding my steps and making sure that I took them in the right direction and in the right order. It is only in my latter years when the whole business of learning ritual, ruling Masonic units and undertaking leadership over several of them is done that I can sit back and try to answer the question which this paper poses. It is a question that was actually put to me some three years ago and then repeated during the time that I was preparing this lecture for delivery. It is thus the response to a real concern felt by some Masons.

As I reflect on the path that I have taken I can only say that at this point I have a sense of having made a long journey in which all the parts seem to fit. I feel this so confidently that I was

about to respond to a request by some of my present colleagues in York to write them a paper in which I could explain how all the different degrees and Orders fit together. It was then that the second query on this paper's topic came up and I hope that what I say here may meet both purposes. If it does not my York brethren will have to wait for something else.

What also spurred me on was an experience I had in visiting the Grand Scribe E of the Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland at the end of last year. We had been talking about the subsidiary degrees that now lie under the care and authority of that Grand Chapter. He told me that one of the European Grand Lodges had now decided that it was time to prepare for the task of allowing their growing number of members to complete the experience that they had so far had in practising the craft degrees, including of course the Installation of a reigning Master. What they needed was advice on the most satisfactory way of introducing the Holy Royal Arch. It is worth noting here that though this foreign Constitution is in full and happy relationship with the United Grand Lodge and Supreme Grand Chapter of England they went to Scotland for this purpose.

What I found to be of interest and of relevance to this paper is the fact that, faced with such an enquiry, the Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland was not inclined to say: 'Well, we suggest that you do it just as we do' but took a quite new line. They said: 'If you are now ready to take this step into what is undoubtedly the ancient completion of the Craft steps then we want to suggest that you do what we would like to do if we were able, but are not, and that is to start afresh. We would adopt the following sequence: Mark; Super Excellent Master; Knight of the East; Royal Arch; Knight of the East and West; Grand High Priest or Installation degrees. That, we feel, would more correctly complete the masonic story.'

It is not fitting for me to comment here on what may or may not be the correctness of this suggestion. All that I can do is remark that in the mind of these senior Scottish Masons there was a place for the degrees after the Craft and the events, especially of the Master Mason's degree, requiring the best possible succession of other steps to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion.

That this is not just wilful irresponsibility on the part of the Scots is made abundantly clear by looking at the stance of the older Grand Lodges in regard to other than the normal three degrees. All of them, as we well know, accept that in a significant sense a Master Mason is not really a completed Mason until he has been through the Chair of his lodge. Whether or no such a step is constitutionally regarded as a degree—though every Constitution requires an Installed Master to take an obligation, to receive secrets and to hear some kind of historical explanation of his new status—this is not in any way thought to be completely unnecessary.

On the contrary the brother who does not proceed to the Chair is usually the odd one out. This is not said in any sense of disparagement of such a decision but the truth of Masonic history is that when a brother has been a Fellow (and was in earlier days also called a Master) of the Craft then he was eligible for the Chair of a true Master Architect (hence the tools of the present 3°) and it was then the case that he could learn about the remaining 'Mason Word' that was the climax of all Freemasonry.

In England in the 18th century, and even in the chapters reluctantly allowed by the Premier Grand Lodge, it was the rule that no one could proceed beyond the Craft unless he had completed the step of occupying the Craft lodge Chair. It was only after 1836 that the significant change was made which allowed 3° Masons to proceed to Exaltation in the Holy Royal

Arch Order. This was the natural and logical outcome of the agreement reached between the uniting Grand Lodges by the Act of Union in 1813: 'Pure and Ancient Masonry consists only in the degrees of Craft Masonry together with the Holy Royal Arch.' As far as England was officially concerned a very effective compromise had been reached. The Craft's pre-eminence had been re-affirmed—which meant that the protagonists of the Premier Grand Lodge were vindicated—whilst the place of the Royal Arch as a necessary adjunct to the Craft was recognised—which pleased the members of the Antients Grand Lodge.

Now that the Royal Arch is administered as a separate entity in England, albeit by the same permanent officers, there has to be some recognition that, whatever the 'technical or legal' connection with the Craft may be, those who enter the 'supreme degree' of the Holy Royal Arch are stepping beyond the bounds known only by those who remain 3° or even just Installed Master Masons. Further, the Royal Arch Mason knows soon enough that he has taken a substantial step forward beyond the three degrees and in any case has three more steps to take before he can encompass the whole of the new Order he has entered. Yet all this, states the Act of Union, is a necessary completion of the Craft. One of the answers to my first question has already been given. The Craft degrees in England are deemed incomplete without at least the exaltation into, and occupying the Chairs of, the Holy Royal Arch.

In Scotland the situation is somewhat different. Following the pattern of the Premier Grand Lodge of England, the Scottish Grand Lodge was for long adamant that Ancient Free and Accepted Masonry consisted of three degrees and no more. They too recognised that the Mastership of a lodge had somehow to be included in that categorical statement but every effort was made to prevent the same thing happening in

Scotland that had occurred south of the border. There the activities of the Grand Lodge of the Antients meant that such degrees as Mark Man and Mark Master, Passing the Chair, Super-Excellent Master, Royal Arch and even Orders of Chivalry were all able to be practised on the authority of the Craft lodge warrant. This, they vowed in Scotland, must not happen.

Then the problem arose. Certain very long-standing lodges proved beyond any shadow of a doubt that they had the established custom of conferring some kind of Mark ceremony on those who were Fellow of the Craft Masons. It might be done in a Master Masons' lodge but it was an ancient right for all those who had proved themselves to be true Fellows. What could the Grand Lodge of Scotland do? Their decision was made more difficult in that, to avoid the English compromise, there had already been established a Supreme Grand Chapter which had happily taken under its wing the Mark degree. Yet the Grand Lodge could not allow the Grand Chapter to interfere in the life of the Craft Lodges by ruling their Mark ceremonies nor would the old lodges concerned stomach any such interference. The Grand Lodge of Scotland accepted that whatever they professed about the Craft degrees (and the Installation) they now had to countenance the practice of the Mark in some form within and as part of old Craft working. The restriction of the Installation of a Master of a Mark Lodge to the authority of the Supreme Grand Chapter was as far as compromise in that country went.

Again, however, we see that anyone who asks what is the point of the other than Craft degrees has to begin to recognise that even the best intentions of clear-minded Grand Lodges cannot be maintained. There is some point and purpose in the practice of what does not come strictly within the current definition of 'the Craft degrees'.

In Ireland it looks at first as if the ideal situation has been achieved, for the Grand Lodge in that land controls only the Craft degrees and the Installation of a Master. Yet the very reason for the setting up of a Grand Chapter there was because Irish Lodges in the 18th century practised a whole range of degrees under a Craft warrant rather like their cousins, the Antients in England. In order to organise the range of degrees and bring some greater uniformity into Irish Masonry, especially when there were also Encampments and their subsidiary degrees, the Grand Chapter was instituted, but so close had the Craft and other degrees been for so long that it was fully acknowledged in Dublin that there could be no such declaration as had been made in England or Scotland. The Grand Lodge may rule over the Craft degrees but no one pretends that in any way defines the sole importance of that basic branch of Freemasonry. The so-called ‘other degrees’ are still acknowledged as being important.

We thus find ourselves constitutionally in a situation where no one categorically excludes the non-Craft degrees though there are different views as to how they should be regarded. What remains for us to do in this presentation is to answer two questions: what has been and should be the continuing core of speculative Freemasonry; and how do the other-than-Craft degrees fit or not into that definition? These are big questions and I can only attempt my own answer to them. It is quite likely that others will have their own views on them and I can only hope that if that is the case we can begin to develop a useful debate. Let us begin to tackle the first issue.

The core of speculative Freemasonry

In defining this matter there are, I believe, six stages:

We begin by joining the team of Masons who are engaged on the building of the temple as envisaged by King Solomon, with

the assistance of Hiram, King of Tyre. The latter provides not only essential materials but also some labour and in particular a Master-Craftsman who is skilled in forging brass, but also in the planning, designing and overseeing of the whole work. It is into the team which he directs that any new Mason is traditionally recruited and it is to learn the skills that he will be able to wield, and the tools that will enable him to perform, that the new apprentice commits himself by obligation. He soon realises that he is very much part of a team and that he has obligations of care and cooperation towards the other members of his lodge, as well as to the universal society of which he has become a member. He is put on his honour to maintain the principles of which he will now increasingly become aware. He is entrusted with his first 'secrets'.

After a suitable interval which represents his apprenticeship, he is considered for fuller admission into the society of Fellows of the Craft. He has to prove himself competent in the work that has already been entrusted to him but he has also to show that he is not only a mere 'hand' but has a mind that can create. He has to prepare his own pieces of work for building into the temple and at some point that work has to be seen and judged suitable for the sacred purpose for which it is destined—no less than the temple sanctuary. He is told of how Hiram the Master Architect has divided up the work into different classes of workmen, each under their Overseers or Harodim. He is taught that because the temple is to be constructed 'in silence on the site' so the work produced by him and others has to be marked in order that it may be laid in place without hesitation and also that good work may be rewarded. He is even told where to go to receive his wages and how to request them. He is again warned that any who misuse their privileges will be punished and, as in his previous obligation, that there are comparable penalties. He is

even introduced to the various sciences that enable him to be a true Master of the Craft.

His progress in participating in the work at the temple site is such that he is now ready to be considered for a post of management, first as one of the Harodim but thereafter, if judged fit, to be an Architect Master, able to draw designs, lay schemes and manage the government of the work. He is even able to be considered as a possible future Hiram, the widow's son, but in order to attain that high status he has to have learnt the secrets of a Master Overseer and rules over those who, like himself, have regularly produced marked work according to the plans of the Grand Master of the Work, and become aware of the great responsibility which that demands. He will realise what is still required to complete the temple building and he will be aware not only of the danger of over-ambition revealed by some Overseers but also of the disastrous results when some of those Overseers overstep the mark. The very Grand Master who is to be their and his pattern is murdered and only properly entombed after being fortuitously discovered. The Grand Master Hiram Abi's removal from the scene means that a substitute has to be found in order that the Grand Secret within a completed temple can be maintained.

The Mason is now so competent as a ruler that he is selected to be Hiram's replacement and becomes Adoniram. He helps to complete the temple with its final Arch and Solomon can dedicate the edifice assisted by the Priests, like Jachin, and in the presence of many Princes and Rulers, such as his ancestor, Boaz, was, and including the Queen of Sheba. Adoniram joins the Kings in maintaining the Mason's Word in a sacred chamber beneath the temple and order is maintained amongst the workmen.

Following the death of Solomon, the kingdom is once more divided and eventually falls to the attacks of the Babylonians.

The Grand Secret or Mason's Word is similarly dissipated and lost. The nobility and rulers of Israel are taken into captivity and it is only when Persia conquers Babylon that the opportunity arrives for a return to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. Men such as Ezra and Nehemiah undertake the first task and at last a Prince, Zerubbabel, aided by prophets like Haggai, and the priesthood, including Joshua Ben Josedek, seek to undertake the rebuilding of the temple. They are rebuffed by the local pagan rulers and only after Zerubbabel has appealed successfully to Cyrus can he come back and uncover the sacred chamber and the lost Mason's Word. All who assist the Sanhedrim in this task are made Princes and Rulers.

The ultimate discovery is that the Mason's Word has a threefold form. All those who are deemed worthy of knowing it as Rulers and Princes are made privy to it, and not simply Kings and their intimates as previously. Knowing the Word is of course not enough. Those who know it are expected to exemplify their knowledge by the kind of lives they live in society generally. For their guidance and instruction biblical and historical figures are portrayed and imitation of their good deeds encouraged—just as was recommended when Hiram Abi first suffered. When the good Mason has lived respected and died regretted his whole life is complete.

How do the non-Craft degrees fit into that pattern?

Beginning of course with the recognition in the above survey that the Apprentice, Fellow Craft and present Master Mason degrees are already there, it can, I hope, be seen how naturally, as in those old Scottish lodges, the Fellow of the Craft led to the Mark Man (receiving your mark) and the Mark Master (taught how to receive wages and present your masterpiece as a keystone), which latter skill meant that you were deemed fit to rule over a Fellowcrafts' lodge before you became an Excellent

Mason as a ruler over a Master Masons' lodge. Having so proved your worth as a ruler you can the better take part in the completion of the temple, though the Most Excellent Master degree fully entitles you to use your keystone masterpiece as part of that final Arch-raising occasion and enables you to appreciate the Arch of the Rainbow which characterises the Royal Ark Mariner degree.

You are now about to be admitted to the secrets of the inner chamber of the temple through the veils of the Super Excellent degree, but first the degree of Knight of the East prepares you for the return from the exile and the Royal Arch experience once you have reached Jerusalem. The Royal and Select Masters degrees tell of the trials experienced in seeking to restore the temple and Jerusalem, whilst some of the Allied degrees complete the story and also belong to the progress to the Arch chairs.

It is as one becomes a complete Ruler and Prince that the degrees of Rose Croix, Knight Templar, Red Cross of Constantine and Royal Order of Scotland have their own lessons to convey, whilst the Knight Templar Priest and the Order of the Secret Monitor provide biblical patterns for our behaviour that we should be honoured to follow. The operative degrees only serve to underline the story of what it is to be a Temple Mason who might eventually become a Grand Master Mason.

If that seems to be fitting the existing degrees to a contrived pattern then I have to say that this is how it may appear because of the form of Freemasonry that followed the early severance of the full Master's Part from the other sections of the original Craft ceremonies. When in 1813 in England, and shortly afterwards in Scotland and Ireland, Grand Lodges sought to limit their activities to what they *deemed* to be 'the Craft Degrees', then it was bound to look as if everything else was simply an addition and a doubtful addition at that. What I have

been trying to say in this paper is that this is a faulty way of considering the question. To put it another way, in the so-called non-Craft degrees we have fuller parts of what was originally the 'whole Craft working'. If you do not participate in the non-Craft degrees then you are actually missing out on some of the original Freemasonry to which you are the rightful heir. That is their point and that is why I for one am so grateful that I was introduced to them. I am, I would claim, a truly instructed and fully fledged Craft Mason. I know where I came from and I know where I have arrived—at the Ne Plus Ultra of the ancient Craft.

THE GRAND LODGE OF YORK AND THE YORK RITE—A FRESH APPRAISAL

Were you to question any average English or Welsh Freemason today about the topic of this paper, you would, I strongly suspect, be greeted with complete and utter astonishment. This would not be because such a brother could not conceive of there being anything new to be said about the subject but because he would not know anything about the subject at all. If he had done any Masonic reading, or been to a certain number of lectures, or even listened carefully when a United Grand Lodge certificate is presented, he might have grasped that in the 18th century there were two Grand Lodges that were at work in England and Wales, the one started in 1717 and called the Premier (or later, Moderns) Grand Lodge, and another, begun in 1751, which called itself the Antients Grand Lodge. That would be the extent of his awareness of such matters.

That there was ever a Grand Lodge of All England at York, let alone a Grand Lodge South of the River Trent, both in the 18th century, and that there is still a *York Rite*, would astonish and confuse him. It might even be having just that effect on some who are present today. Before I therefore start on some of the fresh things that can now be said about this topic, it is as

well that I introduce you to some of the things that have so far been written. When we understand just how this York Freemasonry was previously regarded we will the more usefully appreciate such new insights as are now possible.

Anyone who has studied the emergence of the Antients Grand Lodge will know its founders had one principal objective. They sought to restore in England, and especially in the south of the country, a form of Freemasonry that they believed was more in tune with the traditional teachings and practices of the Craft. What those teachings and practices were and what the Antients did to achieve their aims has been well, and often, told elsewhere and is not our concern here. What is important to record is that in the book of Constitutions acknowledged by the Antients, *Ahiman Rezon*, Laurence Dermott says that the 'Antient' masons were called 'York Masons' because of the claim that Prince Edwin obtained a Royal Charter which permitted the first grand lodge to congregate in the city of York in 926 AD.

Of this claim Bernard Jones has written as follows (p 215):

Dermott was repeating a *myth* . . . Well aware of the *halo surrounding York masonry*, he flagrantly borrowed an appellation which he *shrewdly believed* would render indelible *the stamp of antiquity* which he had skilfully affixed to the 'Antients' system—a stamp *whose genuineness we see no reason to question seriously*, but which has not gained *added authenticity* by association with the white rose of York.

Whilst we shall consider this argument carefully in a moment, we must note that this is not the whole of the evidence. There is also the opinion of Lionel Vibert, who wrote this:

Yorkshire, perhaps more than any other locality outside London, preserved in *scattered*

communities, remaining in touch with one another, the *old traditions and usages* of the Craft, until the time came when they were to be handed on to those who *developed from them* our freemasonry as it is today.

He concluded:

If the phrase '*York Masonry*' be understood to imply, not that the users of it belonged only to York, but merely that *in common with the Brethren of that city* they adhered to the *ancient customs of the Order* and valued its old traditions, no harm will be taken. We can still talk of '*York Masonry*' in that sense; we can recognise that York, in the Craft, still implies a high standard, a reverence for our time-immemorial customs, and the preservation of all that is best in Freemasonry today.

These statements require to be examined more carefully to see exactly what they are saying. They certainly raise the following questions which we must address:

- 1 Why was there a '*halo surrounding York Masonry*', especially if the Edwin story was a *myth*?
- 2 If claiming an attachment to York would *not* add to the undoubted genuineness of Dermott's claim to the Antients' antiquity, then why is he called *shrewd* in doing so?
- 3 What were these '*scattered communities*' that kept in touch with one another, and, in which '*old traditions and usages*' were preserved?
- 4 Who were the people who '*developed*' those traditions, and into which present Freemasonry did they develop it?

I believe that as you allow me to respond to these important queries we shall both get into the heart of our subject and also look at it with fresh eyes and fresh material.

The source of the York ‘halo’

I begin to deal with this issue by referring to something that is still often overlooked by my contemporaries. It is the fact that already in the period of at least 1725 to 1740 there was a groundswell of dissatisfaction with the development of the newer forms of Craft Masonry. This happened a substantial time *before* the Antients Grand Lodge came on the scene and the groundswell revealed itself in at least two distinct areas, one around the City of London and one in the north-east of England.

The catechisms that developed in the south are today enshrined in the ceremonies of the *Royal Order of Scotland*, whilst the lectures that developed from catechisms in the north-east formed the *Harodim* tradition which, as we shall see, formed a basis for all the subsequent degrees comprising the York Rite. We have therefore *in situ* by 1743, a whole decade before the emergence of the Antients Grand Lodge, a Masonic tradition of working that claimed antique origins, proper preservation of biblical and legendary traditions, and a span of instruction that admitted Apprentices and could also make them qualified Masters of the Craft, including an *Arch* element.

As the later name of this process in the south implies, the English roots of the Royal Order were *eventually* taken up more fruitfully in a *Scottish* clime, but the Harodim development was, throughout its 18th and early 19th-century progress, always acknowledged as being first established on the basis of old York Masonry. Whilst there is sadly neither time nor space here to prove this point, with several quotations from the Harodim documents that we possess, I will at least mention that the source of much of the Eastern wisdom that was said to have been brought to our shores was attributed to a man learned in Masonry called *Ebranc*, and when you appreciate that the Roman name for York was *Eboracum*, the source of the legendary figure is not far to seek. Dr Francis Drake, in his

notable book on York produced in 1730, uses *Ebrank* to describe both York the City and also one of the ancient local kings.

We move on from this fact to the acknowledgment by early 18th-century Irish Freemasons that they obtained *their fundamental understanding* of the Craft from both some local operative sources and the ancient York traditions. We thus see what were the forces that influenced the next generation of Irish Freemasons who migrated to England in the 1740s and were largely the founders and promoters of Antients' practice. If we want to know where the *halo* of York antiquity came from then one has not far to look. It came from a conviction that what made Irish Masonry distinctive as compared with that of the London Grand Lodge, was in part their inheritance from *York*. That is why Laurence Dermott and others made their claim. That there *was* a distinction between the two we have at least one example to prove.

In a book written by Dr Fifield d'Assigny in 1744—you should note that date—we are told of 'a certain propagator of a false system some few years ago (that is, about 1740) in this city of Dublin who imposed upon several very worthy men under a pretence of being *Master of the Royal Arch*, which he asserted he had brought with him from the *City of York*; and that the beauties of the Craft did principally consist in the knowledge of this valuable piece of masonry'.

What is hardly a surprise is that this claim from York was, shortly after, opposed by a subsequent visitor from London who had attained the '*excellent part* of Masonry' and proved that the former's claims were false. What this means in plain terms is this: already in York—where, let me remind you, there had been what was called a 'Grand Lodge' since 1705—they taught that in becoming an Installed Master you *received the Arch degree*. In London they claimed that this was not necessary for, as a

Grand Secretary of the Premier Grand Lodge was still able to assert in 1755, 'We are neither Arch, Royal Arch nor Antient ...' It was in York—even if also elsewhere in the north-east—that the difference already existed by 1740. Here is the basis for Dermott believing that the Grand Lodge of All England Masonry at York had a special quality, a halo, if you like. Here too is the ground for our starting to believe that there could be something that would develop into a 'York Rite'.

There is still, of course, the matter of the Charter of Edwin. *Was it entirely myth?* If, as we have just seen, there was some substance to the idea of York having some kind of ancient system then why should Dermott have *risqué a threat to his reputation* by drawing attention to a *spurious* document of antiquity? Did he naively trust the claims of the York Masons? Was he slipshod in not fully checking his sources? Or is Bernard Jones's assessment of the Charter due to our having *much more evidence* than was ever the case in Dermott's day? We must not spend too much time on this issue but, as the Grand Lodge of York also made this claim, and its present descendant, York Lodge No 236, *still does*, it deserves some examination.

There is a fairly full discussion of this topic in *AQC* vol 22 and there most of the historical evidence available by the start of this century has been uncovered. The net result is this. Whilst we must admit that it is *historically incorrect* to claim that King Athelstan had a *son* called Edwin, he did have a *half-brother* with that name and on at least one charter he was described as 'Eaduuine cliton' (pronounced Eadweenah cleetohn) which is translated for legal purposes as 'Edwin the king's son'. However, whilst this may be the *present* historical truth, it is not the truth *as it was perceived* in the early 18th century.

Dr Anderson, writing his *Constitutions* for the English Craft in 1723, speaks of Edwin as 'the youngest *son*' and it is only in the 1738 edition that he changes this to 'Brother of Athelstan'. It

is therefore evident that the received opinion *at the start* of the 18th century was that Edwin was what the York Masons believed him to be—the King’s ‘son’ who obtained for the old York Masons a charter granting them the right to meet annually in Assembly and regulate their affairs.

Bernard Jones is therefore *not correct* in saying that Dermott was repeating a myth. Moreover, in all discussion as to the true nature of Prince Edwin, which is the correct and Dermott’s way of describing him, there is never any doubt that Athelstan granted *more charters* than any other English king and therefore it is not in the least unlikely that the Masons in York were so privileged. In so far as the king was the fount of such privileges it does not invalidate the York tradition even if, as we now know, there was a contemporary misunderstanding about Edwin’s true status. That a Charter was *granted* to Freemasons is more important than *by whom*.

Was Dermott really so shrewd?

To answer this question we have to appreciate what it was that Dermott was attempting to do. Onto the English Masonic scene there is projected a new Grand Lodge that seeks to establish itself against the existing body which has already enjoyed 30 years of noble leadership. The period in which this effort is made is one in which English eyes are focused on the pretensions of foreign enemies, whether it be the Jacobites seeking to restore the Stuart monarchy, or the French crown contesting supremacy in Europe, the Americas or India. This backcloth cannot be forgotten as we consider the issue before us.

Dermott and his colleagues had to show, by more than differences in ritual or ceremonial working, how legitimate was their claim to be *restoring the old* when the new was disfiguring the Craft. They might have urged their Irish inheritance but that had Catholic and Stuart implications, and to have claimed

French support for their practices would have seemed well nigh treasonable. *Where else could he go* for a convincing confirmation of his intentions but to that other and time-immemorial Grand Lodge of the North which was unquestionably English, linked with the English Church, and already the protagonist of that Royal Arch aspect to Freemasonry that he was to call the ‘very heart and marrow’ of the whole structure.

When, as is still printed in the short History presented to members of York Lodge No 236 today, you read of ‘a Society of Freemasons working under the Chapter of York Minister in the year 1370’, and that ‘Freemasons of those days were a recognised body, with an organisation, habits and customs similar to those which now prevail amongst the Order throughout the world’ it is hardly surprising that in the 1750s Laurence Dermott did not hesitate to ally his own new Grand Lodge with such ancestry. The question still is, however, *was he shrewd enough?* Did he claim as a support what was a faulty framework? Could York Masonry sustain its own claim to Antiquity?

Interestingly, these questions impinge on one of the still unresolved aspects of the York Grand Lodge of All England. According to our present state of knowledge there is an unaccountable gap when this York body seems not to have met, between 1740 and 1760. Yet this is the very period when Dermott first claims that his brethren are the protagonists of that Antient Masonry which descends from York. It is this, at present intractable, problem to which I have lately been giving my attention and which I believe I am in the process of solving. Let me, however, just point up the fascinating situation that we face.

We have records of the Grand Lodge of York which show that meetings took place up to 1740 and that immediately after 1760 this body was still so vigorous that it began to produce

new subordinate lodges as far west as Cheshire and Lancashire, on the East Yorkshire coast and in what is really South Yorkshire. We have no indication immediately before 1740 that there is any problem with the lodge and when records resume in 1760 the minutes read as if they were but a continuation of a previous meeting that year. We even have a manuscript book made in the Victorian period which lists every known York Freemason, local member or visitor, from 1611 to 1820 and this list includes men who were known as Masons in the years between 1740 and 1760.

We have, earlier in this lecture, mentioned a reference to a Mason from York about 1740 who appeared in Dublin and shared what was being practised in York, and there was no suggestion that he came from any defunct body. Finally, we have this claim of Dermott's in the 1750s and we can be sure that he would not have lauded the past of a *defunct* York body. That would surely not have been very shrewd at all. There is clearly more research to be done but perhaps Dermott's claim is an essential clue.

What were the 'scattered communities' that preserved old traditions?

Time will not permit me to expand this next part of our fresh appraisal of the York scene but it presents, I believe, a most important new slant on the whole matter. The information came to me whilst I was conducting my close examination of the origins of the Mark Degree, a not unimportant part of the York Rite.

What became clear was that during the 17th century there arose a Guild of operative free masons which, by the second quarter of the 18th century, had its own catechisms, lectures and rituals, and from which the speculative Masons adapted their own more restricted models. A copy of the workings of the

seven grades (an interesting parallel to the seven degrees of the York Rite) is now in my possession, having been handed down from someone who was a member of one of the original operative districts. What is of particular interest for our present purpose is the fact that in 1677 a map of England was prepared which showed the division of the country into 8 areas. These were: the City of London; Westminster; Southern; Bristol; Chester; Island of Anglesea; Lancaster; and *York*.

Within these districts there were individual units that became, in some cases, future speculative lodges and which helped to disseminate the old lessons and practices of the past. These, I believe, are legitimate contenders for the ‘scattered communities’ which Lionel Vibert referred to but never explained. Moreover, it was in these operative units that there was offered both *Square* and *Arched* work, with the latter recognised as the superior attainment for those who were members. Once we appreciate this, we can begin to understand another quotation from the 1744 book by d’Assigny (p 16):

I am informed in that city [York] is held an assembly of *Master Masons* under the title of *Royal Arch Masons*, who as their qualifications and excellences are superior to others ... receive a larger pay than working Masons.

Some past members of Quatuor Coronati Lodge have thought this to be a highly doubtful claim but perhaps we can now begin to look at it afresh, though to explain to you what kind of *Arch Masonry* was intended would mean another whole lecture.

Who were ‘developers’ of York Masonry—and into what?

There is no simple answer to this double question. What I shall attempt to do as I draw this lecture to a close is to provide some of the possible solutions, whilst emphasising at the outset that this has been a fresh appraisal of the York issues, but by no

means a final solution. What I am more confident about is that we are now better placed to approach a final solution than we were previously and that with but a few further steps of research we shall achieve a more conclusive result. Meanwhile, let me point you to certain areas that I am sure reveal the 'development' of the York system.

The first is in the Grand Lodge of York itself, following its re-emergence after 1760. To give you some idea of what began to develop in that lodge (for it was a private as well as a governing body), symbols on the pedestals and Secretary's table, *still used in York Lodge today*, reveal the practice of *all* the stages at present embraced by the *York Rite*, including Knight Templary. This means that before the Grand Lodge of York had reached the end of its journey in 1792, all the elements for the forming of the York Rite of seven degrees were there.

I am not saying, (and please note this carefully), that here was the York Rite already in being. I say this because we know that members of the Grand Lodge of York considered the Royal Arch as the fourth degree in Freemasonry and practised the Red Cross of Babylon degree *after* that step. Yet the Red Cross of Babylon degree was already a composite one including the Mark Man degree and an early form of one of the Royal and Select Master degrees. In addition, they had a form of *Arch* ceremony which was first of all part of the Mark Master in England and Wales, but which was later linked with the Royal Arch working. A form of High Priesthood was also implied in the Knight Templary section.

What is patently obvious, however, and does not seem to have been grasped previously, is that here, in the very heart of Old Masonry in York, were the first fruits of a much extended Craft and Royal Arch Masonry that could, with surprisingly little re-adjustment, be fashioned into the York Rite we know today.

Nor is that the end of the story. What happened in York had also been taking place in *Ireland* since at least 1740. It would take a further whole lecture to explain this development fully but there is one more passage in the 1744 book of d'Assigny which is revealing. He writes:

I cannot help informing the Brethren that there is lately arrived in this city [Dublin] a certain itinerant Mason, whose judgement (as he declares) is so far illumin'd, and whose optics [eyes] are so strong that they can bear the view of the most lucid rays of the sun at noonday, and altho' we have contented ourselves with *three material steps* to approach our Summum Bonum, the Immortal God, yet he presumes to acquaint us that he can *add three more*, which when properly plac'd may advance us to the highest heavens.

Clearly, degree development was already afoot.

Even with the evidence that is still extant today we see that by the 1790s the order of progress available to most Irish masons was as follows: Apprentice, Fellow Craft, Master Mason, Past Master, Excellent Mason, Arch Mason, Super Excellent Mason, Royal Arch Mason.

When you consider that the 'Arch Mason' was again an early form of the current Most Excellent Master you can certainly see the *York Rite* elements shaping up. When we learn that the Irish Royal Arch also included the Ark, Mark Fellow, Mark Master, Link Mason and Babylonian Pass (or Red Cross of Daniel) we are even nearer the final outcome.

What, I am increasingly convinced, were the final steps of development towards the York Rite were the influence and practise of the military lodges and the determination, by the start of the 19th century, of a more specific Scottish, or Ancient and Accepted, Rite. Indeed, as the steps of the latter became fixed at

18, 25 or finally 33 degrees, so the inclination of others grew to have a more modest but no less fixed Rite. Not surprisingly they called it *York*.

Let us remember that most of the military lodges were warranted by the Irish or Antients Grand Lodges and some even by the Grand Lodge of York. As the members of military lodges settled down locally, or local joining members of such lodges set up their own neighbourhood lodges, they still continued the work into which they had been initiated. Would you believe, for instance, that in Beverley, Yorkshire, there is still a 200-years-old Chapter that does not allow you to stand for obligations, prayers, speeches or greetings because its first military forebears met in tents that prevented that happening. Such is the force of tradition.

Our journey in this lecture must now draw to a close. I dare to believe that what we have shared together may have made more clear a Masonic story that has for too long been shrouded in unnecessary mystery. All I can say to you as I finish is this. The decision I made to end my days in *York* and amongst York Masons was more than a coincidence. I believe it was providential.

DISCOVERING THE 'ARCH' DEGREE

In 1759 the Grand Secretary of the Premier Grand Lodge of England wrote a letter to an applicant for charity. The reply is now one of the most often quoted passages in the history of 18th-century English Freemasonry. The approach had been made by an Irish Freemason and in his response to this request the Grand Secretary, Samuel Spencer, wrote as follows: 'Our Society is neither *Arch*, Royal Arch nor Antient, so that you have no right to partake of our Charity...'

The petitioner, William Carroll, hailed from Dublin and, finding himself on hard times, unsuspectingly appealed to the Grand Lodge in London which he would expect to respond as did his own Grand Lodge at home. The further implications of this incident, in so far as it indicated the gap between the Premier and Antients Grand Lodges, is not our concern this evening. What is important and never seems to have been fully or satisfactorily explained to brethren or Royal Arch companions is why, in the Grand Secretary's reply, there was a distinction made between 'Arch' and 'Royal Arch'. Was it because, in the appeal made to this officer, the petitioner made specific reference to the fact that he was a qualified Arch *and*

Royal Arch Mason, as well as being a member of an Antients lodge in England?

If that were so then it might partly answer the query, though a nagging question remains. Why did not the Grand Secretary simply explain that as his Constitution was not the same as that of the Antients he could not apply the former's funds to any who were not attached to his Grand Lodge? Instead he refers to *two degrees* that were not approved by the Moderns and therefore of which he could rightly claim to be wholly ignorant. By mentioning them in the same sentence as the Antients Grand Lodge he at least suggests that he is fully aware of their existence, even though membership of them cannot weigh with him in this instance.

From a student's point of view it can only be considered providential that he made such a reply, for here we have unbiased acknowledgment of something that, as I have already said, seems to have been largely, if not completely, ignored by most Masonic commentators. That the Moderns Grand Lodge at this date did not recognise the Royal Arch we can fully understand. That was to come seven years later. But what was this 'Arch' degree to which Spencer also referred? It is in an attempt to unravel that mystery that I have prepared what follows—the *discovery of the Arch degree*.

The fact that the petitioner in the above incident was an Irishman would suggest that it is in that country we might begin to establish a trail. We can do so with yet another well-known fact which has received more but inconclusive attention as regards its full significance. I refer to the item in an Irish newspaper, *Falkner's Dublin Journal*, for 10 January 1744. Here we have the account of a Masonic procession which took place in Youghal, County Cork, on the previous St John's Day, 27 December. We read that the Master of Lodge No 21 was preceded by an Arch carried by '2 *Excellent* Masons'.

The two fullest English comments on this incident that I am aware of are those given by Bernard Jones in his *Freemasons' Book of the Royal Arch* (p 45) and Eric Ward in *AQC* vol 88 (pp 20ff). Bro Jones writes as follows:

We wish we could be certain that this 'Arch' was not a mere piece of added ornament—arches are not uncommon in public processions—but certainly the inclusion of the term 'Excellent Masons' does incline us to the inference that the procession was indeed one of R.A. Masons.

It is manifest that Bro Jones is puzzled by this incident and, whilst having to accept that it was not simply a bit of Irish public exuberance, he cannot do more than associate both the object and its supporters with the only part of Freemasonry that he knows in which an *Arch* and the description of *Excellent* Companions are employed. Bro Ward is more categorical: the Youghal incident is *not* evidence of the Royal Arch (p 28).

Is there perhaps another way of looking at what was clearly a lodge occasion? We are told specifically that the arch was carried in front of the Master and since Masonic processions, like ecclesiastical ones, are arranged so that the most significant person at that moment comes last, this means that we are here involved in a lodge occasion. If that is so then why do we have *Excellent* Masons carrying something not normally associated with the Craft degrees? Ward may be right in claiming that the term 'excellent' was simply an 'adjectival superlative' and did not necessarily mean 'installed in a Craft Chair' but surely the presence of an 'arch', and especially when in this instance the reporter even described it as a 'Royal Arch', seems inappropriate for a Blue Lodge celebration. Well, such reflections only serve to remind us that perhaps we have still not understood how the speculative Craft was already developing across the Irish Sea even at this early date.

I cannot here tackle the *whole* question as to the origins of our Masonic practices but there are three elements in that process that I believe have been overlooked. The first is that there was almost certainly evidence of operative masonic practice around—in both the symbolic and administrative sense—when Anderson and Desaguliers (among others) were attempting to *reorganise* Metropolitan Freemasonry. We even have a statement as late as 1911 which asserts that English Grand Lodge Masonry had its origins in the *workings* of the prior operative craft. It is to that source, in so far as we can uncover it, that we must turn if we are going to make any progress in unravelling Masonic puzzles that have so far bemused, or baffled, us. Which leads to the second point.

In ancient operative practice there were two parallel lines of progress, a career in square or straight work, or a career in arch or curved work. I have provided details concerning this in another lecture [chapter three], as well as in my new standard work on the Mark degree, and once we begin to accept that this was the case, we can immediately begin to solve three difficult queries in early Grand Lodge Freemasonry. These are: (a) Where did the idea of the *Arch* come from? (b) Why is there no mention of the *Arch* from the outset? (c) What was the *Arch* relationship to the Craft?

Simply stated, the organisers of the 1717 stage of English Freemasonry chose only to adapt certain parts of the old operative practice—apprentice, Fellow of the Craft, and a *reigning Master* degree—and to be discreet in their use of what they knew about the *Arch dimension* to these stages. Yet the *Arch* aspect of the old craft was nonetheless a fact and it was only a matter of time before some one, or some group, was going to insist that if speculatives were the true descendants of the old operatives, then one had to pay attention to the full customs of their working. That leads on to the third point.

There were at least two groups of Masons who followed operative practice on the above basis. One was the assemblage of Freemasons who followed what was to be called the 'Old York' working, claiming that their practices were derived from operative patterns in the York area. The other was the Grand Lodge of the 'Antients' which made one point strenuously. The Craft ceremonies were not complete unless there was an Arch component and to acquire that knowledge you had to have passed through the reigning Chair of a *Master of Square work*. It is here that I have to remind you that the Antient members were initially almost all of Irish extraction or from lodges with Irish connections. We have thus come full circle and find ourselves back to connections with the Emerald Isle.

Nor will it now surprise you to encounter what was written by Dr Fifield d'Assigny, a Huguenot like Desaguliers. In his book, which appeared in 1744, he spoke of "a certain propagator of a false system some few years ago in this city [of Dublin] who imposed upon several very worthy men under a pretence of being *Master of the Royal Arch*, which he asserted he had brought with him from the city of *York*; and that the beauties of the Craft did principally consist in the knowledge of this valuable piece of masonry."

Until 1867 d'Assigny's book was only known through a quotation in *Ahiman Rezon*, the Book of Constitutions of the Grand Lodge of the Antients. Happily, since that date, copies of the complete work have been discovered and its even greater usefulness recognised. Whilst there is not time here to explain fully this work and its significance, the book does contain certain interesting facts that seem relevant to my thesis.

We have first to note that prior to 1744 a Mason from *York* can propose a form of *Arch* working that clearly linked not only with the Craft in that city but was also acceptable to Craft Masons in *Dublin*. Moreover, he is for some months able to

claim and show 'to the learned and wise who were his followers' that *Arch Masonry* was the principal object of the Craft and revealed its true beauty. This practice was only queried when someone else comes from *London* who 'had some small space before attained *that excellent part of Masonry* and plainly proved that his doctrine was false.' This must mean that by 1740 there was a quite different way of viewing and working the Installed or Past Master's degree as between London on the one hand and York or Dublin on the other. Indeed, d'Assigny actually goes on to state that in 1744 there were *Arch Masons* in York who were so organised that this step was only possible for those who had passed the Chair and were *Excellent Masons*.

It is at this juncture that we need to take on board a fact that is all too often passed over by modern Masons. In their editions of the *Constitutions of Masonry*, Anderson (England 1723) and Pennell (Ireland 1730) included a well-known exhortation which ended as follows: '... let the *Cement* of the Brotherhood be so well preserv'd, that the whole Body may remain as a *well-built Arch*.'

For Pennell and Irish Masons this was much more than a mere expression. It referred to the whole structure and aim of Irish Freemasonry, as the following evidence suggests. In June 1725 Lord Rosse was installed as Grand Master of Ireland. One of the ceremonies for that occasion was to hang a gold trowel around his neck with the words 'not doubting your Capacity and Care to preserve the *Cement* of the Lodge so that the whole Body may remain as a *well built Arch*'. In 1732 the Grand Lodge of Ireland adopted a new seal, with the trowel as a symbol of that same purpose, and thereafter from Youghal in the 1750s, reveal not only a hand with a trowel but one holding a sword and also a complete Arch with pillars and keystone.

What we are seeing here is a reference, nowadays no longer applied, to an *Arch* degree—the setting up of a well-built and

completed Arch—which was a *component part* of the three-degree system then being established. What in fact was emerging was a new pattern: a first degree in which a brother was Entered and Crafted; a second degree in which he became a Fellow or Master of the Craft; and a third degree in which a brother was given the Master’s part as a ruler of his Lodge and in the Craft at large. (This latter was so highly regarded, as in operative practice, that until about 1730 this third degree was only conferred in our Premier Grand Lodge where a *Grand Master* presided.)

When a brother came to the third degree in Ireland he would find himself in the presence of three Symbolical Grand Masters *in the East*. This is exactly how the reigning Masters of an operative lodge would have been discovered when an operative mason reached the 5th grade (of seven) and was now considered worthy to be a ruler and architect—of square and compasses, of straight and arched work—in the Company. Let me here emphasise the point that this, and what follows, was what was intended as ‘the Master’s Degree’, whereas what Prichard revealed in 1730 was only a *part* of the whole. The rest, by which one became an Excellent Mason, was literally *veiled* from him.

Yet the Excellent Mason also found himself faced with something else.

He would see set up before him a pillared Arch, into which he would be instructed to set the keystone that he had been taught to prepare as his Masterpiece in the completion of the Fellow of the Craft degree. Now we can perhaps begin to appreciate why the frontispiece of both Anderson’s and Pennell’s works on the *Constitutions* of the Craft depicted a *well-built Arch ornamented with a keystone*.

It was that same keystone that the true Master would be taught to remove in order to discover the long-lost writings of

the Law as this third degree proceeded. Herein we see the origin of what is *still today* the Irish form of the Royal Arch ceremony and we again see why the *Constitutions*’ frontispiece contained *another* feature. On the pavement shown there is the Greek word *Eureka*—the ‘I have found’ of the recovered Word—whilst placed above the motto is the Pythagorean proposition, the square of three, which was *the most important secret* of operative masonry.

We are now at the point where we can see the possible emergence of a distinct, if comparatively short, ‘Arch’ ceremony which would follow the Fellow Craft and Mark Man, the Master Mason and Mark Master, the Past Master (or Excellent Master), but would anticipate the Super Excellent (or Veils ceremony) and the Royal Arch. It is as this sequence emerges in the late 1750s that the Moderns’ and the Antients’ forms of 18th-century Freemasonry most noticeably divide. In the last half of the 18th century, military and local lodges of Antients or Irish origin are working all of the above ceremonies. In England there is an evident, though not a clear-cut, distinction between Moderns Craft lodges that may, or may not, have Chapters attached to them but nothing else, and Antients’ Lodges that provide their members with Ark, Mark and Link, a Past Master’s, or Passed the Chair, degree, Excellent, Arch and Super Excellent ceremonies prior to the Royal Arch itself.

There are, in the Grand Lodge Library in London, examples of ceremonies worked in the south-west of England from 1759 and associated with Dunckerley, which reveal *five* Arch stages before the Royal Arch. And in 1809 there are *eleven* Arch points without which ‘no Brother can be complete as a Royal Arch Mason’. The fact that one of these latter was the *Arch of Noah* might even help to explain why the ancient brass plates denoting extra-Craft degrees in a Stirling lodge, and dated *c* 1743, show the Arch degree as a Rainbow with a keystone at its head. The

rainbow, after all, had already been mentioned in an early catechism as the source of the Arch and a symbol of the Great Architect's care.

It may never have been your privilege to experience the presentation of a reconstructed 4° ceremony as it was carried out by Antients Masons before 1835, or as it is still carried out by American Masons in places like Philadelphia to this day. All I would tell you is that at the very outset of both ceremonies, after having confirmed that the candidates or Sojourners (and there always have to be three of them) are Past Masters of the Craft, they are led first of all under a *living Arch* made by the Companions, and this Arch (or series of arches) is to symbolise the Arches which collapsed without their keystones. Anyone who witnesses this or takes part, realises the importance still attached to the Arch in the ceremony that follows.

In Plymouth, one of the mid-18th century Chapters that still meets there has a miniature arch with keystone, upon two pillars in the centre of the carpet (with the altar between the east end of the carpet and the 3 Principals) and under the arch are placed the 5 Platonic bodies. A similar arch is a feature in what was originally an Antients Chapter, meeting at Newport in the Isle of Wight.

The following ritual is extant in some parts of Canada and the USA under the title of the 'Most Excellent Master degree'. It follows the Mark Master but still precedes the Veils and the Holy Royal Arch. In England it is one of the subordinate degrees attached to the Order of the Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests, though never performed. Its link on the other side of the Atlantic with an Arch part of Freemasonry is at least interesting. This is what happens:

The Marshal forms the brethren in a double file in the south, facing east. The Master and Senior Warden lead in an *anti-*

clockwise direction three times round the altar and as they march they sing three verses of a hymn, of which this is the last:

Companions assemble on this joyful day

(The occasion is glorious) the keystone to lay:

Fulfilled is the promise, by the Ancient of Days,

To bring forth the cape-stone with shouting and praise.

The Most Excellent Master then says: ‘Craftsmen, nothing now remains to be done for the completion and dedication of the temple but placing the keystone in the *principal arch* and setting in place the ark of the covenant.’

The two pillars, Jachin and Boaz, are now brought forward, set up about three feet apart, and a wooden arch, made to imitate blocks of stone, with a place left for the keystone, is set on top of them. The Master takes the keystone, steps up on a chair and sets it in its proper place, and drives it down with 6 raps of the gavel.

There, at last, is the ceremony of the Arch degree that we have been seeking.

That is also why, in most Royal Arch chapters that meet away from London, you will find some kind of Arch with real keystones or archstones at the head and, across the arch, words such as: *Fiat Lux et Lux Fuit*. (Let there be Light and there was Light.)

In January 1810 we discover an interesting minute in the Minerva Chapter of Kingston upon Hull. It reads: ‘A material change and alteration took place in the Chapter this evening, namely the introduction of the Arch with ‘Holiness to the Lord’ painted in gold letters thereon, in front of the three M.E. Grands. The Pedestal and Master’s Level, with appropriate inscriptions in Brass letters thereon, and the Burning Bush within and under the said Arch, *being the first introduction of these essential requisites* in this part of the United Kingdom...’

In his comment on this innovation, Bernard Jones wrote: ‘Is it possible that some ideas were being borrowed from a travelling *military* lodge or were introduced by an *Irish* visitor.’ (p 161) In view of what has already been stated above, it does indeed seem a likely suggestion.

For those Royal Arch Masons who have such an item this is an ample reminder of a part of Freemasonry that was once a distinctive and essential element in the Royal Arch ceremonies but which in England and Scotland is now absorbed by talk of a *crypt or vault*.

With all this evidence before us it might be worth considering afresh the earliest form of *Arch* ceremony to which Dr Oliver refers in his book, *Origin of the Royal Arch*, (pp 86ff). In the first section of the Rite he describes, the three candidates approach the Right Worshipful Master’s chair: ‘Sire, the Temple being now finished and dedicated . . . we are anxious to obtain that distinguished reward . . . of being admitted into the honourable degree of Geometrick Master Masons.’

On the return of Hiram, King of Tyre, this is done and search is made for the absent Hiram Abif. Oliver continues: ‘After certain ceremonies (describing journeys) the Brethren made their report. *Then followed a representation of the Arch, and the recovery of the Lost Word.*’ Oliver concludes: ‘Such was the outline of the Royal Arch, as a completion of the Third Degree . . . although the plan was subsequently extended by *the addition of the cavern and its mysterious contents.* . . .’

There are, before we close, three other pieces of evidence that need to be considered by anyone who might still have doubts about the thesis which I have introduced. The first is that so-called Operative *Lodges* in Scotland invariably use an Arch as the motif for their banners. The second is that in Scottish Chapters to this day a pillared Arch is set up as the focus of their ceremony and an Arch degree ceremony is still listed as being

under the auspices of the Supreme Grand Chapter of that land. And thirdly, in the Province of Northumberland, in the 1820s, we have Certificates appointing brethren to Provincial Office showing what look amazingly like the very Arch, Ark of the Covenant and Altar of incense features that suggest an Arch and Royal Arch connection.

What we have here uncovered begins to answer some of those persistent questions which so often puzzle Companions. How is the Royal Arch the completion of the Master's degree? Where does this Arch with its keystone come from? Why do we have an Arch rather than a dome? Why do Irish Royal Arch Masons still persist in keeping to an Arch and another legend, whilst we follow a different path? Where did the Ark of the Covenant and the ceremony of the Veils fit in? All these things at last begin to be much clearer once you have recognised the Arch Degree.

If you then want to know where the domed vault, the rebuilding of the temple, and the pedestal secrets came from you are simply asking for yet another lecture.

Chapter eight

**THE GENEVA BIBLE AND ITS
CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT
OF ENGLISH RITUAL**

Some time ago, I was invited to give this paper at the oldest lodge still meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. It was a subject that had lingered in my mind for a considerable time and I was delighted to be provided at last with the opportunity to give the first presentation to an appreciative audience in the very city associated with this particular form of the Volume of the Sacred Law. No other paper has ever been presented on the topic, although the late Harry Carr did make three brief references to the Geneva Bible in his compendious *Freemason at Work* and another Past Master of Quatuor Coronati Lodge, Christopher Haffner, gave it an honourable mention in his book, *Workman Unashamed*, so the matter has not been wholly overlooked.

It might be claimed that since this subject has not attracted substantial attention thus far it is probably not one that deserves even the scope of one whole lecture. That is something you will have to judge for yourselves when I have finished. I can only state that whereas I started out with the certainty that there would be at least enough to occupy us for this one evening, I now know that there is other material which I cannot share with you today and a much longer and, I believe, equally interesting

paper could with ease be presented if time were available. Let me however start to whet your appetite by what is available and in order that we all begin from the same point I must describe briefly the historical background of this work.

It was in the reign of Henry VIII that the first copies of a whole Bible made their appearance in the parish churches of England. This was called the *Great Bible*, otherwise and in some later editions called the *Bishops' Bible*, and it was in 1540 that chained copies—chained because they were too precious and costly to allow them to be purloined by an eager new readership—were authorised to be set on lecterns for open reading to the congregation. That version of the Bible was largely dependent on the work done by another English refugee on the Continent, William Tyndale. (I note with some pride that he was a member of the same Oxford College as I was later to attend.) This Bible continued to have use and pride of place throughout the short but even more reformed reign of Edward VI.

From 1553 to 1558 Mary was on the throne and one of her early decisions was that such bibles must be removed from churches as the services were once more to be recited in Latin. Whilst some died for their reformed beliefs during her reign, others sought refuge once more overseas, initially in the Netherlands but also in German cities, such as Frankfurt. It was from Frankfurt, in 1555, that a particular band of Englishmen and their families made their way to Geneva, where a determined effort was being made to create a city governed by Reformed Christian principles. Indeed so precise was the concern of its rulers—the *seniores* or elders—that no-one was admitted by this date unless satisfactorily vouched for. The English refugees had to undergo the same test as all others.

To be exact the contingent that came in November of 1555 had been preceded by 20 persons belonging to the family of Sir

William Stafford, an English nobleman who was of such close royal descent that it was deemed advisable for him to be abroad whilst Mary was on the throne.

Yet it was the 27 people who were headed by William Whittingham and the formidable John Knox who require our notice. On 14 November 1555 the Council of Geneva granted these ministers and their families the church of *Ste Marie-le-Noue* for their sole use on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, whilst on Sundays they shared it with the Waldensian Christians who came from what today we would call Northern Italy. These latter had the church for their sole use during the rest of the week.

From a remarkable record called *Le Livre des Anglois* (The English Folks' book), which is now kept in the City Hall at Geneva, we can discover who made up this first wave of temporary residents. We note, in addition to the two already mentioned, William Williams and Thomas Wood, Christopher Goodman and Anthony Gilby. This last-named person was in due course to be very closely associated with the City of Leicester, and all of them were to be the principal translators of the Geneva Bible from the Hebrew and Greek.

Their leader, William Whittingham, was born in Chester in 1524 and educated in Oxford. He settled down so well in Geneva that he married a close relative of the wife of John Calvin himself. The following testimony that he left tells us how he and the other English folk were received in their exile.

But to the end that we might be delivered from insupportable tyranny God hath provided better for us insomuch that He hath moved the Magistrates' hearts towards us in granting us a church at Geneva—where God's word is truly preached, manners best reformed, and in earth the chiefest place of true comfort.

Allen Hinds, in his book *The Making of Elizabethan England*, adds to our understanding of the background:

This Genevan church was formed of men of a very great strength of character [so that] of all the churches founded abroad by the English at this time, this alone produced works of permanent importance.

There was gathered here, says another writer (James Packer, then Principal of Tyndale Hall, Bristol) ‘a galaxy of Reformation men who were themselves true Renaissance individualists, rugged, heroic, cantankerous, whimsical and tender by turns, with fighting and exploring instincts well developed, ready both to travel and to suffer, if need be, for the cause of God and truth.’

He continues (vol 3, pp 7, 8):

On the title page of the 1560 Geneva Bible is a woodcut which shows the Israelites standing with their backs to the Red Sea gazing in terror at the advancing Egyptians [who seem to be] only a few yards away. BUT, behind them, over the sea, rises the pillar of cloud (The Israelites will see it the moment they turn their backs) and along the edges of the picture run the texts: ‘Feare ye not, stand still, and behold the salvation of the Lord . . .’ ‘The Lord shall fight for you . . .’ ‘Great are the troubles of the righteous: but the Lord deliuereth them out of all.’ . . . [These Geneva men] were what they were because they believed that truth—clear, definite and final—had broken forth upon them from the Scriptures.

By 1557 William Whittingham had completed the New Testament section and, as has just been indicated, his colleagues had helped to complete the whole by 1560 when the first edition

was produced in Geneva. It was to appear in almost two hundred editions by 1644 when the last English one was printed. Of those editions some 140 were produced in formats that were of a pocket or portable design. This was only one of the reasons why the scripture was to have so deep an influence on Puritan England. There were others.

It was, for example, the first Bible to be printed in clear Roman type rather than the previously embellished Gothic form. 'Its literary style was brisk mainstream English, the Anglo-Saxon of Tyndale, less sonorous but more energetic than the Latinised style of the [later] Authorised Version, and its accuracy and clarity [of meaning] were of a high order.' It was directly translated from the best Greek and Hebrew texts that were then available and, unlike the Great Bible which had been brought out by the Bishops in Henry VIII's time, this version broke with the phrasing of the older Latin Vulgate used by the Church of Rome.

This Bible thus sounded fresh and quite distinct when read. Great chunks of it, as well as many details that we shall very soon consider, were taken over without any change whatever into the Bible which was commissioned by King James I, and thus called the 'Authorised', so that when in 1568/9 there had already been an attempt to produce a revision of the earlier Great Bible it soon became apparent to most objective scholars that the translation provided in the Geneva Bible had not been bettered.

There were two features of the Geneva Bible which gave it a major advantage as a version calculated to impress men's minds deeply. The first was that, following Calvin's own extensive commentaries on the Scriptures, this bible was furnished throughout with marginal notes that sought to make the text as intelligible and relevant to the reader as was possible. William Whittingham, who was to be Dean of Durham on his return,

wrote in the Preface to his own contribution of the New Testament section:

As concerning the Annotations, I have endeavoured to profit all thereby: for my knollage [knowledge] I have omitted nothing unexpounded, also I have explicat [explained] all suche places by the best learned interpreters: So that by this means both they which have not abilitie [the means] to buy the Commentaries upon the New Testament, and they also which have not opportunitie and leisure to read them because of their prolixitie, may use this book in stede thereof.

These notes covered an immense range of issues: geographical difficulties, current money values and weights, social practices and political attitudes, ethical and doctrinal explanations, spiritual counsel and alternative translations—these were but a few of the contents that made this translation a manual of Christian, and especially Protestant, instruction.

We shall have ample opportunity in a moment to consider what part these notes played in shaping and even providing the phraseology of the earliest 17th-century and 18th-century rituals that we possess.

Before we come to that and other specific points of speculative Masonic development, it will not be irrelevant to record certain other facts which show how influential the Geneva Bible translation was in the life of the British nations between 1580 and 1680.

For the first 30 years of that period there were one or more editions of this Bible *every year*. It was therefore brought constantly before the eyes and minds of the public and was made increasingly available to all who could afford a copy for use privately as well as in churches. Nor should it surprise us that after 1595 the major part of the references to the Scriptural

text in Shakespeare's plays (and he has a thousand or so, overall) were taken from the Geneva translation—even to the point of spelling 'Salomon', the form there used, and as with 'couples coming to the Ark' when the Bishops Bible spoke of 'twos'. What seems clear is that, despite what must have been Shakespeare's retentive and wide-ranging mind, he almost certainly had a copy of the Geneva version by him for reference.

In 1579 the first edition of the Geneva Bible was published in Scotland and it was soon adopted as the standard Scots translation. With such a verse as that in Othello, Act. 2: 'God's above all: and there be souls must be saved, and there be souls must be saved . . .' it would not be surprising that such clear Calvinistic teaching of 'predestination' would appeal to the Reformed disciples of John Knox, the outstanding Scottish preacher.

Nor, may I point out, is it altogether coincidental that one who had no little influence on the first growing years of the Premier Grand Lodge in England was also a Scots divine and author, the Rev Dr Anderson. He was joined by an Anglican minister with strong Huguenot and Reformed ancestry, the Rev Dr Desaguliers, and the first editions of the Geneva Bible in England were in part printed by none other than a Mr Vautrollier, who was another Huguenot refugee. From my early researches it seemed clear that when the English language began to be used by the Huguenot congregations in their chapels it was the Geneva Bible and not the Authorised which they used for worship. No less was it the Geneva version alone which the Pilgrim Fathers allowed to be taken on their ships when they set out from Holland in the mid-17th century. We also know that such Establishment figures as Richard Hooker and Archbishops Whitgift and Laud also quoted freely from the Geneva Bible in their writings and sermons. In 1643 there appeared the *Souldier's Pocket Bible* which was said to reveal 'the most, if

not all, those places contained in Holy Scripture, which do show the qualifications of a fit Souldier to fight the Lord's Battles . . . and may be also useful for any Christian to meditate upon . . .

From all this exposure of the text and its numerous comments, it can be more readily be appreciated why not only the wording but also the interpretations included in this Bible began to inform the writings and practices of the earliest speculative Freemasons in both England and Scotland, at this period.

It is time, however, to come to some of the evidence for believing that this form of Bible was a clear contributor to the emergent rituals or other documents of the Craft. What follows can only be part of the more extensive treatment that I am still pursuing but at least it gives the reader a sample of what can be discovered. I shall in this lecture concentrate on items that relate to the best known parts of present Craft practice in England.

We may begin by noting that out of 80 proper names that appear in the first ten chapters of the Geneva Bible, 28 remained the same as in the Great Bible but 52 were altered, so that we now begin to recognise the forms which we find in the first Masonic manuscripts and the history recorded in Anderson's *Constitutions*. Thus Noema becomes Naamah, Mathusal becomes Methuseelah, Hevah is now Eve, Habel is Abel and the Noe whom we recognise in the medieval Mystery Plays at last becomes Noah. Nemroth in the early Charges has changed to Nimrod, whilst elsewhere Nabuchodonozor (the form still used in French today, because of the Latin Bible) assumed the form Nebuchadnezzar. Esdras became Ezra, Oseas was now Hosea and Aggeaus appears as Haggai. All these changes, the translators claimed, showed that their version kept more closely to the 'lively' (or actual) wording of the Hebrew original. What is most significant, in view of this claim, is the fact that whereas the name of the artist sent from Tyre was, in the Great Bible,

called *Huram* as being closer to the Hebrew form, it is in the Geneva Bible that he is first called *Hiram* and is, moreover spoken of in the passage from 1 Kings chapter 7 as ‘his father being a man of Tyre’ and ‘his mother of the tribe of Naphtalie’, which is exactly how he is described in the *No 4 MS* of 1710. Indeed there is no use of the term ‘Hiram-Abi’ or ‘Abif’ in any known catechism, manuscript or ritual up to 1760 and this again, I suggest, indicates the natural adoption of that biblical wording which the Geneva Bible introduced and which was confirmed in the Authorised Version subsequently.

It is when we come to the use of the marginal notes, however, that a rich seam of relationship is revealed to our view. I shall here refer to some of the most obvious ones. We begin in the very first chapter of Genesis, verse 16. The actual verse reads: ‘God then made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule ye night: he made also ye starres.’ This, of itself, is near to but not precisely related to our form of wording. Yet the marginal comment in the Geneva, not available to the Authorised Version reader, says specifically ‘To wit, the sunne and the moone.’ Set the two ideas together and you have the familiar refrain, ‘The sun to rule the day, the moon to rule the night and . . .’ (you know the rest).

In Genesis chapter 3, verses 7 and 21, we have reference to the occasion when, Adam and Eve having realised that they have broken God’s requirement in the garden, they first seek to clothe themselves for shame and are then properly clothed for work by God himself.

In the Great Bible, verse 7 reads: ‘they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aperns or breeches’. The Authorised Version was in time to prefer ‘aprons’ but the Geneva Bible was to be known generally as the ‘Breeches’ Bible because of its choice of word here. What is not so often realised, however, is that in the margin of this latter version it

says, ‘Heb. such things to gird about them to hide their privities’, so that no-one could be in any doubt about the covering’s place or purpose, and when in verse 21 we read: ‘Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skinnies, and clothed them’ then the association with our more familiar aprons is complete. What may be less well known by brethren is that in at least three Masonic documents before 1730 we read the following type of Question and Answer: ‘How was the Master clothed?’ ‘In a yellow Jacket and Blue pair of Breeches.’ Whilst this reference came to be symbolic of the Master holding or wearing an extended pair of brass angled and blue-steel armed compasses, I cannot but believe that there was here an early echo of the first clothing of man returning to the moral way.

Another reference in these first pages of the Bible to the exclusion of Adam and Eve from the garden describes the setting of the Cherubims (and it seems to be the Geneva Bible which started Masons and Englishmen on this use of a double Hebrew plural) ‘and the blade of a sword shaken to keep the waye of the tre of life’. Anyone familiar with the type of sword used by many Tylers in the 18th century—one with a serrated or wavy blade—can perhaps now better understand how the shape was acquired than simply by using the word adopted in the Authorised Version of the Bible—a flaming sword—even though these implements are today so described.

It is at this point that I am especially aware of the increasing amount of material that might await our attention and which time on this occasion prevents my introducing, but I cannot move on to the last section of this lecture without referring you to the story of Jephthah and the securing of the passages across the Jordan to which we so constantly refer. It occurs in the Book of Judges, chapter 12, verses 5 and 6. The text reads: ‘Then said they unto him, say now Shibboleth; and he said Sibboleth; for he

colde not so pronounce.' That by itself is no more explicit than is the similar verse in the later Authorised Version but, lo and behold, here in the margin of the Geneva Version we have the first appearance of those clarifying words that we have adopted almost verbatim: 'which signifieth a fall of waters or an eare of corn'. *That does not appear in the Authorised.*

By these and so many other examples that time will not now permit us to pursue on this occasion, I trust that it is beginning to appear what a debt was owed by our first forefathers in the English (and Scottish) Craft to this particular biblical record. It is hardly any wonder that, quite apart from it being a matter of principle to have the Bible open in lodge, it was of direct advantage to have the 'prompt book' on so many matters freely available to the Master or near his pedestal.

I have not so far, however, referred to the second aspect of the Geneva Bible which made it a most valuable source for Masonic style and practice. I refer here to its *quite new illustrations*. As a piece of book production it was in the front rank for its day. The 1560 edition had 26 fine woodcuts illustrating (as it claimed) 'passages so dark that by no description they colde be made easie to the simple reader' (this meant such things as the Tabernacle in the wilderness, the High Priest's clothing and Solomon's and Ezekiel's Temples). Each of the drawings, or sections of them, will well repay careful study but I must limit myself to just a few of them. These are: the two great pillars, the side chambers, the Holy of Holies, the throne of Solomon and the first great vision of Ezekiel.

Freemasons are often puzzled by the intelligent perception that, if there were indeed two great pillars at the porchway or entrance to King Solomon's Temple, then it is inconceivable that at that date such pillars could have had two spheres set upon their capitals, if those spheres were meant to represent a circular Globe which had not then been circumvented, or a knowledge of

the heavens that only later studies, beginning in Babylon during the exile, were to release. How is it that all the earliest representations of these pillars, however, show, as on our old Grand Lodge of York board, just such pillars with their spheres. The answer must be because that is how the pillars were illustrated in the Geneva Bible, and let me remind you that there were no illustrations at all in the later Authorised Version editions. In the 1560 edition of the Geneva Bible, the 'ball' at the top of the pillar is so wrought about with its 'grates like network' that one cannot see whether there is any decoration on the object beneath. It took only another century of gentlemanly studies and the normal appearance of two 'globes' in any well furnished private library for these two 16th-century 'balls' (*gooloth* in the original Hebrew) to be steadily transformed into the spheres which now adorn our pillars on Wardens' pedestals or on the 2^o tracing boards. Yet it was the first pictures in the Geneva Bible which started the idea.

Again, it is only in the Geneva Bible that we at last realise where the side 'chambers' come from in which the workmen went to be paid their wages. In the accompanying illustration they were in three storeys alongside the inner temple buildings and to get to these chambers you had to mount stairs inside the temple and not from any outside door.

In the same fashion we also grasp from the drawing of the Holy of Holies why there was apparent confusion over the windows, or dormers, 'that gave light to the same'. The text suggests that the Sanctum Sanctorum was totally dark, but here we have it enlightened by five windows high up in the wall. That must have really tested interpreters.

The picture of the Throne of Solomon is also intriguing. We see a figure approaching the monarch who is above seven steps and between two more pillars. The throne is under a rounded canopy which is adorned with three inverted squares. At the foot

of the steps is a ‘chequered pavement’ which continued the normal medieval form of pavement shown in earlier manuscripts. The dome-shaped niche and canopied seat is almost identical with Master’s places still in Weymouth and Taunton.

The feature of the ‘Arch of Heaven’ is a principal item in the last of these woodcuts at the start of the Book of Ezekiel. This picture reveals a figure in a familiar Royal Arch attitude under a cloudy canopy with four wheels that resemble astrolabes, four beasts with different faces, and God sitting upon a throne but also on the arch of a rainbow.

Such, all too briefly, are a few of the visual effects that this very remarkable English Bible introduced into the cultural life of the 17th-century folk that were, in part, to establish English speculative Freemasonry. Of course, it is true that once the general impact of the Geneva Bible editions had been assimilated and underlined, as well as enhanced, by the sonorous language and fine scholarship of the next great translation, it was possible to lose sight of the contribution that had been made by those refugee scholars. The sheer weight of Royal Authority given to the King James version and the events that followed the Restoration of 1662 were such that for a while its predecessor went into retirement—a state of affairs that now needs to be carefully reviewed. Whilst not wanting to claim overmuch for this source-book of ideas and symbols, I would, I think, be not unjustified in saying that without the Geneva Bible our Masonic heritage would have been different and might well have been much less memorable. For the moment I rest my case.

NEGLECTED ASPECTS OF THE THREE DEGREES

At a time when it is probably true that the degrees of Freemasonry are performed more often and with as much care as has ever been the case, it may seem odd that anyone should dare to suggest that there is anything neglected in the three basic degrees of Craft Masonry. Yet what I am wanting to show and to draw to our attention is not the fact that what we do is in itself neglected or mishandled. Rather that there are in our ceremonies, or ritual, parts that are nowadays either not fully explained or else passed over altogether and yet which, if adequately grasped, would add to and clarify the whole purpose of our Fraternity.

Of course I realise that what I may have to say can vary from country to country and you may want to inform me later that what I have focused on is very well explained and recognised in your particular working. If that is the case then may I assure you that such is not the case back in my own land and it will therefore have been both an education for you as to how others miss what you keep and how fortunate you are not to have such neglected aspects in your own Masonry. If, on the other hand, I am putting my finger on neglected aspects of your own

approach I hope this may be helpful, and in any case these are only some areas I could highlight and you may care to go on and research others.

Let me begin with something that meets every English and Welsh Mason every time he enters his lodge room and yet which is very rarely, if ever, explained to him. I refer to the picture of a ladder that appears on the first degree tracing board and rises either vertically or diagonally across it. Its foot is usually resting on a pedestal bearing the Volume of the Sacred Law and it ascends with rungs until its top disappears into a cloud or Shekinah above.

The ladder of course is more properly known as Jacob's ladder and in some 18th-century tracing cloths or charts the figure of Jacob at its foot would have been shown. The biblical story describes how, passing from Beersheba to Haran, Jacob stopped for the night. He took one of the stones from a nearby shrine and, using it as a pillow, he lay down to sleep. In a dream he saw a ladder which rested on the ground but with its top reaching heaven and the angels of God going up and down on it. The Lord was standing beside him saying, 'I shall be with you to protect you wherever you go . . .' There is more but that will be enough.

It is because of this passage that the early ritual-formers took the idea of the ladder and set it before us. Some of the ladders shown since the beginning of Masonry do indeed have angels ascending and descending upon them, but there are other variations. One most frequently seen today shows three figures, the bottom one holding a cup, the middle one an anchor and the top one surrounded by two or three children. These respectively represent Faith, Hope and Charity and it is therefore no surprise to see one variation, indeed the one on the ceiling of the Grand Temple in London, where the symbols, without any figures, are a cross, a heart and a chalice.

Yet again there are several boards where a finger points down to the VSL on the pedestal and above the central anchor the ladder ends in a burst of golden light. The simplest variation appears in some Irish floorcloths where the plain letters F, H and C are shown.

Whilst there are these alterations to the characters on the ladder there is also endless variation in the number of staves or rungs that are shown. Some of the earliest have only three to suit the virtues displayed, some have nine, an Irish ritual declares that there should be eleven and some have fifteen to link up with the staircase in the next degree. Some have a much greater number and perhaps suggest that the total of the completed ladder should be nearer 72, which has its own special symbolism in other degrees.

What is clear is that however the ladder is depicted it is obviously intended to be helpful and meaningful for the viewer. It is not there simply for decoration but has a message to convey. This is in fact plainly stated in one of the lectures that used to be given following the First Degree but which is rarely, if ever, delivered in English lodges. The wording is significant.

Q: Describe the covering of a Masons' Lodge.

A: A Celestial canopy of divers colours, even the Heavens.

Q: As Masons, how do we hope to arrive at the summit?

A: By the assistance of a Ladder, called in Scripture Jacob's Ladder . . .

Q: Of how many staves or rounds was this ladder composed?

A: Of as many as comprise all the moral virtues; three principal ones—namely FAITH, HOPE and CHARITY.

Q: Why these?

A: Faith in T.G.A.O.T.U., Hope in Salvation and Charity towards all men . . .

And the Charge that completes this section of the Lecture is also worth quoting: ‘May every Mason attain the summit of his profession, where the just will most assuredly meet their reward.’

This is, I trust, not simply a matter of words. We are here, at the very outset of our Masonic journey, brought face to face with the core of a vital conviction about who we are and how we are to see our lives. Moreover, it is all set within a context bounded by God’s divine words on the one hand and his glorious omnipresence on the other—the two extremities of the ladder before us. Indeed the very Lecture from which I quoted starts with these words:

‘The nature, character, attributes and perfections of the Deity are faithfully delineated and forcibly portrayed, and are well calculated to influence our conduct towards Him, as our Father, Benefactor, and Moral Governor, as well as in the proper discharge of the duties of social life.’

Those are powerful as well as beautiful sentiments. Yet they are veiled from the ordinary Mason by their neglected use. What could be more effective than to indicate this ladder on the tracing board when certain words regarding our duty to God are used regularly by every lodge in the initiation of a brother: ‘by imploring his aid on all your lawful undertakings and *by looking up to him* in every emergency for comfort and support.’ In an age that makes so much use of visual aids why do we neglect so potent and ancient a symbol?

It is time to turn from the ladder to the staircase of the second degree tracing board. Here, I dare say, I could expect a protest. How can you say that this feature is neglected in modern Freemasonry? Is it not true that very often in a Fellowcraft

ceremony there is the presentation of the second degree tracing board and hence an explanation of the various steps that compose it?

That is indeed true but neglect can come in various forms. What I would ask here is what the ordinary Mason knows about the following: Why do we have a curving staircase? Why do we have 15 or more steps? Why does the staircase on most boards today run upwards from south to west, whereas when we simulate the stairway in the ceremony we make it go from north to east? Why do we show the staircase coming from a south-facing doorway when all the evidence we have states that there was only one porchway or entrance and that at the east side of the Holy Place? Why do we say that the stairway led to the 'middle chamber' of the temple when there often appears to be no lower or upper chamber?

These are just a few of the questions that have always beset me since the first time that I heard the lecture delivered. There are others but time will even prevent me dealing with more than just three of the ones above.

How many Masons are aware that in the 18th century the ritual in the North of England clearly stated that the Apprentices assembled in a lower chamber, the Fellowcrafts mounted to a middle chamber and the Masters ascended to an upper chamber? It was only in a ritual of 1802 that the present wording began to be used so that the peculiar singling out of the Fellowcrafts began and their place in a hierarchy determined. Moreover the fuller ritual mentioned above also made clear that these chambers were *on the outside* of the Holy Place and the higher ones were reached by stairs 'leading from the *south side*' of that sanctum.

It is when we know this that we can begin to understand the confusion that overtook Harris in the design of his second degree board, so that though he drew the Holy Place in the upper

part of his design he created a south doorway in the temple below and added the pillars that belonged only to the main entrance. If, of course, you orientate the inner stairway to the middle chamber correctly then it enters the stairwell by a north entrance and makes its way upwards to the east. The answer to what we do in our lodges is explained.

Why we have 15 or more steps is revealed when you look back at one of the medieval cart plays that were performed in England for more than 250 years and in which productions the operative masons had their part to play. One of their patron saints was the Virgin Mary and they knew her legends well, especially as some of them had to carve these for the churches they constructed.

In the stories connected with the childhood of Mary there is one that describes how ‘the young innocent girl was brought to Jerusalem and there made the traditional entry of mounting *15 steps* towards the High Priest sitting on the throne of the *Inner Temple*, reciting on her way the appropriate Gradual Psalms. Let us recall that ‘Gradual’ came from *gradus* which meant grade or step or degree. In Coventry we still have the words used by her in those plays:

The fyrst degre, gostly applyed,

It is holy desyre with God to be.

In troyl to God I have cryed,

And in sped that lord hat herde me . . .

[The 1° Charge?]

The secunde is stody, with meke inquysson veryly

How I shall have knowynge of Gods wyll . . .

[Do we recall what is the purpose of our 2°?]

The thrydde is gladnes in minde in hope to be.

That we shall be savyd all thus . . .

[The 3° experience?]

Do you wonder any more about why it is ‘3, 5, 7 or more steps’?

Do you also understand why the staircase is curving, though in older floorcloths and boards it always twisted more, and from left to right and back again as in a spiral stairway. It was this latter kind of stair that the ritual-formers had in mind, for do they not say in the charge to the Fellowcraft: ‘to extend your researches into the *hidden paths* of Nature and Science’? What better emblem of that search than to have the stairway of a lighthouse or tower in which every other step ahead is hidden from view and you have to mount to discover the whole truth. No longer the straight ladder of the 1° but a new way.

What I hope is now clear is that however often the normal lecture is given, vital additional information is withheld. Some of our essential instruction is wanting, and that is only answering three 2° questions.

Having arrived at the 2°, it is time for us to look at the subject of ashlars. These have been important from the earliest days of Masonry, both operative and speculative, but when you see the objects lying inert and unmentioned in the lodge room, one wonders what exactly they are meant to teach or convey. In English Masonry they are certainly neglected.

Let us begin with the words that are used at the north-east corner when a candidate is about to have his graphic instruction in the virtue of Benevolence. He is told to stand with his left foot across the lodge and his right foot down the lodge and yet turn his body to face and listen to the Master. Why this awkward stance?

The answer, of course, is because in a properly appointed lodge room the rough and smooth ashlars are placed at the NE and SE corners of the floor. When this happens the Initiate has to stand with his feet as instructed *along two adjacent sides* of the roughly-hewn stone placed there. It is thus appropriate for the Master to inform him that he is placed in this position to

symbolise the beginning of the erection of any building. He starts with fashioning a stone to the required dimension.

What is puzzling, if you think about it, is the fact that he is also told that ‘from the foundation laid this evening may you raise a super-structure perfect in all its parts’. Surely this must mean that what he also represents is a shaped and carefully prepared ‘cornerstone’ that was traditionally laid at the north-east point of the intended building? Yet he has a rough ashlar symbolically or actually between his feet. How can this be?

I believe the answer is this. In ancient Freemasonry the Apprentice was *first* given a rough ashlar to work on and when he could shape it into a smooth ashlar he was then considered ready to be admitted a ‘Fellow or Master of the Craft’. It was with the smooth ashlar in his hand that the Master addressed him and it was this that enabled him to be regarded as ‘a just and upright Mason’. When the speculative ceremonies were otherwise divided up, the smooth ashlar became the sign of the Fellowcraft.

What are we to make of that strange object that sometimes occupies the top of the Senior Warden’s pedestal or is placed on the floor in the west? It is usually a tripod with a pulley and chain suspending a smooth ashlar, though in my own York Lodge and elsewhere it is a more primitive hoist of another design.

The answer here is that it symbolically represents the ‘raising of the Fellow or Master who made this stone’ and where a tripod is used the further implication of *three being needed* to raise the object is clear. Moreover the fact that it is on or near the Senior Warden’s pedestal means that, with the other ashlar in their proper positions, we here have the apex of a triangle of progress through the several degrees.

Again, I have to point out that all this helpful explanation is neglected by so many and thus the valuable symbolism of our furniture and its appointment is lost.

It was a similar object of great antiquity in Freemasonry that was almost lost entirely to view had it not been that about ten years ago the long memory of our English Grand Lodge was re-activated and the *trowel* was returned to service. Much to the surprise of most Masons it was re-introduced as the collar jewel of the Charity Steward, an office that is now as much part of the officers' list as any other. But why the trowel and not a simulated cheque book or at least a box for collecting contributions?

Once more the answer is a neglected one. In the earliest days of English practice the trowel was often the jewel worn by the youngest new Apprentice when he took up his first duty as the ostensible Inner Guard of the Lodge. That latter title was not used until after the Union of our Grand Lodges and before that date he was known as the Inner Tyler. Being the newest member it was his task to make sure that when all duly qualified were assembled—and that meant that he had to learn the password leading to the first degree (and how many know that?)—he should then remember always to seal up the lodge (or make sure all the tiles to prevent eavesdroppers were in place, i.e. to tile it) and thence to be the first to welcome his immediate successor as the next candidate for the Craft. The trowel he carried, either in his hand or on a ribbon, was the obvious symbol of privacy, security and fraternal brotherhood.

In the Royal Cumberland Lodge No 41 of Bath we have the following and exceptional wording: 'the trowel is used for the noble and glorious purpose of spreading the cement of Brotherhood and affection which unites us in a sacred bond as a Society of Brethren amongst whom no contention should ever exist'. This, I know, is still wording that is used in some

American lodges and is clearly not neglected there. It surely explains the use of the trowel for 'Charity' and once explained seems natural to Masons.

It also suggests the origin of one kind of 'fire' at table.

What should also be known is that still in some Irish lodges the trowel is the implement presented to the Candidate at the north-east corner when he is asked if he has anything to give in the cause of charity. When you realise that this was also the implement used in ancient working to be presented to the naked left breast of the candidate on entry, the use of it as the trowel points to his heart reminding him of the need for charity, is even more telling.

What is no less important is the fact that the trowel's use by the newest apprentice at last fully explains those otherwise peculiar words: 'Monarchs themselves have not thought it derogatory to their dignity to exchange the Sceptre for the Gavel'. Oh! Isn't that correct? But surely kings would exchange their sign of rule in the world for the sign of rule in the lodge? But, no! What the ritual is saying is much more searching. An earthly ruler is not ashamed to assume the role of the newest and most junior of all Masons and to hold the trowel at the lodge's door. How could we neglect such important teaching? Well, it may interest you to know that somewhere else in England they don't. In the oldest lodge in Norwich they still give the latest Apprentice a silver trowel to wear.

I have said enough to make my point, I believe, and I am sure that as you gather on this or any other lodge evening you will begin to ask yourselves: What else have we neglected to make this Masonry of ours less fascinating than it ought to be? I would love to pursue the matter with you but it is time to call a halt. I can only wish for you further worthwhile hours as you discover the hidden, because neglected, recesses of nature and science.

UNKNOWN PARTS OF THE TRACING BOARDS

The title of this paper may perhaps surprise some of those who have gathered to receive it. Surely, it might be said, the tracing boards are there for us all to see, there are lectures available (even if they are not always or regularly given) which explain the boards, and most of us have already lived with them sufficiently for them to be familiar if not well-known. How then can any parts of them be 'unknown'? Well, it is my belief that there are such unknown parts and enquiry of many Masons on every continent has confirmed me in saying that lack of knowledge about them exists. It even reveals itself when we seek to determine which tracing boards that are presently used we are going to examine.

Would you believe, for example, that not every board from the earliest Harris board of the 1820s to the present has the same following features:

- 1° The symbols on the ladder rising from the pedestal;
the design for the three pillars;
- the kind of trestle board or drawing plan;
- the design on the front of the pedestal.

- 2° The number of people shown in the picture;
the nature of the chambers above or below the stairs;
the number of steps on the staircase;
the place where the great pillars stand.
- 3° The placing of a sprig of acacia;
the intimation, or otherwise, of a grave;
the figures on the coffin top;
the design of the dormer over the doorway, if there is one.
- This mere recital of variations, and these are not the only ones as you will shortly see, must convince any student of tracing boards in the post-1820 period that there are ample unknown parts to be acquainted with.

So that we may focus on the same design I have chosen the *Emulation* trio.

The First Degree Tracing Board

At first glance this picture may appear to present few surprises but before I come to the three items that I would suggest are 'unknown' I must point out some peculiarities of this design. The pedestal is marked with a circle having a point at its centre but the parallel lines that are customary when this figure is displayed are not shown. Moreover, the point within a circle is surely a symbol referred to in the 3° and yet it appears here in the 1°. Similarly we note the square, level and plumb-rule which are properly associated with the 2°. There is no rough ashlar, unless the stone 'mound', with a small maul or gavel upon it, is meant to represent that item, but we do have a squared ashlar and one with a cramp or 'lewis' in it. This too has definite 3° links, though the presence of the chisel could be said to refer to the 1° working tools. Lastly, the trestle board in front of the pedestal has no drawing on it.

Turning to the features that I suggest are wholly or comparatively unknown we have (a) the mosaic pavement; (b) a

fourth symbol on the ladder; and (c) the four tassels at the corners. Let me deal with these in turn.

The mosaic pavement

Masons generally are familiar with the explanation of this feature as representing the diverse character of the life we lead, with its dark and light periods, its difficulties and achievements, its promises and disappointments. But that is explaining its symbolism. What its origin was and why it has been deemed so important and essential from the earliest use, not only of tracing boards but of lodge carpet decoration, is not explained. It is that which might well be termed 'unknown'.

Freemasonry in Britain has always been associated in some way with the Temple of King Solomon. The lodge room itself represents some part of that structure; the Master himself stands for that monarch; incidents in the course of completing the building of the temple are referred to in the several degrees; and in the consecration of every new Masonic lodge, direct connection with the temple hallowing is always invoked. It is therefore not surprising that in each of the three tracing boards, and not only in the 1^o, there should be something that directly relates to that edifice. That 'something' is the squared black and white flooring. The reason why there is such a connection is as follows.

In the middle of the 16th century, after Henry VIII had at last reluctantly accepted the need for a Bible in the 'vulgar tongue', that is, in English, new translations of the scriptures began to flourish. In 1560, after the short reign of Queen Mary, there was published a Bible that was called the Geneva version, because the translators of it had been exiles in that city when it was being produced. One of the new features of this particular Bible was its illustrations, the first such to appear in any Bible in England. These illustrations were all, of course, in black and

white, since no printing press for some centuries to come could produce the coloured pictures of the earlier monastic manuscripts.

What is important for our purpose is to note that whenever the Temple of Solomon or even Solomon's house or throne is shown in these pages, the floor is always depicted as made up of black and white chequered squares. Thus was born the 17th-century idea that this was the correct indication of the Temple of Solomon. You might give it medieval towers, characters in medieval dress, and even a long Christian-type altar, but you made sure that your readers knew it was the Temple of Solomon by the black and white flooring.

When the designers of the first floorcloths or floor drawings, and then tracing boards, for Masons had to depict the temple or a reference to it, there was no alternative. The mosaic pavement was the only option. It was called 'Mosaic' because in that same Bible the precursor of the temple was the tabernacle in the wilderness built by Moses' command on God's instructions. The floor of that same holy meeting place was also shown as black and white squares. The temple mosaic pavement was born. It is with us still.

The key on the ladder

The number of symbols shown on the ladder here is itself a generally unknown feature. Whilst some versions have the figures of angels who are ascending or descending, as in the original story from the Bible of Jacob's Ladder, it is much more usual for there to be only three items, though these can vary considerably in position and form.

In this design we have a fourth symbol—the key—placed between the cross of faith and the anchor of hope. These two latter virtues, joined by the chalice of 'charity' at the apex, reflect what was, on the oldest tracing boards, a three-runged

ladder. It is indeed these three virtues that are explained in the lecture that was written to accompany this same board. What, however, is the point of the Key, which is not explained?

The answer to this question begins with something very old in terms of Craft ritual. In the *Edinburgh Register House MS* of 1696, as well as other texts of that period, we have the following:

Q: Which is the key of your lodge?

A: A weel hung tongue.

Many of the early texts expanded this key/tongue connection and added that the key was lodged in a 'bone box' (which meant the mouth) and that a true Mason kept this box securely locked. It was precisely this idea that is illustrated in the 'Masonic' opera by Mozart, *Die Zaubeflöte*, when the garrulous Papageno is subjected to the indignity of having a padlock clamped to his lips to keep him silent.

In the *Sloane MS* of c 1700 we have the key explained in terms of a phrase that has now become part of the 1° pass word:

Q: What is the Keys of your Lodge Doore made of?

A: It is not made of Wood Stone Iron or Steel or any sort of mettle but the tongue of a good report behind a brother's back as well as before his face.

If with this first mention of 'free and of good report' we can recognise the key as related to the 1°, we are also reminded that in the Charge to the Initiate we use the words: 'Still, however, as a Freemason, there are other excellences of character to which your attention may be peculiarly and forcibly directed: among the foremost of these are *secrecy* . . .' and you know the rest. Moreover, as the three other virtues on the rungs are of scriptural provenance so we ought also to remember the biblical injunction: 'Let not your right hand know what your left hand

doeth’—the discretion in one’s charitable dealings is also the key to a true Freemasonry.

The four tassels

These apparently discrete attachments to the board are often thought to be explained by relating them to the four virtues also mentioned in the 1° Charge: prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice. That, as with the pavement, is fine for explaining the symbol but does not explain its origin and additional importance.

In first considering the erection of any edifice, the architect had to select a site and then mark out the line for the foundations. This he did by fixing pegs at the four corners and attaching a cord or string from one peg to another. Thus the area was enclosed and the line of the walls determined. Where the cord or string was tied around each peg there was created a knot that was later formalised and became the tassel at each corner. In forming their ‘lodge’, the architect-masons quite literally established its dimensions by the lines and tassels that they could see. In exactly the same way the dimensions of the lodge are still defined by the lines of the board and the tassels at its corners. This is why, when a new lodge is due to be consecrated, the order is given at one part of that ceremony, ‘Let the board be uncovered’, and the tracing board, with its tassels, is laid bare in the centre of the floor and is then duly ‘dedicated’ by the pouring of corn, wine and oil upon it—for it is thus representing the new lodge itself. It is still at that point without human members, who have yet to be themselves purged with salt before being constituted as the latest ‘Lodge No’.

So significant are the tassels considered to be as defining the limits of the lodge that in older English and Welsh halls the tassels are hung from the four corners of the ceiling, thus ensuring that everyone present is ‘within the lodge’. Otherwise,

with the tassels only on the mosaic carpet, it might be said that the members were sitting around, but outside, the lodge.

In the USA and parts of Canada, the lodge is actually defined as the modest area of mosaic 'carpet' with tassels that lies in the middle of the room westward of the central pedestal or altar. No one may cross or step onto that area which is the fixed replica of the consecrated 'lodge'. To emphasise this point, I have seen on that continent tassels actually drawn out in relief from each corner of the carpet so as to emphasise its presence. In view of what was said earlier about the origin of the mosaic carpet, it is also interesting to remember that it was tassels which were worn by the priests in the service of God in the Temple of Solomon. Such then are some unknown parts of the First Degree Tracing Board.

The Second Degree Tracing Board

Like its predecessor, this board may at first glance appear straightforward and without any peculiarities. Yet a more careful examination reveals that its arrangement shows three distinct chambers, a lower, a middle and an upper, and the latter is fenced in with a lattice which speaks clearly to any Mark Mason about the payment of wages. That, after all, is what these side storerooms in the original Temple of Solomon were partly created for and throughout the 18th century we have rituals which refer to the fact that Apprentices went to receive their wages in a lower, the Fellow-Crafts in a middle, and the Master Masons in an upper chamber.

We might also notice that above the curtained entrance to the middle chamber, and under the inner arch, appear certain Hebrew characters that are not normally revealed until we have completed the 3° in the Royal Arch, whilst beneath that sacred Tetragrammaton, representing the Deity, there is a dove in a singularly evocative form. It is not like that usually seen at the

Ark of Noah or on the deacons' wands but in medieval pictures of the Trinity. Above the outer arch of this central area there are also the cherubim usually associated with the Sanctum Sanctorum of the 3°. Let us, however, turn to three even more 'unknown' parts of this board.

The steps of the staircase

Has it ever occurred to you to ask why there should be '15 or more steps' on the staircase in the 2°? Pragmatists might say that it is because we refer to the symbolism of 3, 5, and 7 steps in the ritual and these add up to the required number. The answer, I believe, is much more interesting than that. It has, once more, a reference back to the temple at Jerusalem.

Medieval legend included a story called 'The Presentation in the Temple' that was actually performed as one of the cycle of mystery plays in the City of Coventry. This performance showed Mary, the child of Joachim and Anna and the later mother of Jesus, being brought as a young girl to be blessed and having to mount a ceremonial stairway made up of 15 steps which led to the High Priest, who sat on a throne at the top of them in the inner temple. There are manuscript and stained glass representations of this interesting event and in some of these pictures the stairs are even divided up into stages of 3, 5 and 7. What is more, we are given the very words the actor representing Mary had to say when the stairs were being climbed. I cannot reproduce all the verses in this paper but the following are strangely significant for their influence on later Masonic practice. It should be recalled that in Latin *gradus* meant both 'step' and 'degree'. The girl stops three times as she mounts:

That we shall be savyd all thus . . .

The fyrst degre, gostly applyed,

It is holy desrye with God to be.

In trobyl to God I have cryed . . . [the 1° Charge?]
The secunde is stody, with meke inqyssyon veryly
How I shall have knowynge of Gods wylle . . .

[The south-east Charge?]

The thrydde is gladnes in minde in hope to be
That we shall be sayvd all thus . . .

[The 3° experience?]

What struck me even more when I first read this Coventry play was that when the maiden reached the top of the stairs, the High Priest reminds her of the Ten Commandments and then tells her that each day she is to serve God with prayer, devote some of her time to manual labour, and take 'a reasonable tyme to fede'. An interesting direction before she is admitted into the temple.

The location of the staircase

As I became more and more familiar with the arrangement of the Temple of Solomon and then tried to relate that to our ritual it increasingly puzzled me why there seemed to be some discrepancy between them. Why, for instance, is there an opening on the south side of the temple (with the two great pillars that ought to be at the east entrance) when there is no mention in the Bible or commentaries of any such opening in an outer wall? Moreover, if the opening is to the south on our board, then why does the staircase run south to west when we take a candidate north to east? Even if the pillars show that the opening is actually the temple's porchway or entrance, then why does the staircase run east to south when we do something else? It seems odd and unnecessarily confusing. Is there something we do not know? The answer is yes, there is.

What the Bible tells us is that there was an opening in the south wall of the Holy Place and that, of course, led to the chambers on three floors at the side of the temple. Some

versions of the 2° tracing board actually show this and then we see something very different. The staircase then leads from the north side of the bottom floor of the side chambers up in a true spiral stairway towards the east end of the middle floor. We are actually going in the very same direction as we perform in our ritual. If the staircase began at the wall where the lowest arches are and then spiralled round as it does, the same effect would be achieved. But that is only understood when you know how the original access to the various side-chambers was explained in the Bible. What we tend to do is to rely too much on what our later designers thought was right rather than going to the proper sources.

An ear of corn near to a fall of water

It would be a strange tracing board for this degree which did not today carry a scene incorporating these two features. Yet for a long period in my Masonry there were two questions that dogged me: how could one word signify two such different things and why was such a word used to protect the crossing of the River Jordan? I now know the answer.

The earliest Semitic word we know for 'an ear of corn' was spelt *s-b-l-t* which explains why in Arabic, Ephraimite and earlier Hebrew the word was pronounced either *sibolet* or *seblit*. The early Semitic word for a watercourse or the 'way' the water ran was *sh-b-l* which became the early Hebrew word *shebil*. Somehow, and scholars still do not know why or when, the speakers of non-Ephraimite Hebrew began to use the same word 'an ear of corn' and 'a channel of water' and called it *shiblot*. In case you find this surprising, may I remind you that we do the same in English. The word 'shift' can mean 'a garment', a 'movement of earth', a 'period of work', and even a 'typewriter movement'. It is only the context that helps to clarify the meaning. The answer to my first query is now possible. The

word does not *mean* ‘an ear of corn near to a fall of water’ but is ‘depicted’ as such because the Hebrew word could mean either of these items separately.

What is also fascinating is that in Modern Arabic the original old word *sh-b-l* meaning ‘a way’ has now become *sabil* so that in Islamic practice the word *sabil* means ‘a way of charity’. The word also means ‘a fountain’ and this fits perfectly with its other meaning for there is no greater act of charity in the desert than to provide water for a traveller on his way.

We can now begin to see the suitability of the word used in this degree. The Hebrew guards of the water crossing ask the approaching Ephraimite travellers for the word that means ‘I would pass by the water way’ (*sabil*) but the guards call it *shebil*, which small variation discovers their country of origin. What you should also know is that on pre-1813 tracing boards there is displayed, beside the ear of corn, a bridge over a flowing river (the Jordan) that could thus be guarded. There even developed a Red Cross degree called the ‘Jordan Pass’.

The Third Degree Tracing Board

The only thing that is distinctive about this board is that the entrance to the Sanctum Sanctorum is formed by a series of columns rather than a simple doorway. The writing in Hebrew above it is not always present and the words there translated as ‘Holiness to the Lord’ are usually associated with the Ark of the Covenant rather than with the doorway to it. Perhaps the artist felt that this was its most convenient place. Let us however turn one more time to the more ‘unknown’ features.

The cypher writing

If there is a mystery about anything in modern-day Freemasonry it is the presence of, and yet the silence about, this cypher writing. As I have recently written about it at length elsewhere I

must avoid making this paper too lengthy, but it is a constant surprise to me that Master Masons readily accept this facet of the 3° Board without ever being given any information upon it. That it was most commonly associated with the Mark Master degree for over a century and is now only really preserved on that degree's tracing board and this one is itself a mystery. Let us at least make three brief comments upon it so that it is not wholly unknown.

First, it took its rise from the employment of a simple arrangement of crossed parallel lines in which the angles or sides of the spaces thus created represented letters of the alphabet. It was thus used in private, especially diplomatic, correspondence from at least the late 15th century and one user of it was no less a person than Cardinal Wolsey.

Secondly, dots, diagonal lines, and even the diamond and the swastika, were further employed to diversify and extend the cypher use. It had been used in Service intelligence and it may have been in such a setting that Duncerley, as a naval officer, first encountered it. He introduced it to the Chapter of Friendship in Portsmouth.

Thirdly, Dr Oliver was to reveal several forms of the alphabet in his book, *The Origin of the Royal Arch*, but it was Bro Haunch in his *AQC* 75 article on Tracing Boards who explained the Harris board's cyphers. They read: T (H A B A L 3000) C, and below M B. Now at least we know.

The three 5s

These figures are also displayed but few if any know why they are there or to what they allude. They are in fact mentioned, if only in passing, by the person narrating the traditional history of this degree, and then it is in two connections. We hear first of the 15 trusty Fellowcrafts who were appointed to make diligent search for the Master Architect—and it is here that I would

remind you why the tools of the 3° are those of an Architect and not a working mason—and hence the division into three parties of 5, going (and here notice the different orientation of this board) north, east and south. Later we are told that the Master was buried in a grave 5 feet from north and south and 5 feet or more perpendicular (persons then being buried upright to await the general resurrection). Thus we have the explanation of otherwise puzzling items.

What should also be said is that on some boards the 5th letter of the Hebrew alphabet replaces these Western numerals. The connections with 5 are thus retained, but now we have a further triangle made up of the letters that refer to the eternal attributes of the Almighty.

The parted curtain of the sanctuary

If the cypher characters constitute the major mystery of this board, then the parted curtain certainly hints at another. We know to what sacred portion of the temple these curtains gave admittance and the words above the colonnaded doorway tell us of the Ark but, apart from recognising the right of the High Priest to enter there 'and that only once a year', it is difficult to see why in this degree there should be any indication of truths yet to be revealed, when even the Master Architect himself could not be buried in the Holy Place and certainly not in this place of divine darkness and silence. If the veil is to be lifted, then it is in another place and at another time in Masonry that such is to happen.

Could it be that here the Master Mason is being beckoned to yet one more step that he ought to take and that he will then enter the most Holy place of all where God in glory reigns? Could it even be that here there is the remnant of that earlier Christian Masonry in which, after the slaying and raising of another Master, the veil of the temple was torn aside and the

Sanctum Sanctorum laid open to view? That is something we have still to know. It leaves us at least realising that despite all our familiarity with these tracing boards there are still unknown parts of them to pursue.

WHAT IS THAT IN YOUR CEILING?

(In 1993 I was made an honorary member of the oldest lodge in York. This is the first of the lectures I gave describing their hall near the Minister.)

How familiar are you with the building in which you come so regularly to take part in ceremonial Freemasonry? Are you familiar in the sense that you need to have nothing explained because you have made yourself so well acquainted with its treasures and its features that no longer does it hold any more mysteries for you? Or could it be that you are so familiar with it that you just take it for granted and have never enquired about some of its parts, either because they do not seem to have anything to do with your normal activities or because you are too busy with more mundane matters to bother about unusual corners?

Coming to this building as I do, as still a comparative outsider, there is little danger of those things affecting me, and what I offer you here is only the first of what is to be a series of reflections to help me appreciate the very distinctive temple in which I have been permitted to become a lodge and chapter

member. What I hope will emerge as a result of these reflections is a new and revealing approach to Old York Masonry.

The subject of the reflection this evening is what is above our heads. There, at the centre of the blue ceiling is the common-enough letter G, but around it is a circular band that contains certain strange figures. We call it the Progression of the Zodiac. Let me hasten to say that this is by no means unique in Masonic buildings. You will find the feature in the halls at Malton and Scarborough and I could take you to Dorset, Sussex, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire, and Lancashire, where you would discover the same arrangement. We are not, therefore, looking at this feature as if it were special because it is exceptional. We should examine it because it has clearly been a normal part of Freemasonry and because understanding it here means that we can explain it to those who puzzle over it elsewhere.

The first question that might reasonably be asked by anyone who saw the design which is above our heads, and who realised what it is, might well be this: 'Just what are men, such as Freemasons claim themselves to be, trying to prove by having such doubtful, if not downright undesirable, emblems in the very centre of their main meeting place? Could it be that, just as many critics have thought and dared to suggest, Freemasonry is at heart a secretly occult and magical affair which any right-minded person ought to keep away from?'

Alternatively, is Freemasonry so shallow and meaningless a practice that it is no better than a matter of following the horoscope guidelines in the tabloid press? And if—but surely this cannot be the case—if those who meet in such a building as this should deny these unworthy or undesirable aspects of the zodiac and yet cannot adequately explain this feature's origin, purpose or place in their affairs, then what are we to make of their integrity or competence? If these men are sensible and morally upright members of society, then what are we to think

of their reliability as citizens when they are not even aware of the auspices under which they gather—and have gathered for a century and more?

Those, I suggest, are perfectly proper questions for people to put to us, or to put to one another out of our hearing, especially now that the general public has access to these rooms, however infrequently.

Yet even more importantly we ought to be asking these questions of ourselves. How can I, a professed member of a religious body that follows the teaching of Scripture, which frowns on witchcraft and the wrongly occult teaching of a pagan society, bear to meet in such a setting and still hope to set an example for others to follow? Each of us doubtless could imagine similar doubts and queries that might arise in our minds as we begin to reflect on having a zodiac permanently in our midst.

If I am right and those really are fair comments by others or within ourselves then what do we do to start dealing with them? It seems to me that there are three things we have to do. First we have to understand properly just what the zodiac is. Second, we have to understand why it has a place in Freemasonry; and third, we need to know in particular why it is here at Duncombe Place. It is to those issues that I now want to turn.

The zodiac didn't just happen. A recent book by a friend of mine deals with the whole growth of the study of the heavens in the days of the Babylonian and Assyrian Empires. Let me quote one or two sentences. 'Detailed analysis of the astrological tablets in the library at Nineveh quickly revealed two important facts: first, that astrology developed over a long period of time . . . and second that the astrology found in these tablets was not concerned with the fate of individuals (i.e. horoscopes) but with the affairs of society. Moreover the zodiacal signs are absent.' In other words to equate astrology and the zodiac is not correct.

How then did the concept of the zodiac arise? Let me try to explain.

So that the rulers of the early Middle Eastern kingdoms could rule effectively they needed an accurate calendar. The first astrologers sought to provide this by literally 'watching the stars' and reading what they saw, which is why they have the name *astero-logoi*. Yet even in the Middle East, sandstorms, dust clouds and even sometimes rain clouds might conceal the stars at just the moments that mattered most. So they had to think of a further way of getting the information that would enable them to give the kings what they needed. They had to acquire an understanding of the regular movements of the Sun and Moon across the heavens so that even if those important planets were obscured their position in the sky could be ascertained. That meant working out mathematical 'paths' for those major stars and setting those cyclical movements down as reliable 'laws'. That is why these 'wise men' now became not only 'star-gazers' but star-lawyers or *astero-nomoi* (astronomers). It is in connection with their efforts to discover these Sun- and Moon-paths, regardless of whether they could be physically seen, that we come to the formulation of the zodiac. The zodiac was part of the process involved in trying to establish a plan of the heavens on which to base calculations.

How did that work? Despite their still fairly primitive time-keeping, these star-gazers eventually arranged the star-clusters or constellations into four groups and recorded them on tablets which later became instruments called 'star-takers' or *astero-labes* (astrolabes). Originally these were circular tables divided into 12 segments with three concentric circles, and in the 36 spaces thus provided they placed a separate star and gave it a number. Before too long they had deduced that these numbers related to the length of a day and then other calculations followed. Eventually they worked out that the Moon passed

through a belt 12 degrees wide and the Sun and other planets also moved in this same 'path'—the Ancients' *Star Trek*.

The 36 divisions were first reduced to 18 and finally to 12 and it was then that these 12 stable and basic guides to the movement of the heavenly bodies—the foundation of modern astronomy—were given names. Tablets began to record the zodiacal placing of the important planets and anyone who wishes to do so can see the largest collection of these in our own British Museum. The zodiac marks the entry into astrology and astronomy of mathematics and calculation. Its use by the ancients for birth-charts was a by-product. Its main contribution was as a more precise method of describing the heavens at any given time and that, by any standard, was a step in pure science. The astrologers had gained a much greater understanding of the celestial cycles upon which a reliable calendar of the year could be based.

If that helps to explain how the idea of the zodiac came into being and where it was initially meant to assist the life of society, it still does not explain why the name and its various components were selected. Let us now try to understand both of these elements.

The name is of course derived from the Greek language and thus reveals that the zodiac, as we are accustomed to view it, arose when the Greek scholars began to interest themselves in Babylonian astrology. We know, for example, that Pythagoras first went to study in Egypt but was captured by the Persians, who had in turn also conquered Babylon and Assyria. Indeed it was whilst Pythagoras was in Babylon that he was taught by a famous Zoroastrian scholar and finally composed his great work on 'The Musical Harmony of the Universe'. Pythagoras would have known all about the zodiac.

The word 'Zoo' is familiar to us all, even if it is not as popular today as it certainly was 50 years ago. The word means

‘a place where living creatures exist’, for *Zoe* is the Greek word for ‘Life’. From that word we get *zoidiakos* which means ‘creature-like’ or ‘animal-like’ and hence the Latin word *zodiacus* which gave us the English word. Yet the word *Zoidiakos* was an adjective and needs a noun to go with it. The whole phrase was really *kuklon zoidiakon* which means ‘a circle of living creatures’ and that of course exactly describes what is on the ceiling over our heads. It is a band or path of very active human or animal-like creatures moving round in a circular fashion, hence *progression*. It is this feature that can still be seen drawn round the celestial globe that adorns many an ancient lodge room, or even on a small globe that sometimes caps the pillar on the Junior Warden’s pedestal. The presence of the zodiac in Freemasonry is still as alive as the figures that comprise it. It has a rightly honoured place in our Old York traditions.

Before we come to that, however, we must tackle the matter of why the figures of the zodiac are the ones that they are. With so scientific an origin it is to be expected that they are not there by whim or chance. The answer as far as the names and various figures is concerned is really quite simple. The titles we give them today are those that were applied to them by the Greeks who kept only five of the original Babylonian names. The reason for this difference is again very simple when you remember that looking at the night sky from around the Aegean Sea is different to looking at it from the area of the Persian Gulf—at least if you are using only your ordinary eyesight. The original descriptions were those as seen from Babylon and the more clinical and precise Greek ‘star-gazers’ decided that other shapes, especially related to their own myths and legends, were appropriate.

Moreover, it was the Greeks who later discovered that even the constellations changed their positions over time and that this

accounted for differing views of them. The final and most decisive change in any appreciation of the zodiac came, of course, with the discovery of the telescope by Galileo, when the hitherto comparatively simply sky-pattern was peopled with a great new influx of hitherto unknown bodies. It was then that astronomy began to diverge from astrology.

Why the figures of the zodiac came in the order that they did was because that is how the Babylonians first saw them appear through the year. What was later discerned and considered as important by the early speculative Freemasons was that the creatures represented in turn the elements of fire, earth, air and water, three times over. It was this kind of knowledge, as well as their ancient connection with the succession of the seasons and their importance to the first calendar and clock makers, that ensured constant Masonic interest in the zodiac. It had nothing to do with natal charts or horoscopes. The connection of Freemasonry with this 'ancient scientific aid' was on another plane.

This is seen by two quotations that I now want to share with you. The first is found in Richard Carlile's *Manual of Freemasonry* that was first produced about 1823. In addition to the extensive rituals of the period which he reproduced, he also wrote some commentaries on what he regarded as the pros and cons of the Masonic contribution to Man's well-being. For him the most valuable of all human virtues was Truth. At one stage he wrote this:

But for planetary motion, there could have been no division of time. The relations of the sun to the planets and fixed stars, make up all the natural divisions of time; such as the day, the month, the year, and the corresponding seasons. The day is marked by the motion of the earth on its own axis. The month (the lunar measurement) by the

appearances of the moon; and the calendar (the solar or sun's measurement) by the grouping of the stars into twelve divisions, which are called the Zodiac.

Make no mistake. Whilst there were some aspects of our Fraternity that Carlile criticised, having the zodiac in our halls was not one of them. For him that was a mark of the truth of things.

The other quotation will, I hope, be of even more interest and perhaps surprise. During the last two years a very determined effort by one of the Freemasons in Newcastle upon Tyne has led to the complete re-ordering and refurbishment of the Provincial Library at Neville Hall in that City. As a result of many hours happy research there, I have been able to lay my hands on the earliest extant versions of the Harodim working that was prevalent in that area between about 1730 and 1800. What is important for us is that it is strongly believed that much of that working either derived from or was paralleled by Old York working. What I am therefore going to read to you might in the same or some similar form have actually have been given in this city and alongside the emblem that is over our heads tonight. It is an Astronomical Lecture applicable to Master Masons. (Let me hasten to add that that does not apply to Master Masons today). Here it is, or at least part of it, for the whole would take about 20 minutes to deliver.

Q: How many of the 12 signs of the Zodiac are peculiarly applicable to our valuable secrets in the M.M. degree?

A: Seven: viz. Castor and Pollux (or Gemini), Leo (or the Lion), Virgo (or the Virgin Astrea), Libra (or the Scales), Capricorn (or the Goat), Pisces (or the Fish) and Apelles (the Painter).

Q: Please to explain them?

A: Castor and Pollux loved each other so tenderly that they never were asunder . . . a true emblem of brotherly love; and as such used to be drawn on the Apron of every newly initiated Brother. This act of fraternal affection occasioned their being metamorphosed and turned into stars and made a constellation . . . being the lively images of the twins belonging to our G.M.H.Ab. . .

Leo: in the reign of King Solomon a Lion ran through the streets of Jerusalem spreading everywhere the utmost terror and dismay. The wife of Solomon's chief Architect, with her infant in her arms, dropped it in her fright when it was immediately seized upon by the Lion. . . she threw herself upon her knees before the animal and implored with all the energy and expression of a Mother in despair. The Lion stopped, fixed his eyes upon her, placed the infant unharmed on the ground and departed. . .

Virgo: she is represented as a virgin with a stern and majestic countenance holding a pair of scales in one hand and a sword in the other.

Brethren, I will not quote more for fear of wearying you, but now I trust you can look up with confidence to what is above your heads and hold your heads up high. The zodiac is a rightful part of our heritage.

SURPRISES IN SCOTTISH LODGES

It would not be a surprise at all if, as a result of the many visits that I have already made in these last few years to hundreds of Masonic halls in England and Wales, I did not find that there was ‘little new under the sun’ and this might even have been expected in the ancient and noble realm of Scotland. As one friend said to me, ‘Surely the mine of discovery is at last running out and you are going to be hard put to it to find seams of worthwhile material in future visits?’ The answer in this case, after three long visits in three separate periods to the Craft lodge rooms and Royal Arch Chapter meeting places of Scotland, is that I never cease to be surprised by things unusual and unique, and often when one least expects them. If I can interest you on this occasion by preparing you for some of the treasures that will appear in full in the books about to be published and revealing our Northern Masonic Kingdom then I will be satisfied.

My first surprise was soon borne in upon me when, during my first tour, I found three halls *all* claiming to be the oldest continuously-used ones in the country. I had expected, and found, that there were still smoldering embers of the fiery debate as to which was the oldest *lodge* in Scotland—that is, between

Kilwinning, Edinburgh, Melrose and Aberdeen—but the claims for the oldest *premises* did jolt me. It even gave me problems about the contents page of my book and I hope that what I have come up with will, with the close cooperation of the then Grand Secretary in Edinburgh, smooth all hackles. We English, after all, have to be careful when treading on such hallowed ground.

I intend therefore to speak briefly at the outset about these four contending parties and their lodge rooms, and then take you on a scattered trip to six others. That, I am sure, will surprise you enough.

I begin with Lodge No 0 (Yes, number zero) just to the north of Ayr. To find oneself at last in front of the red sandstone building that houses this ancient lodge is itself a surprise, and not least when you read the words across the facade: ‘Mother Lodge Kilwinning’. Not a banner but carved in stone. To stand then, in its richly endowed museum, to try on one of the members’ famous Kilwinning aprons that are still in use and which have no emblems or decoration whatsoever (as in operative days) and then to stand at the pedestal that is used for the obligations, and is almost in the centre of the floor, is to have more surprises. On the top of the present pedestal (quite separate from the Master’s or, as they say, Right Worshipful Master’s, desk) is an engraved plaque. It reads, in translation from the Latin words it bears: ‘Under the leadership and guidance of Archibald, the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Eglinton, and his deputy, John Allen, etc. etc., the ancient Mother Lodge of Kilwinning was rebuilt. The Foundation stone was laid 24 March 1779 in the Masonic Year 5779.’ You will notice ‘re-built’.

Here, you suddenly discover, is where the present Assistant Grand Master of England stood when he was initiated by his father, the previous Earl of Eglinton. Their estate, not surprisingly, is not very far away. Here too stood the young

man, earlier than them both, who organised the famous, or disastrous, Eglinton Tournament in 1839. It may not surprise you to learn that the books about to appear on Scotland's halls are to have a foreword by the present Earl of Eglinton and Winton who will, we now know, soon become the next Grand Master Mason of his native land.

Mary's Chapel No 1 (The Lodge of Edinburgh) is unswerving in its claim to be the premier lodge of all Scotland. Its premises within are very distinctive but it has an unpretentious external face in a rear street that runs parallel with the renowned George Street, where stand the headquarters of the Grand Lodge of Scotland itself. We are here in what is still called the 'New Town' of Edinburgh though it was built in the 18th century.

The claim of this 'lodge' is so strong that it is written in Scottish native script on the ceiling of their old meeting place at the top of the building. The extract in question is from the Schaw Statutes of 1598 which were happily re-discovered in 1859 after a long and hidden existence in—of all places, would you believe—the archives of the Earls of Eglinton. In part they state:

1598. The Statutes and observances to be obeyed by all the master masons within this realm.

1599. Edinburgh shall be in all times coming as of before the first and principal lodge of Scotland.

The minute books of this lodge are still complete from 1598, which makes the celebrations of the Grand Lodge of England over 275 years seem quite jejune. I find it still very moving in this hall when, at the close of a lodge meeting, the Right Worshipful Master and his Worshipful Wardens move from their chairs to the floor of the lodge and all present form a rough circle, so that the lodge may literally be closed 'on the level with

all true brethren'. Having closed all too briefly here, we must turn south again.

The Melrose Hall belongs to the Lodge of Melrose St John No 1² (or No 1*bis*), which means 'equal to and twinning Lodge No 1'. The ancestry here is of minutes from 1594 continuously and a tradition that there has been an operative lodge here since 1136, founded to build the Abbey of Melrose for King David—of Scotland, of course. Two surprises here are the fact that this lodge parades publicly every St John's Day, whatever the winter weather, with a band to lead their flag and the officers of the lodge, the latter all duly clothed and carrying their Right Worshipful Master's and Worshipful Wardens' batons, their Bible (a Geneva or 'Breeches' Bible, of course) and all wearing hats. They process three times round the Market Cross close to their hall and then head off for the Abbey grounds where they thread their way through the ruins, assisted by the letting off of fireworks and with pitch torches blazing, before they return to the hall for the closing of the lodge and some well-earned warming refreshment.

Nearly a century ago the *Southern Reporter* stated: 'The proceedings were somewhat marred by the heavy rain and some senseless cracking of squibs prevented the bulk of the people from hearing the remarks of the Grand Master.' In case you think that this latter gentleman was a visitor for the occasion from Edinburgh or London, let me surprise you by explaining that until 1891 this lodge acted as a Grand Lodge which chartered other new lodges, especially south of the Clyde. It thus had a presiding officer called 'The Grand Master' and not just Right Worshipful Master.

The other surprise, though by no means the last, is the presence on the walls of the upstairs lodge room of a framed document entitled 'A Panegyric upon the Excellent Art of Masons' by James Donaldson. It was written in 1711 and was

gifted to the lodge by Bro John Mein in 1721. A few of its sentiments are worth recording here.

Another thing they have all Arts do lack,
In which no other with them doth partake;
Namely that house to which the Tribes did go,
To sacrifice and pray in Times of old,
As by the Sacred Scriptures we are told,
Figur'd the Temple of this Glorious One,
Who is himself called the Chief Corner Stone,
And sure Foundation of the Spiritual Dome
Of living Stones together join'd, in whom
They're knit together in one Frame Compleat,
In him they rest, in him they all do meet.

In Aberdeen we come to the ancient lodge which has the number 1³ (or *1ter*), which means 'equal to No 1 but the third partner'. To enter their Hall after admiring the superb granite facade—and it is, after all, called 'The Granite City'—is immediately to have a surprise. There in front of you is a huge horizontal 12-foot-diameter representation of the zodiac in full coloured marble inlay. The effect is stunning, and then you also notice that at the edges of the chequered flooring around this circle the corners all contain not tassels or squares and compasses but triple taus. Though I cannot go into this matter in a Craft lodge I should tell the Royal Arch Companions present that these two forms, the zodiac and the triple tau, have very close linkage in those Scottish chapters that lie outside the district between Scotland and England known as the Borders.

You then lift your eyes from the floor and see before you a massive Austrian oak fireplace with an overmantel that reaches up to the ceiling, some 20 feet from the ground. Above the marble surround of the iron grate are four rectangular panels that bear words in the ancient Doric speech or dialect of this land of Scotland. They read: SEN VORD IS THRALL / AND THOCHT IS FRE /

KEEP VEILL THY TONGE / I CONSEILL THEE, which may be roughly translated: ‘Since your word is given and your mind is free, keep watch over your tongue is my advice’.

There is another vast surprise in this hall for those who are Royal Arch Masons, but this is not the place for this underground feature to be described adequately, even though I have been fortunate in being given permission for the first time to describe such Royal Arch items. The forthcoming books will be the place for this to be explained and fully illustrated.

I pass next to the Lodge Dalkeith Kilwinning No 10. This lodge, too, is very insistent on its having the most ancient continuity in its meeting place. Its hall is certainly a most fascinating building, with ancient Masons Marks re-positioned on its passage ceilings by modern decorators. In the temple there is a huge white stone statue of St Andrew, showing him spread-eagled on his cross and dominating the north wall. Yet the most surprising feature of this hall is the fact that the Senior Warden sits in a chair that is almost a third of the way down the room from the west wall. There are even six rows of chairs behind him. When I asked why he was not nearer to the present entrance of the temple in the west, the answer given was:

Ah, but you see his chair is where it has always been since this hall was built. A century ago we took down the old west wall that was right behind him, and to make more space we incorporated the room that was behind that wall. This gave us what we wanted but the Warden has always sat there and there he stays.

A further surprise in the hall is that in the south and north walls, on a level with the Senior Warden’s chair, there are two niches painted brown and standing about 2’ 6” from the ground. These were first placed in the corners of the original temple and alongside the doorways that then existed. Their possible use

puzzled me until I suddenly realised what was later confirmed, that they were ‘aids to comfort’ for the dining and drinking brethren in the lodge room. They were able to make use of them without having to disturb the Tyler and seek permission to leave. That I must confess, was a feature I had never seen before.

In the showcase of this temple is a magnificent Tyler’s outfit that looks good enough to have served one of the Monarch’s Regiments of Foot. It is bright red, with a distinctive sash, a cocked hat and cloak. One is usually prepared for a more sombre type of clothing for this officer and the surprise is therefore all the greater. Yet this is not the only such striking Tyler’s outfit in this northern kingdom. Outside the entrance passage that leads to the main temple of the no less ancient Lodge of Scone and Perth, in the latter town, you will find a life-size model of the ancient Tyler there and he is clothed in a white turban, blue velvet overjacket and baggy white trousers, with shoes having upturned toes. He clearly represents the person shown in a nearby portrait, the actual Tyler of this lodge in days past. Having given him at least a knowing look, you pass into their breath-taking temple, a description of which in full you must look for elsewhere.

Let me simply tell you that at the centre of the room is a circular altar with a small side basin in which is lit a certain ‘glimmering ray’ for all the three degrees. We have been at such a central obligation pedestal in Kilwinning but what you see here, on one of the many painted murals round the walls, is a scene of King James VI of Scotland (and I of England) being initiated in this very lodge and holding out his hand over the flame that rises from this very pedestal, albeit in an earlier hall than this one. The continuity and real link with Royalty in the Craft together with the drama of such a scene all combine to

create a real moment of surprise that I am sure you can appreciate.

Another lodge at Newborough in Fife—Lodge Lindores—was not as careful about its possessions as those I have just mentioned. It was my turn to administer a surprise to my hosts. In the anteroom of the temple I noticed a portrait of yet another old Tyler in the mid-19th century. He was dressed in the ancient garb provided for him by this country town lodge. ‘We thought you would find that picture of interest’, they said, ‘but sadly the clothing was lost and we therefore treasure this picture.’ I too regretted not seeing another distinctive local Tyler’s get-up. So we turned to the items that did remain in the lodge room—one of which again could take your breath away but must await revelation in my books—and I eventually noticed a white, glass fronted cupboard set into the north wall.

‘What is in there?’ I enquired.

‘Nothing but junk which we have never really sorted out’ was the answer.

Could we see it, I wondered, for I had heard those words so often before. They unlocked the glass doors and there was junk. What there also was amongst the rubbish was a bundle of clothing. We unwrapped it and lo, to their complete surprise and my delight we had discovered the blue and yellow stockings, the blue and silver-edged waistcoat and the light overjacket of the Tyler we had seen portrayed. The hat and outside coat had gone but I have helped one more lodge to treasure its past afresh and its possessions more carefully.

There remain three more surprises that I would like to share with you before I finish. They all have to do with helping to teach about the Craft degrees that we carry out.

The first is a board of large proportions that was given to the Lodge of Greenock St John’s, on the Clyde’s south bank, at the time of the lodge’s inception in 1791. It has hung on their walls

since that time and reveals on its much illustrated surface all the tools of the three degrees and even some symbols of the Royal Arch. Why this board was both provided and used was as follows.

Because Greenock was a seaport that flourished, many seamen and merchants from the Continent came into Masonry through this lodge. Yet because their stay locally might be quite brief, they were given the three degrees in one evening. Yes, that does probably surprise you. Hence they needed a board that would serve their purpose. In addition, if they could come back the next month (or later) after being made a Master Mason they could be 'exalted' into the Royal Arch in the same lodge and they used the same board.

This persisted as their practice until 1868, when the Grand Lodge of Scotland asked them to stop giving the three degrees at one time. They refused, on the grounds that this was what they had always done. Two years later, however, a new view had prevailed and someone presented them with three separate boards, as they had promised not to do more than *two* degrees for one candidate in any one evening. One Past Master then said that perhaps they could now do the work 'in full', which suggests how they had done the three previously. What is still interesting is that because the symbols of the degrees have always appeared in the lodge room all the time it has existed, the new boards are never covered up, whatever degree is being worked.

In Musselburgh we come to the fine old Lodge of Fishherrow, close by the oldest golf links in the country. The lodge actually still meets in part of what was the original Golf House that the Masons bought. I was told here that there were **NO** tracing boards and there never have been any. How could that be, I wondered. The Secretary, who showed me around the building, also demonstrated the answer to this puzzle. He acted out, for

my benefit, the whole of their third degree ceremony which is learnt by heart *without books*.

They also have their own form of the ritual and at the end of the 'raising' they display all the items for the teaching of the degree on the steps below the RW Master's place. Those who have seen the oldest 3° tracing boards that I have shown in the halls at Bath and at Llandudno (North Wales) will now see in Musselburgh all that the former only have drawn as pictures—the coffin, skull and crossbones, the Ark of Noah, the incense and manna jars, the scythe, the sword pointing to the heart, the beehive and the heavy maul, the plumb, the level and the hour glass. They are here very powerful visual aids and the instructing Past Master, like this admirable Secretary, can actually lift the items and present them to the candidate so that he remembers them. That was a real surprise and the surprise was continued when I was able to tell the people in Llandudno that the explanation of all the items they have, but the meaning of which they had lost, could now be supplied by asking a brother from Musselburgh to pay them a visit.

Finally, I take you to Dunbartonshire, north of the Clyde. In a few lodges there they use one of the most remarkable rituals in all English-speaking Freemasonry. It is called the John McBride working and it is totally different in presentation to anything that most other British Masons know. It too has no tracing boards.

It is principally worked in full in the hall at Renton, where John McBride was a member and where the hall was specifically built for his working. You therefore see two enormous pillars, some 25 feet high, at the west end of the temple, and behind and through them the winding stair of 3, 5 and 7 steps leads to a real middle chamber through the Veils of the upper temple. There, against the light from behind the candidate, the brethren below hear the lecture of *their* 2° delivered to the new Fellow of the Craft. Needless to say, at

both the foot and top of the staircase he has been actually challenged for a pass word. For the remainder of this remarkable building you will again have to read what I trust will shortly be produced—but that, I am certain, is by now no surprise at all.

May I say that I hope that this short pilgrimage will reveal the ongoing search that we can all make in learning about this great Craft of ours. We can in truth take real steps to make those daily advancements in Masonic knowledge which were urged upon us at the outset of our journey.

HUGUENOT FREEMASONS

(The Huguenot Lodge in London invited me to write this paper some years ago, commemorating the 300th Anniversary of the Huguenot community in England.)

Providentially, but unintentionally, I found myself six days ago in the border country of Languedoc and Provence, to be specific, in the city of Nîmes and the town of Uzès. As I wandered down their ancient streets and gazed upon their attractive house facades, I naturally allowed my mind to turn afresh to this address which I had prepared to deliver to you on my return. To see also that sun-baked countryside, with its trim vineyards and red-roofed white-walled villages, and to see those mountain valleys which had been the homeland of so many Huguenots who came seeking refuge here after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, only served to underline for me the depth of their longing for freedom and their eagerness for a security which their own nation could not offer them.

In one sense it is sad to think of how great a treasure was lost to France by the emigration of such a people—though that sadness cannot but be tinged with an ironic delight at how

England benefited from all that these new-comers were able to offer in their new homeland: tapestry making in Exeter, silk and cotton manufacture in Bideford, sail-making in Ipswich, papermaking in Southampton, hatstyling in Wandsworth and language teaching in Cheam. And that is but a random selection from the range of skills that these scholars and craftsmen, whether employers or employed, were able to share with the English. And it is in one Craft in particular that we should be particularly interested this evening to hear of their involvement. For make no mistake, the place of the Huguenot male citizen of the early 18th century in the development and establishing of the English Grand Lodge was notable and extensive.

My mind was first drawn to this subject in a fresh way as I read that latest contribution to English Huguenot history, Robin Gwynn's book, *Huguenot Heritage*. On page 90, appropriately at the end of a chapter entitled 'Professions', the author unpretentiously points out that the very first Grand Steward after the formation of the Grand Lodge in 1717 was Josias Villeneau, a refugee, who went on to become Senior Grand Warden in 1721. In 1725 we find the Walloon protestant, John James Heidegger, wearing the same red apron and then, in a quite continuous stream after the revival of the Stewards Lodge in 1730, there are one or more Huguenot members every year:

1730 Ezekiel Varenne
1731 Thomas Durant and George Fage
1732 Claude Crespigny (and Solomon Mendes)
1733 John Pollexfen and Dr John Mizaubin
1734 Isaac Nevre
1735 Dr Schomberg
and the list goes on: Barret, Beaumont, Bernard, Carne, Caton, Combrune, De Charmes, De Vaux, Faber, Foy, Hemet, Le Bas, Le Maistre, Ruck and Vol.

Suddenly you find yourself immersed in a whole new dimension of allegiance to the Masonic Order by these fresh citizens of the realm and as you read through Colin Dyer's fascinating account of the Grand Stewards Lodge, published in 1985, you will be made to see how the strain persists to this very day, with Pierrepont and Cazenove appointed in 1985 and a recent Deputy Grand Master, the Hon Edward Latham Baillieu. To pursue further that channel of Masonic history would be enough for this evening if we were wanting to exhaust the whole range of our subject. Let me at least add that no less than one quarter of all the recorded Stewards' names in Grand Lodge are those of recognisable Huguenot origin—but what of those whose names have, or had soon, become totally anglicised?

Let us however turn to another source of interest for the Huguenot Mason. In her book, *They came as Strangers* (1959), Francesca Wilson reminds us that these Huguenot refugees introduced the art of calico-printing and wax-bleaching, the weaving of velvet, silk stockings, gauze, table-linen, etc. 'They brought with them new ways of manufacturing ribbons, tapestry, baize . . . new modes of dyeing and of making hats and looking-glasses. The first person who contrived a machine moved by steam was Savary, and the best maker of telescopes was Dollond...' (p 27)

In 1934 Bro F W Golby took up this inventiveness as a scope for Masonic research and published a paper in *AQC* entitled, 'Our early brethren as Patentees'. You will not be surprised to learn something of what he found in that study. There is James Christopher Le Blon/Blun who patented the 'Multiplying of Pictures' on 5 February 1719, and in 1730 his name duly appears in the list of the lodge at the Crown and Sceptre in St Martin's Lane. There is John Marten, Doctor, Fellow of the Royal Society in 1727, who patented on 7 May 1720 a method of 'Meliorating oils'. He is recorded in the 1725 list as one of

the Wardens of the lodge meeting at the Golden Lyon in Dean Street. Daniel Niblet, coppersmith, and William Vreen, instrument maker, are two more brethren who patented 'Heating by steam for various manufacturing processes' in 1720, whilst in July 1721 John Senex joins with two Englishmen, Harris and Wilson, to patent the making of 'Globular charts'. Senex appears in the 1725 list of the lodge meeting at the Fleece in Fleet Street. Bro Thomas Chanifleur is perhaps someone whom whisky and other drinkers may have very good cause to remember with gratitude, for he patented 'a water syphon' on 15 April 1724.

John Senex, who was mentioned above, subsequently became Grand Warden and also a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1728. He was proposed to that important position by no less a person than Dr Halley—of whose comet we are constantly reminded (and which I must tell you I saw in the Canaries when last it appeared)—and recommended as a Fellow by the President. To qualify, Senex had 'presented his draughts of the Constellations laid down from Mr. Flamsted's Catalogue containing the Northern and Southern hemispheres in two sheets with the constellations in the Zodiac . . . and he also showed the Society his two new large Globes of 28" diameter'. I think you will agree, considering the pillars of which we are taught, that was an appropriate thing for a Masonic FRS to produce. We are told that 'he was thank't'.

Indeed one of the factors in 18th as well as late 17th century Masonry was the surprisingly close connection between the Royal Society and the Craft. On 4 July 1728, we read that John Senex 'gave his Bond, signed his obligation and was admitted a Fellow'. You might be forgiven for thinking that that referred to the second degree of Freemasonry but you would be wrong. That was his admittance, like so many other Huguenot brethren, into the Royal Society. Incidentally, it is worth remembering

that at the date 1728 we have no evidence to suggest that there was anything more for a Freemason to do than become a 'Fellow' in speculative Freemasonry, for it was only with Prichard's exposure in 1730 that we have any indication of the third degree. The parallel with Craft and Royal Society practice is, or was then, very much closer than it might now seem.

Senex, however, was not alone. Bro J R Clarke tells us in his illuminating article, 'The R.S. and early Grand Lodge Freemasonry' (*AQC* vol 80, pp 110ff) that from its inception in 1662, as part of the Stuart Restoration, the Society 'numbered amongst its Fellows some of the most inquiring minds of the age; they were curious about everything and some of them—Ashmole, Aubrey, Locke and Wren—had shown themselves to be inquisitive about Masonry...'. He goes on (p 111): 'A preliminary survey [shows] that nearly all noble Grand Masters during the first 50 years of the existence of Grand Lodge were Fellows of the R.S., and that their Deputies during the first ten years had the same honour...'. For our present purpose it is enough to notice from the 1723–1730 lists the following refugee Masons who were also in the Society: Clare De la Faye, De Loraine, Du Bois, Du Gode, Foulkes, Hody, Machen, Papillon, Schomberg and Rutty.

From that list I have, as with several previous references, left out one of the most distinguished early Freemasons of all, John Theophilus Desaguliers. He was also a proposer of Senex as a Fellow of the Society, being one himself, and he it was that caused the revival of the Grand Stewards Lodge in 1728 when he was again Deputy Grand Master, having been Grand Master 1719/20. It was Desaguliers who was a co-patentee with Niblet and Vreen in their 'Steam processing' just as he was a patentee in his own right in regard to 'water systems'—a subject which drew him in a professional capacity all over these islands and even led to his being given the freedom of Dunfermline. He is

the very epitome of the early 18th-century Huguenot Freemason, born at La Rochelle in 1683 as the son of a Pastor at Aitre, and himself becoming a parson of the Church of England, though ‘somewhat Pastor of the French Chapel in Swallow Street’. He married Margaret Thomas La Chapelle in France and I have to claim a very special interest in him because he was a student at Oxford in the very same college as myself, Hart Hall, that is now known as Hertford College.

It is in Desaguliers that we find all those characteristics that both bring distinction to the Huguenot contribution to this land and such great credit to the émigré company of which he was a part. We see his scholarship honoured by the Royal Society, in his being awarded the Copley Gold Medal in acknowledgment of his continuing experiments (at the age of 60) in bridge constructions, water supplies and steam control. Perhaps those may seem odd matters for a clergyman to engage in but they simply reveal those great Huguenot traits of inventiveness and dedication. When we also recognise his wholesale devotion to the Masonic Order, his leadership there and his assistance to Dr Anderson in compiling those first Grand Constitutions that preserve tolerance in religion and freedom from any political bias, we again note the Huguenot characteristics. It was no part of these new Englishmen to return to the evil experiences of their mother country. To be part of a movement such as ours where a Free man of full age could associate naturally with all other adult men in an atmosphere of mutual concord and fraternal affection was an answer to all their prayers. From the persecution of Rome, from the brutality of political dragooning, and from the fear of not being able to practice their daily avocation, these men found in Freemasonry a code and a manner of life that they could truly cherish.

Above all else, they could in their Masonry express the new-found loyalty to a royal house that was also part of their

scriptural upbringing. Desaguliers was chaplain to the Duke of Chandos; he was asked to demonstrate his experiments before George II, who admired him greatly, and in 1727 he was appointed chaplain to Frederick, Prince of Wales. He was a favourite of Queen Caroline and in 1738 was Chaplain to the Bowes (later 12th) Regiment of Dragoons—an ironic twist of fate, since it was this brand of French soldiery that had led to his flight, as some say, on board ship in a barrel. Those who want to pursue this great man's fuller career should read Bro John Stokes' essay in *AQC* vol 38 (1925) where almost every known detail of the Masonic and secular career of Desaguliers is recorded.

Yet it would be wrong to stop with this well-known Huguenot Mason. We need to record that his assistant in his experimental laboratory was another Huguenot Mason, Charles Labelye, himself the engineer who directed the building of the new Westminster bridge. He was first a member of Solomon's Temple Lodge, Hemmings Row, (of which Desaguliers was Master), but later became Master of a lodge in Madrid, and is last mentioned as being Warden of the lodge at the White Bear in King's St, Golden Square, which is now the prestigious Royal Alpha Lodge No 16.

We should also note the Rev J P Stehlin, a member of the French lodge at the Swan, Long Acre, and also a Fellow of the Royal Society. He was a minister of several French churches from 1727 to his death in 1753 and, to emphasise the great contribution to a better learning of foreign languages introduced by Huguenots (who first used real sentences like *Où est la plume de ma tante?* to replace the dry recitation of declensions), we learn that this clergyman knew Hebrew, Greek, Latin, English, German, Italian, Danish, Dutch, Coptic, Armenian, Syriac, Arabic, Chaldee, Gothic, Old Tudesco and Anglo-Saxon, besides Spanish, Portuguese, Welsh and his native French.

In Canterbury we might notice the place of Thomas Roch, cabinet maker, who was a member of the first lodge there, that held at the Red Lyon, and who was taken to court by the Carpenters for plying his trade without first applying for and obtaining the freedom of that city. And no less a furore was caused by the members of a lodge called *L'immortalité de l'Ordre*, which was warranted on 16 June 1766 and only lasted 9 years. After being constituted at the Crown and Anchor in the Strand, some bylaws were introduced which made the speaking of French compulsory in lodge and these were signed by one John de Vignoles, a relative of that distinguished Huguenot soldier, Major Francis La Balme Vignoles, who fought so bravely at Alicante in 1709 for a British cause.

This John de Vignoles signed himself 'Provincial Grand Master for Foreign Lodges' and later went on to exercise quite unauthorised power over new Masonic units in the area we now call Belgium. This was not the least of his misdemeanours and it should not therefore surprise us to learn that dissension was growing amongst the lodge members, Leautier, Blache, Lapeyre and others, and not least when the famous (or infamous) Chevalier d'Eon was here made a Masonic member.

It can thus be seen that, like the well-known Masonic pavement, the involvement of Huguenot Masons in the Craft was not all sunshine and light. Nonetheless the benefits accruing to the Craft from the engagement of these brethren was, as in the nation as a whole, far more overweighted on the side of good than of any other quality. English life would never have been the same without the Huguenot touch (and I am one who loves oxtail soup). In no less a way, English Freemasonry stands beholden to many of that persuasion who graced its lodges.

Ainsi soit-il: So mote it be.

IS THERE ANYTHING MORE TO RESEARCH?

It was after I had been ordained a very short time that I experienced a crisis. I rang up an older and wiser clergyman and put my problem to him.

‘As you know I am the assistant to a church with a large congregation and my Vicar expects me to preach at least once each week. I have been there 6 weeks and I have covered all the main points of the Christian Faith. I don’t know what more to preach about. What am I to do? I can’t admit to my Vicar that I have nothing more new to say.’

The older man was kind and helpful. ‘Do you visit the parishioners?’, he asked. ‘Do you listen to the news on the radio or read the newspaper? Do you read your Bible regularly? Do you talk with your friends?’

I admitted that I did all those things.

‘Then just begin to think about what you hear, read, see and talk about and let God do the rest’, was his advice.

I did and I have never stopped preaching from that day to this, 45 years on.

That in brief is the theme of my lecture to you today. It would be so easy to imagine that when you see all the books that have

been written about Freemasonry, when you hear the lectures that have been given and note how many of them seem to repeat the subjects that you have heard, or heard of, before, and above all when you consider that the speculative Craft has been in existence for some 300 years and more, that everything that is of any consequence has already been researched to exhaustion. If that is what you may imagine to be the case then let me say that I too was once of that opinion. I too once wondered, as a new member of Quatuor Coronati Research Lodge, whatever new there could be to occupy my future years. That was 20 years ago. You will perhaps not be surprised to learn that, as with preaching, so with Masonic research, I have not only never stopped—I just wonder whether I will have enough time left to complete what I still have the desire to achieve.

How does such a change come about? Well, in much the same way as that by which my friend enabled me to effect a new approach to my preaching. It is done by looking afresh at the texts that I might think I am thoroughly familiar with, by reading the past and current journals of Freemasonry, by listening to what my friends and acquaintances are interested in knowing and not infrequently having them ask me to explain what nobody else has ever satisfactorily solved for them. Visiting new Masonic halls and seeing the artifacts they contain, or witnessing new forms of ritual or ceremony there, also helps—but reading the so-called ‘authoritative’ books and asking myself whether they really satisfy me is the greatest spur. Above all I know the truth of the saying, ‘The more you know, the more you realise what you do not know.’ When you find that even the sources that claim to have dealt with a topic themselves still leave gaps, then you know indeed that there is still more to research. Let us turn to some examples of what I mean.

Some six years ago I was invited to give a first series of lectures in Australia and New Zealand. What the New

Zealanders asked me to do was to produce something with a down-under flavour that had never been done before. They had lodge histories which told the story of how the first Freemasons set up their meetings in the colony and how those meetings developed into the oldest units that are extant in the country today. That was interesting and, as far as research in early New Zealand Masonry was concerned, there seemed to be nothing more that could be said. What no one had ever done, however, was to ask the question 'where and what were the lodges in England, Ireland and Scotland from which those earliest Masonic pioneers emerged? Why was it those particular Masons who started the first lodges in their new world? What kind of Masonry did they bring with them and what influence did that English or other Masonry have on the emerging practices of Christchurch, Wellington or Auckland?'

In a field where everything seemed to have been said, a whole new gap appeared. I count it one of my real delights to have tried to begin to plug that hole and someone else one day will perhaps write an exhaustive survey of those first pioneers and their origins.

This recently led me on to enquire if anything of the same sort had ever been attempted for Canadian Freemasonry. Where did the first Freemasons on that continent come from and what traditions did they bring with them? Why did they set up the lodges in the places that they did and what links, if any, did they retain with the lodges back in Britain? What, for example, was the especial part played by the military personnel in this exercise and, since military lodges tended to be mainly of Irish or Scottish tradition in the early days, what effect did this have on the working and outlook of the first lodges here?

I feel myself already involved in this enterprise, because one of my current commissions is to research and then write up the story of the Cornwallis family, which began in 1230 and is still

producing heirs to the line today. The Cornwallis family has been involved in English Freemasonry from at least 1725, when we know that a member of the family belonged to a lodge in London, but what is much more to our present purpose is the fact that no one has ever portrayed the whole story of this family's service to Masonry and this will be one of the Chapters that I shall include in my new biography. One of their sons was the Hon Edward Cornwallis, an officer in the 40th Regiment of Foot, which later became my own Lancashire Fusiliers, and in his service in Canada he formed the very first lodge in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I would like to think that in providing the full family history I shall be able to offer the descendants of that first lodge an even more complete background to their Founder.

Mention of the one Cornwallis leads on to another who made the surrender of the British forces at Yorktown in 1781. He too was not just an English General but also a regular Freemason. We know, for instance, that after his return to Britain Cornwallis provided Masonic charity for the children of General Benedict Arnold, who transferred his allegiance from the American to the British side. No one to my knowledge has ever pursued this matter though it might well be germane to another, as yet, unsolved mystery. What was the relationship, as Commanders, of those who were practising Freemasons whilst serving on opposite sides of the American War of Independence? Is there anything to confirm or disallow the thesis that certain strange and otherwise inexplicable military decisions might have been due to a strange reluctance of fellow-Freemasons to either engage in unnecessary slaughter or to press an advantage which would endanger their brother-opponent unduly? This raises the still larger question as to whether Masonic influence had anything to do with what we know generally to have been the strange courtesies of the 18th-century battlefield. Here again a whole new range of matters for research make their appearance.

On a visit to South Australia I noticed that the lay-out of many lodge items is almost exactly the reverse of what was common in the area around London, England, at the time that the pioneers first set up Masonic meeting places in this part of Australia. That puzzled me until, in one of the present halls in that area, I was told that the pictures of the earliest Past Masters were all produced the wrong way round because someone got the negative mixed up. That, I am sure, is what happened with a picture of an English lodge room. It was developed 'back to front' and hence much of the furniture was in the wrong place. Since the Grand Lodge there insists on uniformity, the mistake has become the standard working style everywhere. New research can thus have its unexpected revelations.

Sitting down to read the not very well-thumbed pages of Masonic transactions produced by research lodges or Past Masters' associations can itself produce some very interesting material for reflection. It was by doing this with such publications in Manchester, Lancashire, six months ago that I came up with what I believe is a refreshingly new area of study on how much operative masonry affected the later and more speculative Craft. Questions that had bemused me and others for a long time began at last to look like having new sorts of answers.

The whole field of early Craft and Royal Arch Masonry started to look like a more cohesive and natural whole, rather than a series of leaps and intrusions. What had hitherto seemed to be a closed shop of unlockable evidence began to re-shape and to acquire a more natural and reasonable form. To use a true if well-worn metaphor, the pieces of the jig-saw started to fall into place and a more cohesive picture emerged. What is more, a different line of research opened up, producing evidence that affected not only the Craft but also the Royal Arch and the Mark degrees.

Having just tackled the challenge to write a completely new book on the Mark and Royal Ark Mariner degrees, I have also recently faced the issue of what I could and could not accept in the previous books thought 'authoritative' on these matters. Time after time I have realised that previous efforts in this field have either not researched certain avenues enough or have come to conclusions that the evidence would not sustain.

When a Past Grand Secretary of our United Grand Lodge said to me with some disdain, 'Why ever do we need another book on those degrees?' I must confess that my heart took a skip. Perhaps he was right: Perhaps everything had been said on the subject and all that was needed was another reprint of the books by Grantham or Handfield-Jones. Yet something urged me on. I began to find that their treatments were incomplete, questions that I had asked of myself for years as a Provincial Grand Master in the degrees were not answered or answered satisfactorily. When one of them said that the Mark degree went through a thin and fitful time after 1813 and prior to its revival around 1850, I knew that something was wrong. In the event, I was able to write a whole chapter showing how the degree was fully alive and being practised at that period in every quarter of England, not to mention Scotland, Ireland and the USA, and that it was its vigour, and not its weakness, that led to the events from 1850 onwards. When the Grand Secretary of those degrees can say that the resulting account I have produced is a 'rivetting read' and a 'scholarly survey' I know that new research has again paid off.

One of the side-effects of this latter work has been the support I have received from the Grand Chapter of Ireland. No one, they tell me, has so helpfully outlined the development of their degrees in the modern period and they are delighted that at last their manner of doing extra-Craft Masonry is properly related not only to their past but also to the sister Constitutions in the

British Isles. What that sparked off in my mind immediately, as I prepared to come here, was the question: what was the contribution of Irish to Australian Freemasonry and has that field been adequately researched? I do not, you notice, ask whether the matter has been previously looked at but whether what has been written, if it has, has fully covered the subject. It might of course also link up with what I said earlier about discovering the origins of other Colonial Masonic founders.

Another line of research that was usefully opened up last year in Quatuor Coronati Lodge could also be said to bear upon the whole matter of early Colonial Freemasonry. As an experiment we invited a non-Mason from Scotland to visit our lodge and deliver a lecture on 'A Cowan's view of Masonic history'.

The points which he made in the course of his paper were both refreshing and penetrating. He submitted three comments. First, that he was surprised on first discovering the amount, and the general quality, of work done in the historical field by Masonic researchers, and thought that it should be more widely known. Second, that what worried him in reading much of that work, at least in regard to Scotland, was the sense that, whilst what he read seemed sound in itself, it seemed to be written as if the rest of the society in which the events took place was quite dissociated from Freemasonry. And third, he realised that on the side of non-Masonic historians they had failed, especially in the realm of biography, to take any serious account of the fact that the characters they were dealing with as soldiers, sailors, politicians or entrepreneurs were also Freemasons. The severance of Freemasonry from its full social context was perhaps the greatest limitation on anyone producing really worthwhile research. He proposed that somehow or other a partnership between these two camps could not be other than beneficial, but how it could be best arranged he was not able at once to suggest.

If you think about the matter you may begin to see its implications in a number of ways. I have already hinted at one in my query about how or whether the commanders in the War of American Independence were swayed in their actions by being ‘sons of the widow’. I wonder what difference it made that when Cornwallis returned from America, after what was considered publicly to be an ignominious surrender, he was immediately made the King’s Master of the Ordinance—a major military appointment—and within two years the virtual Governor of Ireland as the King’s Lieutenant-Governor there. Did his being a Freemason have anything to do with that? If it did not, then did his being a Mason have anything to do with his highly successful tenure of the Irish post, so that even to this day it is thought that had he only been allowed to continue there, it is possible that the subsequent troubles in that land would have been largely avoided? That is something of what ‘social Masonic research’ can mean.

There is one even simpler field in which further research may be possible and this I commend to you with very great eagerness indeed. It starts with the ceremonies that we perform so regularly and which some of you are doubtless very proficient in performing. Yet do we fully understand what it is that we are saying or doing in these basic acts of Freemasonry? Do you, as I have to tell you that I still do, listen each time a ceremony happens and ask myself at some point or other whether I really know what was the origin, what is the significance, or what is the reason for a difference from elsewhere, of what I am seeing or hearing at that moment? Let me give you some examples:

When a candidate is being admitted to the lodge and is led blindfold to the Wardens, he is positioned so that he can strike the lodge officer on the shoulder. Why is that? And why in some lodges does the Warden leave his seat and stands in front of his pedestal in the path of the Deacon and candidate?

In the second degree there seems to be continuing debate, disagreement or disbelief concerning the place and purpose of the two great pillars said to have stood at the porchway (or) entrance of King Solomon's Temple. Just what is the solution to this puzzle and whatever are we to make of tracing boards that put them not at the entrance but at some side door of the holy edifice?

Still in the second degree, why do we claim that the staircase leading to the middle chamber had 15 or more steps and why do we say that it led from the south to the west in the temple whilst it goes north to east in our lodge rooms? Do you know what is behind this and where you could find an answer?

And finally in this short enquiry I turn to the opening ceremony of any District, Provincial or Grand Lodge and consider the answer given by the Junior Grand Warden to the question about his situation. He replies 'On Mount Tabor'. Why Mount Tabor that appears nowhere else in present-day Freemasonry? Why not Mount Moriah or Mount Zion? Where do we go to unravel any of these mysteries?

I have to tell you that I do not know of any standard textbook on Freemasonry that will straightforwardly answer these queries. If you are going to find the meaning or the origin of them you will have to do your own research—as I had to. Not that these are the only matters still to be unravelled.

Just before I came to Perth I was presented with a new catalogue of the jewels that lie in the possession of the ancient York Lodge in the City of that name and of which, as a newcomer, I am but an honorary member. When the catalogue was presented to me by the compiler, he said this: 'I have listed every jewel in our possession. I have included every bit of information that I can obtain—but there are still 12 jewels that I am either uncertain about or completely uninformed. Would you kindly do what research you can and help me.'

The jewels have been there for 200 years and there is still research to be done on them.

Need I say anything more than this:

Si investigatio requiris, circumspice?

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