

The Discoverer

The Monthly Newsletter of The Lodge of Discovery

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Membership e-mail address list

A list of current members and their e-mail addresses is available on request.

Greetings Brethren,

In this Newsletter I am embarking on a series of basic information on numerous facets of the Craft providing light on various matters which are often taken at face value. These are taken from "Let There Be Light' - a Masonic Lexicon by R. W. Bro. John G. Sullivan, P.D.G.M.

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News from the South

In January we initiated Jorg Schwartz who adds to our list of members nationalities—we currently have members from England, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Germany, Hungary, United States of America, Ireland, Bosnia, France and Vanuatu—if I have missed any I'm sure I'll be told—it just emphasises the world-wide coverage of Freemasonry.

In January we welcomed back Bro. David Barrett after his injury sustained from falling off a ladder.

We now start preparing for the March Installation meeting.

A Brother arrives at your Lodge meeting and no-one can vouch for him, how are you going to prove him?

By Signs, Grips and Words of the 3 Degrees, his Master Masons certificate and check his signature in the attendance book.

What is the highest honour any Lodge has in its power, to confer on one of its Brethren?

To be invested with the Badge of an Installed Master.

What does the Apron represent or stand for?

It is the badge of innocence. It is the badge of friendship. It is the badge of a Mason.

Symbolic Explanation of Ceremony of Initiation

Whilst the friendships made are extremely important and not to be underestimated in any way, the key to enjoying your Freemasonry to the full lies in understanding it. However, in coming to understand the meaning of our Ceremonies, we have a problem, for different Brethren will interpret them in different ways. What is more, none of them will be wrong. After all, if we were all able to understand the Ceremonies in a uniform manner, there would be little point in coming to our Lodges to witness them time after time, as their significance could perhaps be explained in a single visit. Over a period of time, the ritual you see, hear and learn, will prompt you to think about it more widely and more deeply. This will lead you to consider the one constant that should be in our minds - How can we improve ourselves as building blocks for the Temple we are contemplating?

This is a challenging concept for anyone who has just been initiated and gone through a Ceremony that may be viewed on the evening of their Initiation as confusing, perhaps somewhat bizarre and more than likely a little nerve wracking!

The ceremony represents the birth of Man. At birth we are all naked, without possessions and rely upon the help and guidance of others until we reach maturity and can, in turn, extend help to others.

You may remember that just before you entered the Lodge Room you were confronted with the challenge, --- "Do you feel anything?" This symbolic challenge was designed to intimate to you that you were about to engage in something serious and solemn.

A second challenge awaited you inside the door of the Lodge; "Are you free?" After you vowed that you were free of any bondage, the blessing of the Almighty was invoked upon the proceedings.

Then almost immediately came the third and most important challenge of all, "In all cases of difficulty and danger, in whom do you put your trust?" There is, of course, only one answer to this question. "In God" for the Christian; "In the name of Allah" for the Moslem; in other words, in the name of the Supreme Being appropriate to the religious persuasion of the Candidate. To avoid possible offence and to promote unity among all men, the Supreme Being of all denominations is referred to as the Great Architect of the Universe.

The *hoodwink* or blindfold that you wore represented the darkness before birth and education and also made it possible for you to be led from the Lodge Room without seeing it, if you refused to continue with the Ceremony. The *Cable Tow* placed around your neck was an emblem of the bondage which comes from ignorance, but together with the *poignard* which was presented to your naked left breast, also served to control your movements during the ceremony. You were *divested of all metallic objects* so that you could not bring any offensive weapons into the Lodge to disturb its harmony. The naked heel and the *slipshod* are because the ground is consecrated and the knee is bare so that there is nothing between it and the Earth when the Obligation is taken. The *trouser leg* is also *rolled up* to demonstrate the Candidate is a free man, bearing no marks of a leg iron. The Left Breast is made bare so that the points of both the *poignard* and the compasses can be felt next to the heart and also to prove that the Candidate is not female!

It is appropriate that you entered the Lodge Room in a state of darkness, for it symbolised the gateway or beginning of life. You proceeded down the North side, a place of darkness. Your movements around the Lodge Room followed the path of the sun in the Northern Hemisphere, where our ceremonies originate. It rises in the East, reaches its highest point in the South then sets in the West and returns to the East through the hours of darkness.

After convincing the Brethren you were properly prepared to be made a Freemason, you made significant declarations about your honesty to the Craft. You declared that you offered yourself freely and voluntarily as a Candidate, that you wished to serve your fellow man and that, if you were admitted, you would adhere to the established customs of the Order.

You were then advanced to the pedestal by three steps, the beginning of your journey to the East, or light, in Freemasonry. You stepped off each time with the left foot, the left side traditionally symbolises evil. Each step with your left foot was symbolical of putting down evil. Each step represented your growing confidence.

Upon reaching the pedestal, you entered into an obligation of concealment. On your knees before all the assembled brethren, you vowed to hele and conceal what you might learn. Both words have the same meaning, namely, to cover over. The word 'hele' is derived from the Anglo-Saxon language used in England before the time of William the Conqueror. The word 'conceal' comes from the Norman French. Both words are used to ensure that the vow of secrecy was clearly understood.

You were made a Freemason in the body of a Lodge "just, perfect and regular". 'Just' because the Volume of the Sacred Law was open on the Master's pedestal; 'perfect' because there were seven or more regularly made Freemasons in attendance; and 'regular' because the Lodge has a Warrant from the United Grand Lodge of England, which gives authority to perform the ceremony.

After being restored to material light, you were informed of the *three great though emblematical lights*, or guides, in Freemasonry, the Volume of the Sacred Law, the Square and the Compasses. **You received light at the pedestal facing East, symbolising birth and became a Brother among Masons.**

Having taken the great and solemn obligation of a Mason, you were entrusted with the *Sign, Token and Word* of an Entered Apprentice Freemason. A great deal happened to you during the ceremony and it would not be surprising if you have difficulty recollecting them. Do not let this concern you, for your Mentor will go through them again with you, before the next Lodge meeting.

You were invested with the *badge* of a Freemason, which is a simple white lambskin apron derived from the aprons worn by the ancient operative masons. It symbolises purity and innocence, white being the emblem of purity and the lamb being usually considered as the symbol of innocence. This badge is the basis of all Masonic aprons and it is adorned to show the progress a Brother has made in the Craft. The badge is more ancient than the Order of the Golden Fleece, which was established in 1430, or the Roman Eagle, which the early Romans carried at the head of a staff as an emblem of honour. It is more honourable than the Most Noble Order of the Garter founded in 1346, the highest order of knighthood in the world. Apart from signifying purity and innocence, the apron also denotes friendship. We are urged to use this symbol as a guide in our daily lives and never to disgrace the principles for which it stands.

You will remember being placed in the *North East corner* of the Lodge, body upright, feet in the form of a square. This is where you represented the foundation stone of a new building, the building of your new Masonic life. Be upright in life, deal with every man on the square and continue to look to the East for learning. On this foundation you were challenged, 'to raise a superstructure perfect in all its parts'. The North East corner has been well chosen for this foundation stone as it represents the point where you move from the North, the place of darkness and ignorance, to the East, the place of light and learning. Make learning a life-long ambition.

The Charity lecture challenged: "Have you anything to give"? You were deliberately prevented from accepting the challenge. All valuables had been taken from you. It demonstrated that charity comes from the heart and is a way of life not just a payment. Your dress and absence of valuables must have made you ponder in what ways you can demonstrate charity. It was meant to be a constant reminder of your obligation to relieve the distress of indigent or needy Brethren. Charity may take the form of your time, your energy, your friendship or financial assistance. The practice of charity in its broadest sense is the foundation and springboard for other qualities in life.

The twenty-four inch gauge, the common gavel and the chisel are the *Working Tools* of an Entered Apprentice. They shape the rough stones of the future building. Symbolically, the twenty-four inch gauge teaches you how to use time; part in prayer to the Great Architect of the Universe; part in caring for your neighbour and part for yourself, particularly as it relates to your family, your work and your recreation. Your Masonic life is a symbolic rough stone that needs to be shaped for the intended structure.

The common gavel represents the voice of conscience, which is ever ready to warn us when we may tend to err. It reminds us with every knock to keep down all vain and unbecoming thoughts.

The chisel points out the advantages of education and discipline. As the workman uses the chisel to give form to the shapeless mass of stone, so education transforms the ignorant person into a civilised being.

The Working Tools which were presented to you are to teach the basis of a good life which is explained in more detail in the Charge.

ACCEPTED

"Accepted" is a title which alludes to the acceptance into the operative stonemasons' organisation of men who were not associated directly with the craft of stonemasonry, but who admired the technical skills and the moral and social value of masons and the general standing of the masons' societies.

Many authorities point, in particular to a special ceremony of "acceptation" practiced in the London Company of Masons from as early as the first quarter of the 17th century covering the admission into that body of non-operatives.

This ceremony must have been quite distinct from the arrangements relating to those seeking membership in an operative capacity. Men joining through the ceremony of "acceptation" were then able to join an inner circle or fraternity of speculative Masons which had developed over a period as part of the company structure.

The entry of accepted speculative Masons tended to increase during second half of the 17th century as numbers of operative stonemason members of guilds and companies declined as the result of a gradual lessening of demand for the construction of abbeys, churches, cathedrals and the like.

DORMER

In the traditional history charge in the 3rd degree, brethren are informed that the ornaments of a Master Mason's lodge are the porch, dormer and square pavement. In particular, the dormer is said to be the window which provided light to the inner sanctum or Holy of Holies in King Solomon's Temple. In architectural terms, a dormer is defined as a vertical window projecting through a sloping roof and placed in a gable rising on the side of the roof.

BALLOTS FOR CANDIDATES

Brethren are aware of the 'black and white' balloting procedure employed in the election of candidates for admission into the Masonic order.

The Book of Constitutions provides that no man can be made a Freemason if it is clear that 3 brethren have voted appropriately in a ballot against his acceptance, but permission is given for lodges to require only 2 contrary votes to exclude.

It is allowable for 2 candidates to be balloted together but if a sufficient number of contrary votes appear for exclusion, separate ballots must then be taken.

No candidate for initiation who is not accepted in a lodge ballot shall be proposed in the same or any other lodge within 6 months of such rejection.

In balloting for a candidate, every member of a lodge has a responsibility to vote although there is no power of compulsion. Where a brother has no personal knowledge of a candidate, it is generally considered that he should give implicit faith to the recommendation of the proposer, the seconder and reporting committee.

It is also laid down in the Book of Constitutions that no brother shall disclose to any person how he or any other brother has voted in a lodge ballot or induce any brother to disclose information of such a nature to him.

DAILY ADVANCEMENT

Towards the end of the charge after initiation, the recommendation is presented to the initiate that, without neglecting his normal activities, he should be stimulated to make a 'daily advancement' in Masonic knowledge.

Freemasonry is rightly termed a progressive science. The learning, memorizing and presentation of ritual and the performance of associated ceremonial is a necessary part of M Masonry but it is only the outer surface.

As a comprehensive moral philosophy relating to life as a whole from its origins to the closing hour of existence, Freemasonry must be seen as requiring detailed study and research to gain proper understanding and knowledge of Masonic principles and precepts.

Positive development of the individual can best be achieved by a continuing examination of the many facets of the system and, in this regard, the suggested advancement on a daily basis seems a not inappropriate proposition.

FOUNDATION STONE

The laying of a foundation stone or cornerstone appears to be the one remaining connection between operative and speculative masonry.

Newly initiated brethren are positioned in the north-east corner of our lodge rooms at one part of the initiation ceremony to figuratively represent the stated custom (which, however, must be said to be only traditional in nature) of laying the first or foundation stone of buildings in the north-east corner thereof.

This particular piece of symbolism is intended to point out to new brethren that their admission into the Masonic order represents the laying of a spiritual foundation stone with the hope being expressed that, on the base, each will, by the use of Masonic principles, proceed with intellectual task of erecting a personal temple of morality in his heart 'perfect in all its parts and honourable to the builder'.

COMPASSES

The compasses are one of the most important Masonic symbols going back to ancient times and they are employed in a variety of ways.

Together with the square, they represent the emblem by which the Masonic institution is best known. The compasses, along with the Sacred Volume and the square, are represented as the great lights of the order and are used in a particular way to draw a distinction between the work of the three degrees. The compasses are also represented as one of the working tools of the third degree.

When the Fellowcraft enters the lodge for his raising to the degree of Master Mason, the hope is expressed that he will be helped to obtain the privileges attached to that advancement in Freemasonry by the united aid of the square and compasses. In another way, the compasses are used as a warning to each candidate as he enters the order.

The compasses, which are probably the chief instrument used in the preparation of all architectural plans and designs, determining limits and proportions, are applied to point out, symbolically, to the speculative Mason how the Supreme Being has defined the boundaries of good and evil as a guide for his conduct in life. Put another way, the compasses are intended to remind brethren that they should live within the bounds of honour and virtue at all times with all mankind, but particularly with brother masons.

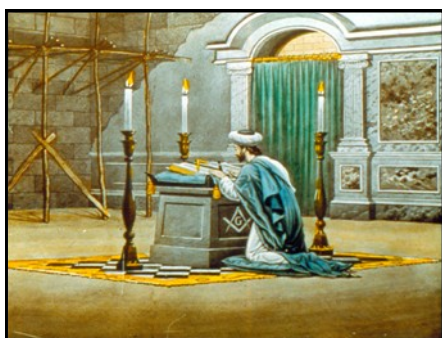


KNEELING

All obligations are taken in Freemasonry on the Volume of the Sacred Law, while in a kneeling position.

The posture of genuflection or the bending of the knees has been considered an act of reverence and humility in all ages.

Solomon knelt when he prayed to the Almighty at the consecration of the temple, and speculative Masonry has adopted the same practice of genuflection at certain parts of the ceremonies as a token of solemn reverence and submission to the will of the Great Architect of the Universe, in whose name all Masonic oaths and obligations are sworn.



Masonic Birthdays

Derrick Butterfield	35(J)(HM)
Jock Hannaford	35(J)(HM)
Doug Bailey	8
Kevin Green	4
Jim Woodford	3(J)

Famous Freemasons – Part 5

Cyril Fletcher - was an English comedian; his catchphrase was 'Pin back your lugholes'. He was most famous for his Odd Odes, which was a section of the television show "That's Life!" Fletcher had first begun performing the Odd Odes in 1937, long before they first appeared on television (though he did appear on pre-World War II television). He came up with the idea when he was short of material for a radio show. The first Odd Ode was a comic, yet sentimental, reading of Edgar Wallace's war poem "Dreaming of Thee". Following this broadcast he was given a regular programme on Radio Luxembourg; it was this show that brought him to national attention. He also appeared as a panellist on the popular UK BBC panel show What's My Line? that ran from 1951 to 1963.

Gerald R. Ford - 25 year Congressman and Minority Leader of the US House of Representatives, he was appointed Vice President of the U.S. in the wake of the Spiro Agnew scandal. When President Richard Nixon resigned, he became the 38th President of the United States. Malta Lodge No. 465, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Glenn Ford - Famous US movie actor.

Henry Ford - Invented the first gasoline powered automobile in 1893, founded Ford Motor Company in 1903 and mass-produced the first widely available and affordable car.

Benjamin Franklin - American statesman, inventor and printer (he published the first book to come off the press in the colonies - Anderson's Constitutions of 1723), author, diplomat, philosopher, and scientist, whose contributions to the American Revolution (1775-1783), and the newly formed federal government that followed, rank him among the country's greatest statesmen. He held the Masonic title of Grand Master of Pennsylvania and was one of the 13 Masonic signers of the Constitution of the United States.

Frederick II ("The Great") - King of Prussia (1712-1786) Effective military commander, music composer, patron of literature and the arts and institutor of many social reforms.

Clark Gable - American actor who played opposite nearly every major female star during the 1930's. Perhaps best remembered for his role as Rhett Butler in 'Gone with the Wind', he had received an Academy Award as Best Actor (in the Best Movie) of 1934 ('It Happened One Night'). Beverly Hills Lodge No. 528, California.

James A. Garfield - The 20th President of the United States, he was assassinated in 1881 and his death was the cause of considerable mourning in the USA. Columbus Lodge No. 246, Garrettsville, Ohio. Knights Templar and Scottish Rite.

Giuseppe Garibaldi. Italian revolutionary and liberator. Tompkinsville Lodge No. 471, Staten Island NY. 33 deg. Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Palermo.

David Garrick (1717 - 1779) - was an English actor, playwright, theatre manager and producer who influenced nearly all aspects of theatrical practice throughout the 18th century and was a pupil and friend of Dr Samuel Johnson.

John Gates - Known as "Bet-a-million" Gates, he was the founder of Texaco Oil Company and popularised barbed wire.

Humour

"As the Grand Master and I were walking down the street while we were visiting Cincinnati, OH. We happen to pass a pet shop. It has a sign in the window that caught our eye. It said, "See our Masonic Birds."

Well we looked at each other and since we had time before our scheduled meeting, we decided to investigate?

We went in and proceeded to the aviary to view the birds. While we were inspecting them the owner came over and offered to help us.

"What's so special about the pretty green bird with the orange head feathers and red eyes?", I asked.

"Oh, he recites the Working tools of the First Degree.", was the reply. How much is that bird I queried. That one goes for \$500 said the owner.

"What about that blue bird with the red trim feathers and yellow beak?", I asked.

"That bird knows the Middle Chamber and sells for \$750.", said the owner.

"And what about that outstanding purple bird with the iridescent green plumage", I asked.

"That particular bird is exceptional because he does the whole second part of the Third Degree and he sells for \$1,000."

"Oh, I see. How much is that pale Grey bird, off in the corner, with the black trim and hollow eyes." I inquired.

"Well that bird goes for \$2,000.", said the owner.

"Wow", I said, "What does he do?"

"Nothing.", replied the owner.

"Nothing?", I repeated.

"Well, then why are you charging so much for him?" I wanted to know.

"All I know", said the owner, "is that all the other birds call him, 'Worshipful Master'."

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Have you heard the story about that fellow who wants to go hunting? He needed a dog and consulted a Brother. That brother, who sold dogs, gave him one, called JW. "It's a very good dog", he said, "he knows a lot about hunting and you can truly rely on him".

Our fellow took that dog. One week later he returned. "It's not too bad, but he doesn't seem to be very experienced. Haven't you got another dog?" "Sure I have", said the Brother. "This one for example is called SW and he's a bit more experienced. Try him and if you don't like him, feel free to come back."

Indeed, our fellow returned the dog two weeks later. "He's quite good actually, but he's not what I'm looking for. Still I need a dog which is more experienced." "Well", said the Brother, "I can offer you a really experienced dog. He's called PM and you'll have good time with him."

So our fellow took the animal. Just one day later he returned. "What's wrong with him?", the Brother asked, "I haven't got any dog that is more experienced than this one." "Well", our fellow said, "he might be experienced, but all he's doing is sitting there and barking!"

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