



The Discoverer

Greetings Brethren,

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Practice What You Preach

“How often do we hear the advice—Practice outside the Lodge what you are taught in it?” How many of us heed that advice?

The World is changing. Economic, industrial and social changes are taking place all about us, nothing appears to be left untouched. But Freemasonry goes on unimpaired, and if our Institution is to have as much influence in the changing world conditions of today as it has had in the past, each one of us must make an individual contribution by giving ourselves unstintingly to the task of furthering the usefulness and increasing the sphere of influence of our great fraternity.

How many of us during the course of our Masonic ceremonials, listen intently to every word that is spoken and are conscious of the instruction intended, and genuinely endeavour to put the teachings into practice in our everyday lives—in our home, in our work, in our civil, social and sporting activities? If we did, we would be contributing much to brighten the lives of those around us as well as performing a Masonic service which would bring us a little closer in our effort to uplift humanity, thereby assisting to build the world with the object of easing the tensions of that which tends to keep men apart.

We cannot advertise ourselves by publicly announcing our Antient Charges and Regulations but if each one of us assumed the personal responsibility which we have to Freemasonry, and which can be fulfilled in hundred or more little ways by making Freemasonry a part of our daily lives, a great deal could be achieved towards the realisation of better world conditions and understanding amongst men. Our work in the Craft should be judged by what we are prepared to give to it and not what we take from it.

THE CABLE TOW & CARDINAL VIRTUES

The following was prepared by R.W. Bro. D.A. McDonald and read at a meeting of the M.H.J. Mayers Memorial Lodge of Research of Cairns and subsequently reproduced in The Discoverer in September 1983.

DEFINITION: According to the dictionary, cable is defined, among other things, as a strong rope, especially a rope ten or more inches (24 cm or more) in circumference. The definition of tow includes, as a verb “to draw or pull”, and as a noun, “a rope or chain for towing”, “the act of towing”, “the state of being towed”, something that tows”, whilst “in tow” can mean “under guidance or protection”. “Tow” also means “thread for spinning” or “fibre from flax or jute”. However, the combination of the words to represent a rope noose or halter around the neck can be found only in Freemasonry.

ORIGIN: This cannot be found definitely, but there is evidence of its use in Egyptian and Druid initiation ceremonies 3,000 years ago, when it fell off the righteous, but dragged the wicked down into hell. It has always been a symbol of slavery, captivity and submission, but when used in religious ceremonies, its main function was to lead the candidate from darkness to light and from ignorance to knowledge. This is explained in the Reasons for Preparation.

In the building trade, from which our Craft originated, rope, or to a greater degree, cord or string, has many uses, e.g. to set out foundations, to diagonally test the square of rectangles and when stretched taut, gives the shortest distance between two points, i.e. a straight line—with a weight attached, it becomes a plumb-line, thus fixing uprights and perpendiculars and by fixing one end to a centre, a circle can be inscribed.

When the candidate enters the Lodge with the cable tow around his neck, it is symbolical of his being in a state of bondage—the bondage of ignorance. It is also to show his submission to the will of the Worshipful Master. When he states that he is free and of mature age and answers other questions, including his belief in God, he fixes his Cable Tow to that centre from which he cannot err. Although the cable tow is there to restrain him, it can also be controlled so that he is guided and protected in his way to being initiated—as the ceremony can be regarded as a rebirth, the cable tow is symbolical of the umbilical cord, tying him to his Mother Lodge.

Although it is not now necessarily the case, in some old Lodge rooms, the cable tow could be found surrounding the mosaic pavement, the tracing board and the cushion on which the Volume of the Sacred Law was placed. The indented or tessellated border refers us to the planets, which in their various revolutions form a beautiful border or skirt-work around the great luminary—the sun, each controlled by its own mystic cable tow—which, if severed, would result in chaos and confusion.

Similarly, the candidate passes around these corners, to which he is attached by his cable tow and to each of which is attached the tassels representing the four cardinal virtues—Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice; the whole of which, tradition informs us, were constantly practiced by a great majority of our ancient Brethren.

Temperance means moderation or restraint, and the Freemason is taught to moderate the passions, the excess of which deforms the very soul. The cable tow acts as a restraint and the Freemason is chastened by temperance.

Fortitude represents strength and firmness of mind and is essential to the Freemason, as without it he cannot cope with life in this day and age, as there are constant strains and pressures on him. This is apart from his obligation to display this virtue in concealing our Masonic secrets. In other words, fortitude is his support.

Prudence, which encompasses wisdom and discretion, is essential to living a regulated life and conducting one's affairs to one's own advantage, but without detriment to others. It is the only bounds recommended to a Freemason's charity and should direct him in all of his activities.

Justice, which is fairness and impartiality, is a virtue which is sadly lacking in the world today, but without it, man will sow the seeds of his own destruction. It should be the guide of all a Freemason's activities.

The cable as a measure of length is one-tenth of a nautical mile or about 202 yards (185m), but there is no length prescribed for the cable tow in Freemasonry. Although its length is referred to in the Obligation, it is not clearly defined, but the distance has been quoted to be within reasonable walking distance, about three miles (2km).

Of course, it goes beyond distance, and things such as sickness, public and private avocations and family needs must also be considered when a decision has to be made on whether "it is within the length of your cable tow". In my position as District Grand Master, I would consider the whole of the area of this jurisdiction to be within the length of my cable tow.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

What do you know about your own Lodge? About what is being done by our Grand Lodge? How many of us subscribe to a Masonic magazine? How many of our Brethren ever read a Masonic book? How many of us are able to tell the world of the accomplishments of Freemasonry and its evolution through the centuries? Many men are proud of their membership in the Fraternity, but their pride and their loyalty would be deepened into a sublime experience by an increased knowledge of what it is all about.

The Ashlar

ADMITTING MISTAKES

Most of us hate to be proved wrong.

Some hate it so much they will refuse to admit (even to themselves) that they are wrong, even when all the facts and evidence are against them. They prefer to cling to their false beliefs rather than embrace the truth.

They feel that to be wrong diminishes their stature in the eyes of others. They are not strong enough to stand the blow to their pride of being mistaken.

But there is no disgrace in making mistakes or being in error. Not even the greatest or wisest of man can expect to be right all the time. To err is, after all, human.

In fact, the wise man is he who is quick to concede his faults.

All our yesterdays

Editor's Note: For the interest of the Brethren (past and present) I am reproducing an article written for the May 1983 issue of the Discover by W. Bro. Hans Mol.

The Furniture of the Lodge

It should be borne in mind that the furniture of a Lodge consists of the VSL, the Compasses and Square (explanation of the first degree Tracing Board). For the purposes of this article, the word furniture refers to the actual pieces of furniture, decorations and other objects found in our Lodge.

It can be safely assumed that it is only the visitor and newly-made Brother who, on entering our Lodge room, look round admiringly and wonder how so young a Lodge can be so well equipped. Our founding members know that when the Lodge was consecrated on 26th February 1977, much of the furniture was in place and that its presence was due to the generosity of a few dedicated Lodges and love of the Craft and craftsmanship of some of our own Brethren.

The story really begins in 1975 when some six Masons, resident in Vila and Santo got together on the initiative of W. Bro. Butterfield, decided to apply for a warrant and, knowing that this would take some considerable time, started meeting as a Masonic circle every other week in order to rehearse the ritual and prepare for the future. Until W. Bro. Butterfield (from a secret source) obtained some tables and chairs which are still in use in the refectory, no other furniture than a few plywood and cardboard boxes were available. Recognising the need for proper furniture in the future, we levied a subscription of five dollars per head per meeting, a rather formidable sum, but the money collected would be sorely needed by the time we would be a real Lodge.

Strangely enough, it is not in our own records that we find a full account of how we came into possession of the furniture which enabled us to start, but in "The Gavel", the monthly newsletter of the Lodge of Fiji No. 1931 E.C. in No. 10 Vol. 17 we read that most of it has been donated by the Rewa Lodge of Viti No. 2238 E.C. after it had been stored by them for more than a quarter of a century. W. Bro. Bill Halstead(?), who had been a witness of our earliest efforts to get started, had asked the Fiji Lodges for help on our behalf and this was the result. Three pedestals, an altar, two kneeling stools, a carpet, the columns for the three pedestals as well as collars, jewels and gauntlets.

Thus far, among the lot of us, we owned one ritual which we photocopied page by page. As loose pages get lost, a small shipment of ritual books, sent by the Lodge of Fiji, was most welcome. This shipment also included some Books of Constitution of which we had none.

From New Zealand came the two pillars, now flanking the Warden's pedestals. They were sent to us by W. Bro. Hannaford's mother Lodge Kumeu No. 279 N.Z.C. A short article in "The New Zealand Freemason" Vol. 6 No. 4 of September 1978 tells us that these oak pillars had been in use more than fifty years ago when Lodge Kumeu was first formed.

The first gavels were presented by W. Bro. Barnes, the first Master. He never used his own gavel, for on consecration night, the consecrating and installing officers presented the Lodge with a beautiful gavel for use by the Master. A small silver plaque commemorates the fact.

Bro. Warren Stewart painted the Tracing Boards of which we are justly proud. Their stand, in the form of a broken column, was made by W. Bro. Hannaford who made so many other beautiful ornaments for the Lodge. The Working Tools in their stand, the bracket holding the poignard, the Square and Compasses at the entrance and the bracket for the Tyler's sword on the other side of the door, the knockers, the Deacons' wands and their stands, were all made by Bro. Jock's hands.

The Tyler's sword was presented by W. Bro. Barnes who also lent us his family bible. And while we're talking of the Tyler, Bro. Wally Geappen has spent many, many hours looking after our first refrigerator and air conditioner, both donated by him. One of the two air conditioners which were installed when we moved into our present abode, was presented by W. Bros. Barnes and Mol. Bro. Hans also had the new benches and Officer's chairs made (the Lodge paid for the upholstery).

Many beautiful gifts were received during these first six years; W. Bro. Tony Olsen, on behalf of his Lodge, brought us a silver charity plate; Bro. Ron Barrow, on his departure, presented the W.M. with a silver goblet for use by him and succeeding W.Ms. A marvel of workmanship and patience in the set of beautifully pawa-inlaid gavels, made by a more than ninety-year-old Brother in Rotorua, New Zealand. Her Majesty's portrait, overlooking the South, was given by Bro. Gordon Haines. There are probably other items which have been overlooked for which I apologise.

Apologies, too, for the dry summing-up of gifts. The thing is, however, that to me and, probably all the Brethren of the Lodge, all these ornaments, pieces of furniture and objects together constitute a symbol of one of the main aspects of our Craft—**BROTHERLY LOVE**.

Editor's Note: On the evening of the 4th April 2002 a disastrous arson attack on the Lodge building at Agathis destroyed everything—building, contents et al. With a feeling of déjà vu, we

Editor's apology:

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Due to a setting-up error in the May newsletter the item on the right was abbreviated—full article is reproduced.

When promoting Officers, Napoleon followed a simple rule:-

For obvious reasons promote first those who are intelligent and hard working. Next, promote the intelligent and lazy, for they will find ways to ensure others carry out their duties efficiently. Next, promote the stupid and lazy for they will have no energy to inflict their stupidity on others. But never promote those who are hard working and stupid, for they will rush around non-stop, creating unnecessary work for others and will soon bring the entire Army to chaos.

Recollections of a Past Master

W. Bro. Andy Donaldson

I was born in Kirkcaldy, Fife, Scotland in 1945 and lived there until I was 14 years old when my Dad, Mum, two sisters and myself emigrated to Sydney, Australia in July of 1960. I completed my education and joined the Australian Post Office as a Telegram Boy and when I turned 17 years old went on to one of their Engineering Colleges in Sydney to study Telecom External Plant Engineering. I stayed with Telecoms in various jobs in various states in Australia for the next 11 years apart from a year spent working for an American company on Bougainville Island, Papua New Guinea at the copper-mine that was once there prior to the rebellion on Bougainville.

I originally came to The New Hebrides in February 1974 with a team of Federal Government employees from The Post Master Generals Telecommunications Department and worked with The Condominium Government on their Telecommunications Expansion Project in 1974. We were there until July of 1974 when the Australian Federal Government decided they did not like the idea of a Tax Haven on their doorstep (*Editor's Note: no change there then*) and pulled us back to Australia prior to all the work being finished. Several of the team were contacted by the Post

& Telecommunications Department of The Condominium Government of the New Hebrides to stay on and work for them, I was the only one to accept and after returning to Australia in July of 1974 I resigned from the Australian Telecoms Department and returned to the New Hebrides in October of that year to start a three year contract with the old P & T Dept of the Condominium Government. My contract with The Condominium Government was from October 1974 to October 1977 and during that time I met Paulette (my Wife) - (this was when I went to connect her Dad's telephone when he and his wife and daughter arrived in the New Hebrides in 1976 on secondment to the New Hebrides British Police from the Wolverhampton Police) In the three years I was there to the best of my recollection I only had one contact with Freemasonry and this turned out to be the time that they were trying to establish a Lodge in Port Vila and, as I was the Social Secretary of the old BESA Club, I was approached by Robin Bibby and Derrick Butterfield and asked if I had any old snooker cues that they could have for an organisation they were setting up!!! I had a couple of old broken cues which they accepted but to this day I am not sure if they ever used. (I assume, looking back now, they wanted them for the

deacons wands). I completed my contract in October 1977 and Paulette and myself then left to go to Sydney where we were married in December 1977 and then we returned to the UK.

While in the UK I worked for British Rail on their Telecoms and signalling systems for approx seven months and then for British Telecom for another six months and this was through the winter of 78/79 and I don't think I have ever been so cold in my entire life so when I saw my old position in Port Vila, New Hebrides being advertised in the British Post Office Telecommunications Gazette I could not wait to re-apply for the post. After applying through the Crown Agents in London for the post and eventually being accepted Paulette and I returned to the New Hebrides in March 1979 and I took up my position with the Post & Telecommunications Department of the New Hebrides Condominium Government which was just a little bit over a year away from becoming the Independent state of Vanuatu.

Our three children were born while we were in Vanuatu, Christopher in 1979, Janet in 1986 and Elizabeth in 1987 and we also had a church wedding service at the Cathedral in Port Vila to celebrate our third wedding anniversary in 1980. My first experience

with Freemasonry came in early 1982 when I was talking to Wally Geappen one night at the old BESA Club and quizzing him as to what it was all about and was told I should speak to Derrick Butterfield if I was serious about learning what it was all about. This I duly did and was asked to attend for an informal interview at a member's house and was duly quizzed as to why I should want to join the craft and what, if anything, I knew about Freemasonry. I assume this went reasonably well as I was then duly informed that I would need to present myself at the old lodge at Agathis Park on the 13th day of April 1982 where I was duly initiated into Freemasonry that evening. I was passed into the second degree on 10th August and raised on the 10th May 1983. My Masonic career went very quickly and I went from steward to Junior Deacon, then to Junior Warden and then to Master in 1986, all in less than four years. (This is in no way reflects my ability or skills in Freemasonry but simply the amazing turnover of people who happened to be Freemasons in Vanuatu at that time). Due to this happening I became the first initiate of The Lodge of Discovery to take the Master's chair and this was in the tenth year of the Lodge in Port Vila and this I still look back on with a lot of pride. The following year as the IPM I had again to resume the Master's chair as, after only a couple of months, the then Master, Brian Mahon, had to leave to return to the UK and I again installed the next Master of the Lodge who was Jock Hannaford. Over the next few years I took several of the chairs I had missed on the way

to the Master's chair and eventually became the Director of Ceremony for the Lodge, the position I held till I left Vanuatu in November of 1997 to return to the UK.

In April 1997 I was conferred with Overseas Grand Rank.

I joined a local Lodge in England in 1998 and, as I was at the time unemployed, found I could attend all the meetings and rehearsals very easily but found that as I was now 52 years old I was classed as too old to work and I was unable to find any suitable employment within the Telecom Industry. (The same year I was awarded an MBE in the Queens Birthday Honours list for services in the field of Telecommunications and for services to the people of Vanuatu). This meant I had to look elsewhere for employment and duly started up my own business which was a franchise restoring furniture.

(Woodworking had always been my hobby since leaving school and I found this was one way of still putting food on the table for my family and still doing something that I enjoyed).

The only problem with the new business was it made it really difficult to attend Lodge as the Lodge I belonged to met on Tuesdays at 1730 hrs for both rehearsals and meetings and my business took me quite a distance from my home during the day and I could not get back in time for most meetings. I eventually resigned from this Lodge at the end of 2002 as I still found I was not able to attend many meetings due to my work commitments.

Over the next few years through meeting other Brethren I started visiting Lodges that met only on Saturdays and this proved more suitable to my business.

In June of 2007 I eventually joined a military Lodge which meets in London on Saturdays and as there are several members living in my area we travel down to the meetings together and this has proven to be very enjoyable. I worked this business for just over ten years and retired last year when I turned 65 and am now a man of leisure!!! (I don't think my wife sees it that way!!!)

I joined the Port Vila Hash in 1977 and was the Hash Grand Master in 1980 and also had several other positions over the years and remained a member until I left Vila at the end of 1997 having completed 738 runs.

Andy

(Editor's note: For those who don't know—the Hash House Harriers is either a running club with a drinking problem or a drinking club with a running problem).

Humour

A man had been convicted of murder and was about to be hanged. Just before the sentence was executed, the hangman asked the man if he had any last words. "Yes" came his reply, "I hate Masons!" "Why do you hate Masons?" asked the hangman. "The man I killed was a Mason," explained the murderer, "the sheriff who hunted me down was a Mason, the Prosecutor who tried my case was a Mason, the Judge who presided at the trial was a Mason, and all of the men on the jury who found me guilty and said I should be hanged were Masons!" "Is that all?" asked the hangman, " "Yes" replied the convicted murder. "Then you will advance one step with your left foot."

A poor old Junior Deacon had been having a very bad night of ritual during a First Degree. His candidate, though, was a very enthusiastic young man. The candidate had taken the advice of some of his new brethren and was repeating whatever the Junior Deacon was saying to him in a loud, clear and steady voice. It came to the end of the Ceremony of Initiation and the WM announced, "Brother... you are now at liberty to retire." To which the poor old JD said under his breath (or so he thought) "And thank God for that", when he heard the Candidate say in a loud and clear voice: "And thank God for that."

A small Lodge had had a string of bad luck. It was preparing to initiate a candidate on a steamy evening in June and it's air conditioner had stopped working. After sweating their way through part of the work, the Master had asked the candidate what he most desired.

The candidate replied "a beer". At this juncture the WM., being startled, whispered "light" to the candidate. "OK," the candidate replied, "a lite beer."