

The Discoverer

The Monthly Newsletter of The Lodge of Discovery

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Greetings Brethren,

The sad loss of one of our most senior members—Worshipful Brother Allan Sands OGR is remembered—see page 12

The Human brain
is an amazing
organ. It
functions
24 hours a day
from the day we
are born and only
stops when we
are performing
ritual

Membership e-mail address list

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

Been there, done that, got the shirt, seen the video...

What Is Freemasonry, its Aims and Objectives?

A paper prepared by the Committee of Masonic Education of the United Grand Lodge of NSW and the ACT for presentation at Open Nights or for the information of non-Masons. In recent years, we have witnessed dramatic social change, when the educational system, the influence of World War Two, Korea and Vietnam, have stimulated students and young people generally to question the speculative theory of the great truth of life and death, a principle on which Masonry stands firm. It seems this highly scientific world has bred an era of distrust of authority, when the values of tradition and the forces of law and order are challenged in the community.

If this is so, then where does Freemasonry stand in the eyes of the community? This is the challenge.

We may justly claim that the story of Freemasonry has developed with the history of people since the dawn of time. When people found an advantage in having shelter and later homes, castles and churches, building skills developed with the human needs and thus we learn how men, working in stone, gradually acquired skills and knowledge and became known as Masons, Craftsmen and Master Masons depending upon their abilities.

Thus we find that in a period when serfdom applied, these Mason builders were granted freedom to travel (by means of Royal Charter) throughout the length and breadth of the land, and so we develop what is probably the strongest of many reasons for the use of the word Freemasons.

This line of progress is recognised amongst the majority of Masonic scholars as being the main line of development of the Order as we know it today, but there are undoubtedly many other branches of development which had their influence.

The groups thus formed quickly realised that unity was essential; unity of purpose, of the rule of authority, and to live within the laws of the land of their residence. They elected to have no military, political or theological ambitions and in fact caused these subjects to be banned within their communications. The groups exchanged trade knowledge and commenced the practice of helping the injured or sick brethren, and this laid the foundation for the forming of the benevolent funds which we have and cherish today.

As the years passed, membership became a valued possession, often envied by outsiders. Because of their envy, great care had to be exercised in the matters of admission of new members as well as the protection of the codes of recognition for the varying levels of skill and, of course, these circumstances gave rise to the introduction of a code of recognition which, when regularly given and received, distinguished a Mason from a non-Mason.

When writing skills began to develop it was declared that secrets of Masons should not be written, in case they should fall into unauthorised hands. These secrets must be passed on by word of mouth from a Master Mason to worthy Brethren, and this from generation to generation.

To do this, stories or lectures were devised to convey the secrets involved and in order to further protect them, allegory was used together with symbolism. Pass-words were introduced which not only identified the man as a Mason, but also indicated his rank, or level of skill and were of particular value in the matter of payment for labour. These secret signs and pass-words had to be guarded by those entitled to them lest impostors should gain access to them.

Social and moral laws had not only to be enforced, they had to be taught. To aid the teaching,

stories had to be devised to convey the lesson or requirements. To aid the comprehension and to give reality and relate the meaning, symbolism was used extensively, employing common instruments such as a square or compasses or pencil to hand the story on and which would serve to remind the workman of his social duties as he performed his routine and daily work.

The history of Masonry shows that these early groups remained very much as 'closed shop' organizations and restricted to operative masons ONLY, until the 17th century. With influence from education and enlightenment generally, pressures commenced for non-operative Masons to participate in the friendships enjoyed by the operative masons. Slowly the doors were opened and selected men who were not operative masons were introduced and initiated into the arts of Freemasonry and they became known as Speculative Masons.

With the broadening of the membership the precise skills of the operative mason became less important. However, even more emphasis on the moral and social laws became necessary and so a gradual change in the nature of the whole organization came about. No longer was it a 'trade' organization, it became a social order.

With this change came the need for the establishment of a fixed form of ceremony and meeting procedure. The form of ceremony varied widely from place to place and great disorder was the outcome. However, order was gradually sorted out of the many forms and customs when groups began fraternising and later amalgamating until 1717 A.D. when the Grand Lodge of England was formed. This gave rise to the system of Grand Lodge overall control in each country where Masonry was being practiced.

Soon after the forming of the Grand Lodge of England a Presbyterian Minister, Dr James Anderson, a Mason of great international experience, drew up the first Book of Constitutions in 1723. This book contained the Charges of Masonry, which detailed much of the behavioural requirements expected of a Mason and by them we are instructed in the aims and objectives of Freemasonry.

At the same time and in order to give regularity to the ceremonies, rituals were produced which have remained largely unaltered to this day, despite changes in common word usage, altered meanings of words and grammatical construction changes. The Rituals and Ceremonies are an essential part of the teachings of Freemasonry because as well as conveying important lessons they also impose a discipline upon its members. Since the secrets of Masonry could not be written, an allegoric story, using symbolism, had to be composed and thus the story of Freemasonry is, in fact, an extended metaphor. To give the story location, background and authenticity, it was decided to use the circumstances known about the building of King Solomon's temple, in the city of Jerusalem.

The characters employed in the story were those mentioned in history and widely recorded in the Bible.

From this background is derived the word 'Mason' because our story comes from the activities of builders in stone; Freemasons because only un-bonded and non-slaves could become Masons; Lodge because that was the name given to a room on most building sites used for the storage of plans, worker's implements, tools, etc. You may well ask "What is Freemasonry today?"

This question was canvassed of people, selected at random, in Sydney and suburbs quite recently and some surprising answers were obtained.

34% said it was a secret society.

32% said it was a service organization.

12% said that it was a club.
12% said a religious group.
2% said building trade.
8% said that they did not know.

We are comforted, however, that 85% thought that its influence was for good. 15% said it was bad and gave as their reasons that it was anti-Semitic or anti-Catholic.

Let me assure you that although we rightly claim to be a good influence within the community, we most strongly assert that we are none of those other things and certainly not anti-Catholic or anti-Semitic. Many Catholics and many Jews have been, and are, most worthy members of the fraternity of Masons and even held the position of Grand Master.

Let me further assure you that in the teachings of Masonry, there can be found nothing that could be offensive to any man's mental, moral or religious duties. We, as members of the Order, prefer to say that Masonry is a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.

By morality, we embrace man's dependence on God; our duties to mankind and respect for man, woman and child; our own responsibilities to self in physical and spiritual terms; the principles of benevolence, brotherhood, justice and equality of opportunity, and a constant desire for self-improvement.

We use allegory to paint word pictures, which convey important lessons to develop a Freemasonry of the mind; to teach the Brethren that learning is not restricted to a privileged minority but is the birthright of all who are prepared to make the effort to acquire knowledge, and even more importantly, understanding, the liberal arts and sciences being the symbol of the trained intellect.

By symbols, we mean something that stands for, represents or denotes something else, not by exact resemblance but by a vague suggestion or conventional relation. A perfect example could be our English alphabet and its use to form words to convey meaning. Referring to the Oxford English Dictionary for a precise definition of the words Freemason and Freemasonry, we learn:

Freemasonry is the craft or occupation of a Freemason.

The principles, practices and institutions of Freemasons.

Secret, tacit brotherhood. (Tacit to mean unspoken, implied and understood).

From the same source we accept Freemason to mean:

A member of a class of skilled workers in stone.

A member of the Fraternity called Free and Accepted Masons dating back to early in the 17th century

To simplify and relate these definitions I submit that "Freemasonry is the activity of closely related men, who, employing symbolical forms, borrowed chiefly from the Mason's Craft, and from architecture, work for the welfare of mankind, seeking to ennoble themselves and others, in order to bring into being a universal brotherhood of humanity."

The genius of Masonry is friendship! Perhaps that may sound too simple but it is not simple in the sense of easy achievement or limited application. It is simple only in the sense that all fundamental things are simple. It is also fundamental that we regard Freemasonry and Masonic gatherings as occasions when chosen men, with ideas similar to ours, are brought together in conscious fellowship.

Fundamentally, Freemasonry is a code for living and working together, based on the highest spiritual, ethical and moral standards. In Freemasonry we are NOT taught anything that is unique. The same ethical precepts are part of all religions and most philosophies.

It is not the primary function of Freemasonry to initiate candidates or to enlarge its membership, for if it was so, there would be no basis for our laws against proselytising. We do not canvass for membership and no man is asked to join.

The primary function of a Masonic Lodge is to train its members to an understanding of the truths which its rituals and ceremonies are calculated to inculcate; to develop its members as benevolent men, to cultivate the social virtues among men and to propagate knowledge of the Art. Benevolence, Charity Understanding, Sympathy and Support, must not only be extended to our Brethren and their families, but also, and most importantly, to our neighbour and his dependants, the sick, to the aged, infirm and unfortunate wherever they may be found and irrespective of class, colour or creed.

I submit that the principal aims of Freemasonry are:

To promote the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God.

To render practical aid to the less fortunate.

To develop such behaviour in our daily life as will demonstrate to others that the teachings of the Order have a profound and beneficial effect on all who sincerely embrace its precepts. Freemasonry enjoins the practice of every social and moral virtue. Freemasonry is a way of life. This is the truth of Freemasonry.

Freemasonry not only brings the benefits and rewards of happy fellowship, through participation and being part of the grand design of being happy and conferring happiness, but also – and rightly so – it brings with it the obligations of responsible citizenship.

Humanity has always been calling to good men for help. If men are to be won from hate to love; if those who doubt and deny are to be moved to faith; if bigotry and greed are to be controlled so that no man will ride over the rights of his fellows, it must be done by the art of brotherhood and love.

Therefore, the obligations of responsible citizenship are becoming increasingly important and must rest in the fine art of Brotherly Love, moderation in all things, leadership and the practice of extending the right hand of fellowship wherever possible. Unless good men act, the forces of evil will take over and the dignity of the individual will be no more.

I have outlined what Freemasonry is. It is equally important that I tell you, in even more positive terms, what Freemasonry is NOT. Freemasonry is NOT a secret society. That is not to deny that it has secrets, but there is nothing in any way secret about its meeting places, its membership, its aims, objectives, principles and to some extent, its methods. Our only real secrets are our own personal interpretations of the ritual and teachings of Masonry and how that interpretation affects our lives and the lives of others.

Freemasonry is NOT a religion or religious order, though its ceremonies have a religious character. No religious test is applied to its members or prospective members, except to ascertain that he believes in a Supreme Being. The discussion of religion and politics within the Lodge is strictly prohibited. Furthermore, Freemasonry has always refrained from expressing an opinion on political and theological questions; likewise it does not approve or denounce any movement in the political or religious

fields. Freemasonry is NOT a convivial club. It is true, however, that good fellowship is encouraged and members normally take light refreshments after their meetings. Many Lodges do not have alcohol at their festive boards.

Freemasonry is NOT a reform society. Its aims are to make good men more aware of their responsibilities and, therefore, better able to fill a worthwhile place in the community. To this end, we are highly selective and careful that we accept only worthy and qualified men, without moral blemish, into the Order.

There are about six million Masons in the world today, operating under approximately 100 Grand Lodges. There is no overall control of the Grand Lodges but there is a wide exchange of communications between them, so with proper introduction and recognition Brethren of different countries are enabled to overcome language barriers and establish friendships.

There are nearly three hundred private Lodges in N.S.W., governed by the United Grand Lodge of N.S.W. and the A.C.T., with a Grand Master at its head. It is under this Constitution and Grand master that our Lodges operate. It is the aim of Freemasonry to encourage each brother to develop his finer feelings and in the area of charity he is encouraged to do charitable works of his own choosing and collective charitable works as adopted by his Lodge or the Grand Lodge. To this end Masonicare has been established by the Grand Lodge to oversee the distribution of funds to worthy charities, Masonic and non-Masonic. Grand Lodge and the private Lodges support these charities generously.

The Benevolent Funds are used to assist people over unexpected financial distress, such as funeral expenses, probate charges etc. When a case is investigated and found to be authentic, relief is granted in one payment, or periodic payments as the case merits. The amount paid and the method of payment is not generally disclosed so that the privacy and honour of the recipient is in no way endangered. Masonry is concerned with relief, not the vehicles of relief.

You may recall that I said, "It was fundamental that we regard Masonic gatherings to be occasions when chosen men, with ideas similar to ours, are brought together in conscious fellowship". Therefore and obviously, Masonry could not ever throw its doors wide open. One would have to agree with the Masonic author Joseph Newton who said, "The Brotherhood of Man depends on the manhood of the Brother."

Masonry will remind you of all the good things which you have already learned.

Masonry will give you the confidence and courage to defend these principles that are held dear by every loyal citizen.

It is not given to any of us to know how long we shall live BUT it is given to every one of us, to determine the quality of our lives here on Earth. All of our Masonic landmarks point to a style of life which is founded upon Brotherly Love – Relief – and Truth, and we strive to live to that end.



Did You Know?.....

At Installation some officers are invested with their jewel with words "in saltire". What does this mean?

noun, *Heraldry*.

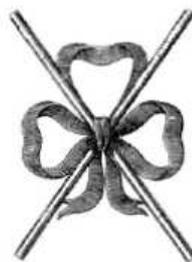
1. an ordinary in the form of a cross with arms running diagonally from the dexter chief to the sinister base and from the sinister chief to the dexter base; St. Andrew's cross.



The Secretary has 2 crossed (in saltire) quill pens (not biros) these are tied together with a ribbon.

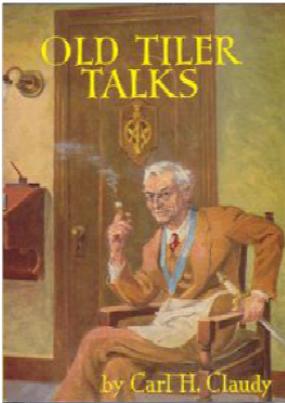


The Director of Ceremonies collar carries two crossed rods (Marshal's batons) tied with ribbon for directing the brethren in the work.



The Lodge Mentor jewel has two chisels in saltire (crossed) pointed downwards.





Old Tiler Talks— INVIOLEABLE

"Jones didn't get through, I knew he wouldn't," said the New Brother, sitting down in the ante-room.

The Old Tiler hitched his sword to be more comfortable. "Some of you young Masons sure do know a lot."

"I knew he wouldn't get through because I know two brethren who were going to blackball him," defended the New Brother.

"I have heard that before, too. Don't tell me who your friends were. Perhaps they try, once in a while, to be good Masons. But they don't succeed very well."

"What do you mean? They are splendid fellows, both of them. They know this fellow Jones ought not to be made a member and so they kept him out. One of them is..."

"Wait a minute son, wait a minute. The secrecy of the ballot is one of the great guardians of the Masonic fraternity. Every brother has a right to vote as his conscience tells him he should. None has the right to tell others either how he will vote or how he has voted. Whoever does so tears down the fraternity to some extent? If every Mason told how he would or had balloted there would be no secret ballot. If the ballot is controlled by outside influence, Masonry is no longer under the guidance of the hearts of its members.

"If I know you will vote against my candidate, I argue with you. I plead with you. I remind you of the favour I did you. I work upon your feelings and perhaps, for my sake, you let into the lodge a man I like but whom you believe unfit for membership. If I don't know how you will vote, I cannot argue with you, and your vote is dictated, as it should be, entirely by your conscience."

"But..."

"Never mind the 'but' just yet. After my candidate gets in because of your affection for me, in spite of your knowledge of his unfitness, then what? Isn't the lodge weaker than it was? Even if you are mistaken and a good man thus gets in, isn't your telling that he isn't a good man a weakening influence? Are you not apt to value it a little less because you weakened it? The harm, once done, may persist for years- and all because you opened your mouth and let out a few words of your intentions before you balloted."

"Suppose I want advice as to how to ballot? How can I ask your advice without telling you why I want it?"

"You can't. But there is a remedy provided for such cases. Masonry demands that every application be investigated by a committee a month prior to the ballot. You have ample time to go to the committee. If you know anything against a petitioner it is your duty to tell the committee. If you heard something against the applicant, tell the committee. Let the committee find the facts. If what you heard is an idle rumour, the committee will learn it. If there is a foundation to the gossip, they will learn that, too. Then you can be guided by what the committee reports."

"Isn't that to say that all balloting should be done by the committee?"

"Not at all!" answered the Old Tiler. "The committee decides for you as to the foundation of the rumour or the malice behind the gossip. If you know anything which in your mind justifies a blackball your course and your conscience are clear. You asked me what you should do when you needed advice."

"But committees are often perfunctory."

"That's your fault!" was the sharp answer.

"My fault? How do you make that out?"

"If you think a committee has made a perfunctory investigation, tell the Master you want a new committee appointed. If you think a committee isn't doing its duty, ask its members what they have done. If they won't tell you, notify the Master that you wish more time. He won't refuse it; he knows such a request means a blackball if it is refused. No Master wants any good man kept out, or any unfit man in. Finally, get yourself on a few committees- the Master will be happy to have your request for such work. Then by example show the other committees what a real committee can do."

"I see!" said the New Brother. "I wonder why all this isn't told to us when we first come into lodge?" "Humph!" All this.' Boy, there are thousands of books written about Masonry. Do you expect someone to teach you the contents of them all? The shoe is on the other foot."

"How do you mean, other foot?"

"When you first came into this lodge, why didn't you ask?" responded the Old Tiler, as he rose to answer raps on the door.

Lodge Birthdays

Chris Kernot	14
Warrick Sands	10
Michael Johnston	7 (J)

News from the South

A memorial for the late W. Bro. Allan Sands was held on Saturday 22nd April at Reefers at which the Lodge was represented by some 21 members.

The lodge is planning a gala dinner to be held at the Holiday Inn on Saturday 24th June to celebrate the ter centenary of UGLE and the 40th year of the Lodge of Discovery—further details will be forthcoming next month.



A recent photograph of how Freemasonry money is put to good use. Two million pounds sterling was donated by Metropolitan Grand Lodge of London (London Freemasons) towards the purchase of a second London Air Ambulance here seen in action at the recent terror attack in Westminster London.

MYSTERIES (AND PRIVILEGES)

All intending new members of the Craft are required to offer themselves as candidates for 'the mysteries and privileges of Antient Freemasonry'. Candidates are informed just prior to their first obligation that Freemasonry possesses many great and invaluable privileges, and initiates are instructed that the mysteries belonging to Masonry are not to be disclosed improperly.

The mysteries and privileges of Freemasonry are the symbolic truths of life which are locked away in the Masonic fabric and which must be actively sought after by each brother. This is a search for knowledge to satisfy man's mind and soul, to increase wisdom and happiness and to enable life to be lived in the most satisfying manner, bearing in mind that man has a co-existence with many others.

It is often possible to gain differing interpretations of what is contained in Masonry but this matters not to the individual brother who is pursuing an honest and conscientious path of exploration.

Freemasonry is different from many other philosophies in that it uses symbols in addition to words to explain its mysteries. Masons are privileged to be admitted into the order and thus have the opportunity, along with others, of engaging in the quest for enlightenment in the great principles of mortal existence which have been presented to mankind via the Masonic system over many generations.

NORTH

From ancient times the north has been regarded traditionally in the Craft as the region of darkness. Freemasonry originated in the British Isles in the northern hemisphere where the sun is always to the south of the observer. The sun in its progress in orbit never reaches a latitude farther north of the equator than 23 degrees 28 minutes (London, for example, is 51 degrees 30 minutes north) and, consequently, any structure erected more northwards could only receive the rays of the sun on its south side, the north being entirely in shadow at the hour of meridian.

The tradition of darkness in the north is carried on symbolically in lodge rooms in that the three principal officers, i.e., the Master and his two Wardens, are seated on the east, west and south sides of the temple. It is a fact that the Treasurer, Secretary and Senior Deacon are usually located on the north side of our lodges but they are close to the east and are positioned as they are as a matter of convenience having regard for available space.

W. Bro. Allan Sands OGR

1941–2017



Allan and his family arrived in Port Vila from Papua New Guinea in 1983 to take over Vanuatu Agricultural Supplies (known locally as VanAg) with his business partner, Graham (Webby) Webb).

The business started off 'in a shoebox' but has now developed into a major emporium.

Allan was initiated in the LOD in November 1986, passed and raised and was installed in the chair of King Solomon in March 1992 receiving Overseas Grand Rank in 2005.

Allan and Beverley loved going on cruise ships to the extent that they had visited almost every country in the world.

Allan, some years ago, created quite a stir in Port Vila by introducing a novel marketing idea—every September there was to be a 20% discount on all goods in the store.

Allan will be sadly missed both in Lodge and in the broader Vanuatu community.

Requiescat en Pace

Humour

1. My first job was working in an Orange Juice factory, but I got canned. Couldn't concentrate.
 2. Then I worked in the woods as a Lumberjack, but I just couldn't hack it, so they gave me the axe.
 3. After that, I tried being a Tailor, but I wasn't suited for it -- mainly because it was a sew-sew job.
 4. Next, I tried working in a Muffler Factory, but that was too exhausting.
 5. Then, tried being a Chef – I figured it would add a little spice to my life, but I just didn't have the thyme.
 6. Next, I attempted being a Deli Worker, but any way I sliced it.... I couldn't cut the mustard.
 7. My best job was a Musician, but eventually I found I wasn't noteworthy.
 8. I studied a long time to become a Doctor, but I didn't have any patients.
 9. My next, was a job in a Shoe Factory. I tried hard but I just didn't fit in.
 10. I became a Professional Fisherman, but discovered I couldn't live on my net income.
 11. Then I managed to get a good job working for a Pool Maintenance Company, but the work was just too draining.
 12. So then I got a job in a Workout Centre, but they said I wasn't fit for the job.
 13. After many years of trying to find steady work, I finally got a job as a Historian – until I realized there was no future in it.
 14. My last job was working in Starbucks, but I had to quit because it was the same old grind.
 15. SO, I TRIED RETIREMENT AND I FOUND I'M PERFECT FOR THE JOB!
-

Irish Fire Insurance

A man and his wife moved back home to Cork , from London ... The wife had a wooden leg and to insure it in Britain was £2000.00 a year!

When they arrived in Cork , they went to an Insurance agency to see how much it would cost to insure the wooden leg.

The agent looked it up on a computer and said to the couple, "£39..00."

The husband was shocked and asked why it was so cheap here in Ireland to insure, because it cost him £2000.00 in England !

The agent turned his computer screen to the couple and said, 'Well, here it is on the screen, it says:

*Any wooden structure, with a sprinkler system over it, is "£39.00."