



The Discoverer

The Monthly Newsletter of The Lodge of Discovery

Greetings Brethren,

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Membership e-mail address list

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

Freemasonry teaches not merely temperance, fortitude, prudence, justice, brotherly love, relief, and truth, but liberty, equality, and fraternity, and it denounces ignorance, superstition, bigotry, lust, tyranny and despotism.

H. W. COIL

THE MASTER MASON

In the third ceremony in Craft masonry, a brother is raised to the 'Sublime Degree of a Master Mason'. It is indeed a 'Sublime' Degree, which, as a full member of the Craft, a Mason may study for years without exhausting it.

Any interpretation in this article must necessarily be a hint only. Yet a hint may stimulate a Mason to reflect upon it himself, and to study it more thoroughly in the future.

In the First and Second Degrees, the candidate was surrounded by the symbols of architecture, nature and science. In the Third Degree a different order of symbolism is found, cast in the language of the soul – it is life, tragedy and triumph. To recognise this is the first step in interpretation.

The second step is to recognise that the Third Degree has many meanings. It is not intended to be a complete lesson in itself, but rather a signpost pointing out paths to follow, a new departure in the form of an awakening of all the faculties. It is like the unfolding of a drama, or a work of art or symphony to which one may evermore return to find new significance and implications.

The Third Degree is indeed a drama. It is the drama of the immortality of the soul. It sets forth the truth that whilst man withers away to crumble and decay, there is deep within him that something that will never perish.

So, what does this 'Raising' ceremony of the Third Degree signify? To have the answer to this question is to have found the key to open up all the meanings of the Degree.

The life of a man is organised into a number of groups of experience. Some of these experiences are incidental to our passage through time, from childhood, through manhood to old age.

Herein lie our greatest problems, our most trying ordeals and severest tests. If we can find the wisdom to deal with these, if we can triumph over and solve these problems, our characters will be secure, our happiness assured.

Evil, in the form of a tragedy, is set forth in the drama of the Third Degree. Here we witness a good and wise man, a builder, working for others, and giving others work. This is work of the highest order, dedicated wholly to God. Through no fault of his own, he experiences tragedy from those he would call his friends and his fellow Masons.

Here is pure and absolute evil – a complete picture of human anguish and sorrow. The ritual explains how the Craft dealt with this tragedy. The first step was to impose the supreme penalty on those who had possessed the will to destruction. Therefore, they had to be slain, lest further tragedy would follow.

Hence we learn the great truth that the greatest enemy man has makes war upon the good of mankind. Our response to such heinous crimes is that no quarter can be given. Throughout history, sound and proper justice has, and never will permit, any compromise.

What of the victim of the tragedy? Here is the most difficult and profoundest lesson of the drama of the Third Degree. It is difficult to understand, and difficult to believe without a true understanding of the implications of a spiritual life.

Because the victim was a good man, his integrity rooted in an unvarying faith in God, that which destroyed him in one sense, could not destroy him in another. This is because the spirit in him rose above the reach of evil, and by virtue of that he was raised from a dead level to a living perpendicular.

What is the lesson to be learnt here? Let us imagine the case of a genuinely good man who has become the victim of the most terrible tragedy, one that has been caused by the treachery of his friends. This deceit has brought devastation upon the foundations of his life, upon his home, his reputation, even his ability to earn a living.

How can he be raised above the clutch of such destruction to his circumstances? How can he ever emerge a happier man, having endured such an ordeal? This is achieved by the effect of his spirit rising to the level of forgiveness, or resignation, or even self-sacrifice, by refusing to stoop to retaliation, or even to harbour thoughts of bitterness.

In such a spirit, the truest and most profound human happiness in the circumstances can be found. The secret of such power is in the Third Degree, symbolised by the tragedy of Hiram Abif. It is the climax of the Craft ceremonies of Freemasonry. It stirs men to serve the truth by steadfastly maintaining their noblest aspirations even in the face of appalling adversity, out of which can rise a more perfect tribute to our Masonic ideals.

Next in importance, and in many ways equal in interest, is the strange and captivating 'search for that which was lost'.

This has an historical background. To the early Jewish people, frequently a name was peculiarly identified with a person. It was held in reverence. Hence it was often secret. Hence a substitute name was used in daily life. In particular the name of God was held in extreme reverence. This holy name was never pronounced above a whisper.

After a while it was only spoken by the High Priest, and then only when alone in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. It is understood that at the time of the Babylonian captivity, the High Priest was killed before he had the opportunity to pass the word on to his successor. Hence 'the word' was lost.

All this appears in the ritual in the form of a story or fable, called an allegory. So why does the ritual not explain fully and clearly the meaning of this symbolism? This is one of the genuine mysteries of the Third Degree, which leaves the candidate to find out the meaning for himself. It provides him with one of the most important challenges in his career as a Craft Freemason.

Freemasonry's brotherly love began with the close ties of our forefathers – the operative Masons. Living together, working together, planning together and protecting each other soon made men learn to love each other.

Through their early and simple ritual it may well be that the Five Points of Fellowship had its origin. It would have united them in one sincere bond of fraternal affection. We can summarise this remarkable concept as follows:

In stretching forth the hand of friendship, and a pledge of brotherly love to render him assistance.

It pledges us to support a brother in all his praiseworthy undertakings, and are reminded that we should press forward in the exercise of charity and kindness to a distressed fellow creature, whether Freemason or not.

A brother, when at prayer, in his devotions to Almighty God should always remember another brother's welfare as his own, when the petition and prayer for self intermingles with aspirations of benevolence for a friend.

It demonstrates that a brother's lawful secrets when entrusted to us, we should keep as our own. If he confides to us a secret, we are made keepers of his trust as well as his secret. To betray a trust is not the act of a brother Freemason.

We should never revile a brother's character behind his back but, rather when attacked by others, support and defend it. "Speak no ill of the dead, since they cannot defend themselves".

A Master Mason's rights and privileges are to be described in principle and in spirit rather than in detail. Beyond all specific duties, rights and privileges, exists a region in which all are mingled together – the whole domain of Masonry's teachings, ritual and symbols, history, ideals of jurisprudence, philosophy, literature – the whole Royal Art.

It is his right to be taught that Art, and have it in its fullness, none of it being reserved for a privileged few. It is his to enjoy all the privileges it offers to the spirit, the mind and heart. All that Freemasonry is, all that it means, all that it has to give or offer, belongs to every individual Mason in the same way and to the same extent as to all others.

However onerous one's duties may prove to be, or however rigidly rights may at times appear to be regulated, such burdens sink into nothingness by comparison with this one privilege: that Freemasonry, in all its height, breadth, length and richness, belongs to you, to use and enjoy.

by Raymond Hollins

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PRESENTATION OF THE MASTER MASON'S APRON

When you were initiated you were ceremonially presented with the lambskin or white leather apron. You were told that it was "... an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. More ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honourable than the Garter or any other order". We are here today to present you with your own apron which is slightly different than the plain white lambskin.

The present form of the Masonic Apron that is in use today was standardised at the formation of the United Grand Lodge of England in 1813. At that time, there were in existence several versions of the apron ranging from those that imitated the Operative apron with a high bib front and neck ties to some very ornate and decorative versions that did not really resemble the original aprons at all. The version that they approved is very close to what we still use today.

The central portion of our apron is still white leather and therefore all the teachings of your 1st degree are exemplified. In other words it is still an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. The colour white also denotes purity.

Most Masons think no more about their apron than that. It is an article of clothing that must be worn when attending Lodge and its symbolism was taught in the first degree. To the thoughtful Mason however, the apron is a trestle-board of the finest quality and will remind him of many Masonic points each time he puts it on.

The blue fringe, which surrounds the white leather centre, is a constant reminder of the universality of Freemasonry. Its unbroken nature reminds us of the unbroken bond of friendship and Brotherly Love which exists among members of the Fraternity. Some believe that the colour of light blue was used to denote the canopy of heaven but the colour also denotes universal friendship.

In ancient times, it was believed that everything in the universe was composed of combinations of four basic elements: earth, air, fire and water. It is interesting to note that the traditional symbols of these four elements are contained on the Master Masons apron: earth is represented by the rectangular base of the apron, air is represented by the colour of light blue contained in the trim, fire is represented by a triangle with the apex pointed up as represented by the formation the rosettes are in and water is represented by a triangle with its apex pointed down in the same manner as the apron's flap. This is a further reminder of the universal nature of Freemasonry.

The rectangular shape of the apron also teaches us certain lessons. The four right angles teach purity, truth, sincerity and honesty which are the generally accepted foundations of morality. The four sides of the rectangle represent the four cardinal virtues of Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice.

The triangular nature of the flap is interesting for several reasons. First the triangle is the ancient symbol of the Deity. The apex pointed downward can be taken to denote the watchfulness of the Deity and the descent of benevolence and knowledge to created matter, or man. It is also a reminder of the generally accepted threefold nature of the Deity:

Egyptians- Horus, Isis, Osiris
Hindus - Brahma, Vishnu, Siva
Hebrews - Elohim, Elshaddai, Jehovah
Christians - Father, Son, Holy Spirit

The two vertical ribbons on the apron are generally thought of as remnants of the Operative apron, which was at times worn with the chest flap down and tied at the waist in the front. When worn like this the frayed ends of the tied strings would dangle down much like our ornamental ribbons today.

However there are other things these two ribbons can remind us of. First are the two pillars which were on the front porch of King Solomon's Temple, B*** and J*****. Of course that calls all of their symbolism to mind. We can also be reminded of the two parallel lines of the first degree which represented Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist and then remember that their teachings are meant to be guidelines for our own behaviour.

The seven tassels suspended from each ribbon are generally thought to remind us of the seven liberal arts and sciences. They can also remind us of the four sides of the rectangular apron and the three sides of the triangular flap, the first representing the material nature of the universe, the second the spiritual nature and therefore once again we have a reminder of universality. They also can be taken to represent the seven primary colours which when united result in white light which is always the symbol of perfect knowledge.

The three rosettes on the apron, in addition to the thoughts expressed earlier, can remind us of all the threes we have been exposed to in Freemasonry:

Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth

- Square, level and plumb
- Morality, equality and rectitude of life
- Wisdom, strength and beauty - Doric, Ionic and Corinthian
- Three Grand Masters at the Temple - Three Master Masons to form a Lodge
- Three Great Lights
- Three lesser lights
- Three degrees - etc.

The five exposed angles of the apron when worn are emblematical of the five points of fellowship (two right angles and the three angles of the triangle).

The three angles of the triangle, the five exposed angles of the worn apron, and the sum of the four sides of the rectangle and the three sides of the triangle being seven gives us a reference to the three, five and seven steps of the flight of winding stairs to

the middle chamber. This of course brings to mind our three Grand Masters, the three degrees, the five orders of architecture, the five senses of human nature and the seven liberal arts and sciences.

The belt or tie strings are generally recognized as a reminder of "the length of our cable tow". When attached the belt forms a complete circle around the body and this can remind us of the eternal nature of God, no beginning and never ending.

The three primary shapes contained within the apron, the circle, triangle and the rectangle, are emblematical of the spirit, the three fold revelation of God and the material universe or man (for in the creation of man all the elements of the universe were united). Therefore our apron represents the totality of nature as we know it.

It is unclear whether our Brethren designed our apron in 1813 with all of this in mind or if it was just fortunate that the parts fit so many lessons. What is important to us is that we never wear our apron as a mere piece of clothing but remember instead that it is a teaching tool and a reminder of the lessons we have learned during our progress in Freemasonry.

Finally, may you ever wear this apron with pride, and rest assured: if you never disgrace this apron, it will never disgrace you.

THE ASHLAR



Famous Freemasons — Part 1

Freemasons come from all walks of life and so I thought it might be of interest to read of some of the well-known personalities who have been, or are, members of the Craft. This is the first part of what will be many listings over the next few months. Information has been downloaded from various sites and is by no means complete.

William "Bud" Abbott - Famous half of the Abbott & Costello comedy team.

Harold Abrahams - was a British athlete of Jewish origin. He was Olympic champion in 1924 in the 100 metres sprint, a feat depicted in the 1981 movie Chariots of Fire.

Edwin E. Aldrin - Known as "**Buzz**" - American astronaut who as a crew member of Apollo 11 became the second human being to walk on the moon (July 20, 1969). 33rd Degree, Montclair Lodge No. 144 New Jersey.

Thomas Arne (1710 - 1778) - Rule Britannia was a British composer, best known for the patriotic song Rule, Britannia! He also wrote a version of God Save the King, which was to become the British national anthem, and the song A-Hunting We Will Go. Arne was the leading British theatre composer of the eighteenth century working at Drury Lane and Covent Garden.

Benedict Arnold - Major General and early American Revolution war hero. Eventually changed allegiance and sided with the British, being branded a traitor ever after. Affiliated member of Hiram Lodge No.1, New Haven CT.

Elias Ashmole - Founder member of the Royal Society and became the first known English speculative Mason at Warrington, Lancashire, in 1646.

Gene Autry - Screen western star - American actor who made some 90 movies from the 1930s through the 1950s, cowboy singer ("Back in the Saddle Again" and more), and professional sports team owner (original owner of the California Angels baseball team). Many young people today have grown up listening to his rendition of "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer". Brother Gene was a "true gentleman". Catoosa Lodge No. 185, Catoosa, Oklahoma.

Sir Joseph Banks - Noted naturalist who accompanied Capt. Cook on his journeys around the world. Founder of the famous Kew Gardens, London. Somerset House Lodge UGLE

Dr. T. J. Barnardo — was a philanthropist and founder and director of homes for poor children, born in Dublin. From the foundation of the first Barnardo's home in 1870 to the date of Barnardo's death, nearly 100,000 children had been rescued, trained and placed out in life. Shadwell Clerke Lodge No. 1910 UGLE.

William "Count" Basie - Orchestra leader / composer American jazz pianist, Wisdom Lodge No. 102 PHA, Chicago and Shriner, New York.

Lawrence Bell - Bell Aircraft Corporation.

Irving Berlin – American songwriter and composer who wrote more than 1,500 songs including "Alexander's Ragtime Band" (1911) and several musical comedies like Annie Get Your Gun (1946). Shriner and Scottish Rite. Munn Lodge No. 190, New York City.

Mel Blanc - If you've heard cartoon characters Bugs Bunny, Elmer Fudd, Barney Rubble of the Flintstones, Daffy Duck, Porky Pig, Sylvester the cat or others, you've heard the voice this 50+ year Mason who brought so much pleasure to so many children for so many years. Mid Day Lodge No. 188, Oregon

THE ORIGINS OF THE GAME OF RUGBY TO SEE WHY IT SITS SO WELL WITH THE VALUES OF FREEMASONRY

The Maori chieftain threw back his head and roared. 'Ka mate! Ka mate! Ka ora! Ka ora!' he shouted, advancing towards the Welsh players. 'Tis death! 'Tis death! 'Tis life! 'Tis life!' Standing in front of the sportsmen, quaking slightly, was Des Barnett, president of the Welsh Rugby Union at the time of the first Rugby World Cup in 1987. The team had been invited to a traditional Maori welcome in Hamilton, on the North Island of New Zealand. As president, Barnett was told that he had to face the haka war dance – 'because I was their chief' – and so there he stood, as the Maori rolled his eyes and flopped his tongue, wondering how to reply. 'I was admiring his beautiful outfit, when suddenly there, swinging on his chest, I saw a square and compasses,' Barnett, a mason since 1967, recalls. 'I gave him a sort of hailing sign, putting my hand on my heart and said, "I bring you fraternal greetings."' The chieftain stopped. 'You mason?' he smiled. And then he gestured towards his tribe, all of whom, it turned out, were members of a Maori lodge.

Now, 24 years on, the World Cup has returned to New Zealand. The sport has changed immensely, moving in the 1990s towards a fully professional game. In 1987, the Home Unions were not keen on the World Cup, fearing it might destroy their own Five Nations Championship – it began under a political cloud because of the expulsion of South Africa over apartheid, and a military coup in Fiji. Wales, Ireland and Scotland flew out on the same plane. Barnett recalls that the Welsh squad had spent just one weekend together, while New Zealand had trained for months. Little wonder that the All Blacks demolished Wales in the semi-finals 49-6 on their way to winning their first and, so far, only World Cup.

Yet the tournament was a success for Wales. They beat England in the quarter-finals (always the result that matters most), and came third in a play-off match against Australia, with Paul Thornburn striking a late conversion from out wide to seal a 22-21 win. 'A New Zealand brewer gave the Welsh players four bottles of lager a day, left untouched,' Barnett says. 'Until the third-place play-off, and then they partied.'

SHARED IDEALS

Rugby may have changed, but the theme of camaraderie, teamwork and post-match enjoyment endures. They are tenets most Freemasons share. 'Rugby was known as the Freemasonry of the world,' says Barnett, who was initiated in Hen Bont Lodge in South Wales, and was Junior Grand Deacon in 2004. Alan Grimsdell, the president of the English RFU in 1987, is also a mason, but they only discovered this bond sometime after the World Cup. Rugby, like Freemasonry, developed over a long time before finding the form we know today. In the earliest days, villages played different versions of a football game with their own rules, much like the early lodges developed individual rituals.

BREAKING AWAY

In 1863, meetings were held to form a Football Association at the Freemasons Tavern, attached to Freemasons' Hall. It was split between supporters of the version of the game played at Rugby in Warwickshire, in which almost any violence was acceptable, and the Cambridge rules, which banned catching the ball and hacking your opponents. 'It would do away with all the courage and pluck from the game,' said Francis Maude Campbell, of the Blackheath club. So, rugby and football parted.

Rugby remains the more manly – some might say thuggish – game. Peter Larter, a former second row forward who played 24 times for England, as well as touring South Africa with the 1968 Lions, has seen enough violence to qualify him to sit on the citing panel for this year's World Cup, as he did in 2007.

'I've been there, seen it and done it,' he says. 'When I played, there were certain crafty players. My job at the World Cup is to provide evidence of foul play.' He admits, though, that since the game went professional, it has become cleaner. 'A lot of boots in the back or high tackles are accidental,' he says.

Larter was initiated into Freemasonry in 1977, when he was stationed in Germany with the RAF, joining Saxony Lodge. Through the late Don White, the former England flanker and, from 1969 to 1971, the first England national coach, he was encouraged to join Cumton Lodge in Northamptonshire.

In 2001, White and Larter were founder members of William Webb Ellis Lodge, which, like the World Cup trophy, is named after the schoolboy who, 'with a fine disregard for the rules of football... first took the ball in his arms and ran with it'.

The lodge meets in Rugby, just 250 yards from the field where Webb Ellis played, twice a year, with the December installation always coinciding with a home match played by Rugby Lions – the National League Three Midlands team who recently appointed Neil Back, the former England flanker, as head coach, with a mission to take the side into the Premiership. The meeting, which starts at 9.30am, is concluded in good time for lunch, followed by an afternoon watching rugby. Conviviality remains something sacred to rugby and Freemasonry.

'In rugby, as in Freemasonry, you make friends for life,' Larter says. The same spirit inspired the foundation of Rugby Football Lodge six years ago in Huddersfield, the town where rugby league split from rugby union at a meeting in 1895.

HOUSEHOLD NAMES

One of the most enduring connections between the Craft and rugby is in the name on the trophy for which Australia and New Zealand compete every year. The Bledisloe Cup is named for Charles Bathurst: Lord Bledisloe, the Governor-General of New Zealand in the 1930s, who was also Grand Master of the country's Grand Lodge.

Many illustrious players have been Freemasons, including several members of the dominant 1970s Wales team. At least two England captains have been masons: Eric Evans, the hooker, who led England in 1957 to their first grand slam in the Five Nations for 29 years, was a member of Lodge of Unanimity, No. 89. Ron Jacobs, the prop who led England in 1964, was initiated in St Andrew Lodge in Cambridgeshire, and was a member of William Webb Ellis Lodge until his death in 2002.

The connection exists among modern players, too. Richard Hibbard, the Ospreys hooker who has played many times for Wales, was initiated into Celtic Eagle Lodge in Port Talbot three years ago. Having served as a steward, he is now Inner Guard, although says that he will wait until his rugby career is over before trying to go through the chair. 'I love freemasonry,' Hibbard explains. 'It's similar to rugby because of the friendships you make.'

Another rugby-playing mason is John Freedman, the Australia prop who managed the national side in 1973 and is in Lodge Vacluse in New South Wales. At a 40-year reunion, Freedman spoke of 'a pleasant ethos in rugby socially, not dissimilar to Freemasonry'. Brotherly love, relief and truth: they are the three principles that bond the Craft together – as closely as the three rows of a scrum.

Patrick Kidd is a writer for The Times. His book "The Worst of Rugby" is published by Pitch

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Humour

A Mason went for an interview for a job, explaining his qualifications with Masonic inferences. He then asked for an exorbitant salary, hoping that his Masonic inferences would carry favour. The interviewer told him that his qualifications were fine. "What about the salary?" asked the man. "Halve it and you begin," replied the interviewer.

An elder brother delivered a speech at the festive board, and as he was an antique dealer he coupled his profession and top quality "Objet d'art' with the top quality found in Masonry. Inviting the brethren to be upstanding to drink a toast, he reached down to pick up his glass of wine and, without looking, inadvertently picked up a jug of mint sauce left over from the lamb dinner. At the back of the room, one brother turned to another and remarked, "Typical antique dealer, only takes things in mint condition."

The Master was absolutely astounded to find a pretty young woman sitting next to the newly-initiated candidate. Upon asking the initiate to explain her presence, the young member remarked, "Well, sir, this is my wife, and you did say that I could restore myself to my personal comforts."

Candidate to Tyler whilst being prepared for initiation, "At the Mele golf club I have a locker for my clothes."

A mean Mason when asked only to give paper money, wrote a cheque for twenty-five Vatu.

A lazy Mason was moaning to his foreman about low wages. The foreman replied, "If you'd be a bit more operative we'd be a bit more speculative."

The Master of the lodge and his two wardens went golfing one day. As they were about to tee off the first hole the course marshal came and asked if a young woman could join their group. Being a charitable group they all agreed. She turned out to be a scratch golfer but on the 18th. hole she drove the green in two and was about to putt for an eagle. She then asked the three brothers if any one of them helped her make the put she would be eternally grateful. Well then, the Junior Warden look at the putt and told her it was uphill and broke to the right. Well the Senior Warden being a more expert workman looked at it second, and said "That is partially correct but five inches from the hole it breaks back to the left. Well the Master of Lodge then took his turn. He looked at the put carefully and then went over to the ball, Picked it up and exclaimed "It's a gimme!!!"
