

Second Masonic District

April, 2007

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From The District

Brethren,

On behalf of the Second Masonic District we welcome all the newly raised brethren into the oldest fraternity in the world and to the **Second Masonic District** where you are **SECOND** to **NONE**. The final numbers are not in yet in but more then 260 men took this opportunity to become a mason. The Second District again unofficially led the state in membership development for the one day class.

We congratulate all the lodges that participated in the One Day Class. The degree work of the day was exceptional and all who participated should be commended for their hard work.

April 30th will be the next **District Officer Association meeting**. Jefferson Lodge #90 will be hosting to meeting.

June 3rd is the Ohio Masonic Home Day in Springfield. The Second Masonic District will again have a food both at the event. We will need volunteers for cooking and selling. Please see WB Walt Barner if you would like to participate.

June 9th is the Second Masonic District's Outdoor Raising, at the Lemay Estates in Waynesville. If you or your lodge would like to be considered for the degree work please contact your district deputy for consideration.

The opening ceremony for the Ohio Special Olympics will be June 22nd at the Jesse Owens Track at The Ohio State University. Remember that all monies raised for the Special Olympics must be sent to the Grand Lodge of Ohio by June 1st for your lodge to receive credit this year. All

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monies received after June 1st will be credited to the 2008 Masonic Year.

Submitted by:

WB Larry B Cornett

1st Vice President 2nd Masonic District

District Deputy Grand Masters

A Concise History of Freemasonry

Is there a Proven History?

Empirical evidence supporting the history of Freemasonry prior to the 18th Century is hard to find. Theories vary wildly from the plausible to the sensational. Most masons believe that Freemasonry is derived from the early medieval stonemasons guilds and enquire no further. However, a well rounded study in Freemasonry should look more deeply at all possible roots, even if only to be able to dismiss most of them.

There is no commonly accepted Ancient History of Freemasonry – even UGLE does not publish a house view prior to its own initial conception in 1717. This is curious because a resemblance of modern Freemasonry (judging from a corpus of medieval manuscripts) was already in place beforehand, even if its pedigree was lost.

The Conventional Explanation

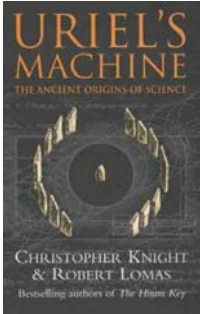


Most historians concur that Freemasonry, in its current form, probably developed as an adjunct from medieval stonemasons through the ages leading up to the Operative Stone Masons Guilds. Just how or when the transition took place from Operative Guild Free-Stone Masonry to Speculative intellectual Freemasonry (using stonemasons tools, clothing and customs as allegorical aids to teach their precepts) is not clear, although Scottish Lodge Kilwinnings records showing non Operatives being admitted by at least 1672 and some Lodges in England were entirely non Operative by the time of Elias Ashmole in 1646.

What was so special about stonemasons? They possessed great skill to create the castles, cathedrals and palaces and the necessary sculpted works and ornaments demanded of their masters. Such skill must have seemed almost magical to the vast illiterate masses. They were clearly the elite of the labour force, had secret customs and marks (as shown opposite) and would have attracted some of the brightest non-educated recruits. However, given the complexity and the emphasis on morality of the various Masonic rituals and teachings, this simple explanation of Freemasonry seems inadequate. To obtain a deeper historical appreciation, one could consider the various ancient and medieval legends with an open mind and then decide for yourself which ones are a better fit.



Legend: The Ancient Scientific Perspective



It has recently been suggested (by Knight and Lomas) that Freemasonry ultimately evolved from Megalithic tribes who, having discovered science and astronomy, constructed numerous astounding astronomical observatories including Newgrange on the river Boyne, Bryn Celli Ddu and Stonehenge between 7100 BC and 2500 BC. It is believed that these sites enabled those tribes to chart the seasons and years by observing the rotations of the sun and the third brightest object in the sky, Venus. These were essential skills as without such timekeeping, civilisation would be hopelessly unable to plan or progress beyond mere day to day subsistence.

Indeed, the Book of Enoch, discovered amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls from the Qumran and from which many higher Masonic Orders draw their inspiration, explains the scientific principles by which those earliest observatories (or Uriels Machines) operate. It is then argued that this knowledge was shared and taken to the East prior to a predicted and devastating comet impact and subsequent world flood in 3150 BC.

Many survivors maintained Enochian and Noachide customs and when the Enochian-Zadokite priests were expelled from Jerusalem in 70 AD by the Romans, having first hidden their scrolls and treasures deep under the ruins of Solomons Temple as recorded in the Qumran Copper Scroll, it seems possible that their alledged descendants, the founding Knights Templar families led by Hugues de Payens, would return in 1140 AD to dig them up and retrieve them. A great story, but it is doubtful whether this theory will take hold in serious academic circles.



The mystical 5-pointed star set on a rose with the 40 year path of Venus plotted relative to the sun.

Legend: The Ancient Stone Mason Perspective



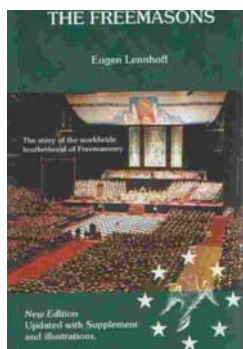
Whilst Freemasonry draws much imagery from the history and construction of King Solomons Temple (@ 945 BC) by masons from the Phoenician city of Tyre, it seems fanciful to claim direct Stone-Mason links from that era. Nevertheless, skills in the manipulation of stone had been well established by then and had been handed down through the ages and through the hands of many peoples including craftsmen from the Greek, Byzantine and Roman eras.

Certain present day Masonic words and meanings seem rooted from the time of the early Egyptians of this era: The virtues of truth and justice were said by them to be “on the square”. Confucius in 500BC referred to the squareness of actions; even Aristotle in 350 BC associates square actions with honest dealings. The square and its symbolism is very old and has maintained a remarkable consistency of meaning over the centuries. However, it does not necessarily follow that Freemasonry began in those eras any more than trying to assert that Euclid was a Freemason because his 47th Proposition (as shown on the WMs jewel) has relevance in modern Freemasonry!



Legend next informs us that Athelstan, having subjugated most of the minor kingdoms of England, gathered together many skilled masons and established York Rite Masonry in 926 AD by granting them a Royal Charter. The charter enabled the stonemasons to meet in general assembly once a year and seems to have been a catalyst for a host of construction projects including numerous abbeys, castles and fortresses. Athelstan's importance to Stonemasons is mentioned in both the Regius and Cooke Manuscripts. The Scottish Rite, by contrast, was established many centuries later by Chevalier Andrew Ramsay (Ramsay's Oration of 1737) and other exiled Stuart Scots in France who were plotting the restoration of James II. This has led to a diversity of subsequent Orders following the three basic Craft Degrees. Click [here](#) to find a drawing depicting the York and Scottish Rite relationship.

The Medieval Operative Masonic Guilds



We have evidence that Operative Masonic guilds (or gilds) existed in Scotland as early as 1057 and possibly in England from 1220 when we know the Masons Livery Company was in existence. Those guilds, associations or Compagnonnage as they were known in France and mainland Europe, were conscripted to produce sufficient masons of all qualities to satisfy the aspirations of Kings and the Church in their respective building programmes.

In days where travel and communication for all but King and Church was highly restricted, the guilds are believed to have developed their own methods of introduction and secret modes of recognition when working on various programmes around the country. These were essential in order to distinguish a skilled master from the aspiring apprentice. This was important because they were no written credentials in those days because only top Master Masons could read, let alone write letters of introduction on expensive parchment. However, some historians (chief among them John J Robinson) argue it is difficult to prove English stone masons guilds (unlike Scottish guilds) existed at all given the relative lack of evidence available to corroborate them.

Box Club Charity Theory

A more recent theory suggests modern Freemasonry developed from charitable beginnings. In the 1600s many trades operated what have become known as box clubs where their members would set aside earnings for the group or individual members to fall back on if they suffered hard times. Those without such assistance usually starved through lack of other reliable welfare support. Evidence indicates these box clubs began to admit members outside their trade and had many of the characteristics of early masonic lodges. Perhaps Freemasonry arose from an early and successful box club framework which was later taken over by the leading intellectual lights that emerged in the seventeenth century?



The Knights Templar

Masonic legend and some tradition is borrowed from the fanciful stories of the Knights Templar, an enigmatic and powerful military Order of fighting monks set up by Hugues de Payens in 1118. Their illustrious history has been the subject of numerous fascinating books and their effect upon the course of world history, religion and commerce is much

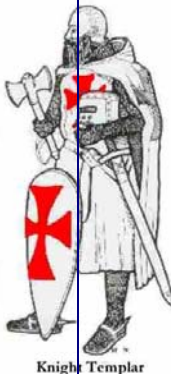


greater than generally recognised. They were also responsible for the erection of many churches (eg Middle Temple on the Embankment in London shown on the left) and the assembly of numerous large estates and would themselves have employed a great many stone masons.

Although their effect upon Freemasonry is very uncertain, they had amassed considerable wealth and influence in London, Scotland and throughout the United Kingdom that cannot be overlooked. Most serious historians dismiss a direct link to the Knights Templars for lack of evidence. However, is it possible that the Knights Templars might have shared some of their knowledge and rituals with their more senior stone masons with whom they employed who later incorporated them into their own traditions?



The Knights Templars ostensible purpose was the protection of pilgrims on their journey from the coastal port of Jaffra to Jerusalem. Initially however, there were too few of them to be an effective escort. In any event, for the first nine years of their existence, they were far too busy purposefully digging under the ruins of King Solomons Temple to be offering any support to Pilgrims. It seems clear that during their excavations they discovered something of immense spiritual or material value for they swiftly became very rich and powerful and enjoyed this position for nearly two hundred years until the fall of the Holy Lands. Evidence of Templar excavations was found by Lieutenant Warren, Royal Engineers in 1867. The Knights Templars were effectively extinguished on Friday 13th October 1307 by King Philippe of France who, broke at the time, stole their lands and possessions (a fate he inflicted upon French Jews two years earlier) and with collusion from the Pope, instructed the Inquisition to torture any Templars he managed to round up to gain evidence to legitimise his grand theft. Many of the fit and able Knights (and their entourage) and most of their wealth managed to escape. It is from their exodus from France and other parts of Europe that much of Masonic folklore stems.



Many Knights possibly settled in the comparative backwaters of Scotland, a land ruled by the excommunicated Robert The Bruce and therefore considered comparatively safe, being largely beyond the reach of the Pope and the Inquisition. No doubt they brought with them their treasures, relics, knowledge and ceremonies as depicted on the ground floor South West window stone carving at Roslin Chapel shown below. Some knights are believed to have travelled much further than the known lands of the times and even managed to find America. Certain corn carvings (see left) at Roslin Chapel appear to confirm this.

Given a background of organised secrecy, could it have been possible that Stonemasons guilds became convenient, if not unwitting, conduits of social refuge through the ages? Templars, who required a degree of privacy from State or Church in their thoughts, discussions or travel arrangements would have found stonemasons guilds attractive. History however, contains virtually no written references linking KT and Freemasonry until the 18th C. Most serious historians believe that a link with the Knights Templars only came about through marketing skills displayed by Ramsay in his Oration in 1737 when he attributed (in error) the origins of Freemasonry to Crusaders and the Knights of St John. Ramsey, a talented self-publicist, would have

known that such a pedigree was bound to impress the French audience whom he was addressing. Robert Brydon, in his book *The Masons and the Rosy Cross*, informs us that Alexander Duechar confused the issue still further by his attempts to revive Scottish Templarism and integrating it within the ambit of Freemasonry.



Rosslyn Chapel

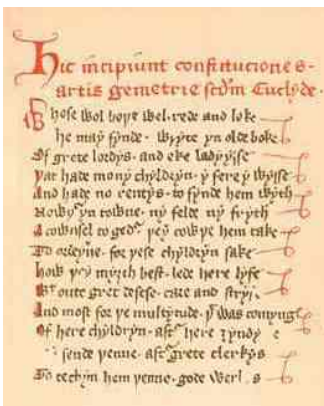
No discussion on Masonic history would be truly complete without a reference to [Rosslyn Chapel](#), situated 5 miles south of Edinburgh and built in 1446 by Sir William St Clair whose family had deep Templar ancestry and alleged family ties back to Hugues de



Payens. Rosslyn Chapel took 40 years to build and is highly embellished with Templar, Enochian and possibly some Masonic imagery. Given that it was constructed in an age when books could be censored or burned, it seems that William St Clair was intent on leaving permanent and peculiar encoded messages in the fabric of the chapel for posterity.

The chapel contains the astounding “Apprentice Pillar” and numerous other intriguing stone carvings – one, on an external window (the photograph is on this web page) even depicts some form of initiation. Curiously, the official Rosslyn Chapel guidebook states that the William St Clair, brother of Edward, was granted the Charters of 1630 from the Masons of Scotland, recognising that the position of Grand Master Mason of Scotland had been hereditary in the St Clair family since it was granted by James II in 1441, the original charter having been destroyed in a fire. Whilst the relevance of Roslin Chapel within Freemasonry is highly controversial, its architectural features and carvings are outstanding and well worth a visit.

Proven History: Pre 1700



So much for legend, what about the facts? It is acknowledged that the [Regius Manuscript](#) held in the British Museum is the oldest genuine record of Masonic relevance and was written in @ 1390. Its author was probably a priest and this MS takes the form of an historical and instructional poem. Interestingly, the phrase “So Mote it be” is first quoted from this text. Next, it is important to consider the [Cooke Manuscript](#) (also in the British Museum) written by a Speculative mason in 1450. This is an important document because many current Masonic usages (eg the Constitutions written by Anderson in 1723) have obviously borrowed heavily from its content, which includes reference to the seven Liberal Arts and Sciences and the building of Solomons Temple. There are approximately 100 manuscripts, collectively known as the Old Charges, grouped together in four families held by various museums worldwide.

Next, we know that the London Company of Freemasons were granted Arms in 1473 and their coat included three castles and compasses and were incorporated within Metropolitan Grand Lodge of London's arms upon inauguration in 2003.

In 1583, a William Schaw was appointed by King James VI (later James I of England) as Master of the Work and Warden General. In 1598 he issued the first of the now famous Schaw Statutes which set out the duties its members owed to their Lodge. It also imposed penalties for unsatisfactory work and prohibited work with unqualified masons. More importantly for Freemasons today, Schaw drew up a second Statute in 1599. The importance of this document lies in the fact that it makes the first veiled reference to the existence of esoteric knowledge within the craft of stone masonry. It also reveals that The Mother Lodge of Scotland, Lodge Kilwinning No. 0 existed at that time. His regulations required all lodges to keep written records, meet at specific times and test members in the Art of Memory. As a consequence he is regarded by some as the founder of modern Freemasonry as we know it today. On the right is a photo of the ruins of the Chapter House, the site of Kilwinning's first Lodge meetings.



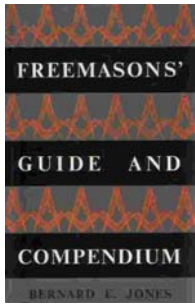
The earliest known record of a Masonic initiation anywhere is that of John Boswell, Laird of Auchenleck, who was initiated in the Lodge of Edinburgh according to the lodge minutes of 8 June 1600. That lodge was Operative and Boswell appears to be an example of one of the earliest Speculative initiations and adds weight to a case for the Transition Theory of Freemasonry, at least in Scotland. The earliest records of an initiation in England include Sir Robert Moray in 1641 and Elias Ashmole in 1646. Abroad, the first native-born American to be made a Mason was probably Jonathan Belcher, in 1704, who was then the Governor of Massachusetts.



Ashmole was a renowned author and scholar and knew contemporary Great Thinkers of the day including Robert Boyle, Sir Robert Moray, Christopher Wren, Isaac Newton and Dr John Wilkins – all early members of the Royal Society, which began its life as the Invisible College, an organization at one time led by Francis Bacon, before securing a Royal Charter from Charles II in 1662. It is understood the Invisible College often met in the early years in the Compton Room at Canonbury Tower in North London, a room embellished with wood panel carvings of Masonic significance commissioned by Bacon like the one below.



One can imagine the level of secrecy that must have surrounded the Invisible College in its early days and in the notoriously treacherous years before and after the Reformation – the consequences of taking the wrong sides or inviting criticism of any kind in those days was often fatal and is commented on frequently enough by Pepys in his famous diary. To get a flavour of the times in mid Seventeenth Century England, bear in mind that slavery was still universal and the gunpowder plot was in recent memory. Galileo was in deep trouble with the Catholic Church by insisting that the earth revolved around the sun, Bacon's works were banned by Rome and The Inquisition and the Courts, at least in Scotland, were still burning witches and heretics. These were still times of fear, state control and comparative intolerance. Personal safety therefore probably demanded that discussion of anything with an esoteric, moral or scientific flavour take place underground.

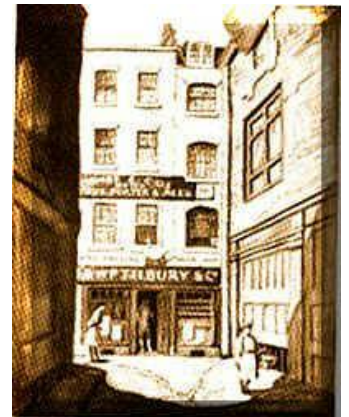


So why would Thinkers and educated classes quietly develop or promote the concept of Freemasonry? Might it be possible that those opposed to intellectual and political suppression went underground and retained their anonymity and safety by clothing themselves with the appearance of an operative organization afforded by an early masonic lodge structure? It is then easy to see that embellishment of that structure by the adoption of old stonemasons Manuscripts and a perceived pedigree dating back to King Solomon would have given their membership a certain degree of authenticity and appeal.

Given that non stone-masons (Speculatives) were clearly being initiated from this time in England, some historians believe that Freemasonry was in transition at this point from pure Operative Masonry to Non Operative or Speculative Freemasonry. Equally, it could be argued that around this time, England copied the Scottish Masonic structure and set up an entirely Speculative form of Freemasonry which merely bore allegorical likeness to much earlier Scottish Operative lodges. This opinion has value when one considers that a disproportionate number of early Premier Grand Masters were Scottish and that the Constitutions were written by a Scotsman, Anderson.

Proven History: Post 1700

Little is known of Masonic activity for seventy years after Ashmole's initiation in 1646 except that general London Club life became very popular. In 1717, four London lodges (the Apple Tree Tavern in Charles Street, the Goose & Gridiron Ale-house in St. Pauls Churchyard (pictured opposite), Crown Ale House near Drury Street and the Rummer & Grapes Tavern in Channel Row, Westminster) formed The Premier Grand Lodge of England. The date was St John The Baptists Day, 24 June 1717. The Inaugural Festive Board was held at the Goose and Gridiron, St Pauls (right).



Anthony Sayer (left) presided over this feast as Grand Master and Premier Grand Lodge took on the Coat of Arms first granted to the London Company of Freemasons in 1473. Interestingly, those founding lodges had a very small membership of 15 Freemasons each except for "Rummer & Grapes which had 70 members. In 1723 the Constitutions were written by Anderson whose father was PM of a lodge in Aberdeen. Clearly, our Scottish brethren had a lot to contribute towards the initial development of English Freemasonry.

Interestingly, it has been suggested that Premier Grand Lodge only came about as a result of the threat by the Scottish Jacobite revolt in 1715. Anti-Scottish sentiment in those days might have prompted nervous London Freemasons to disassociate themselves from their Scottish roots, hide their history and strategically create a governing body allied to the Hanoverian Crown. If so, little wonder that Freemasonry now prohibits

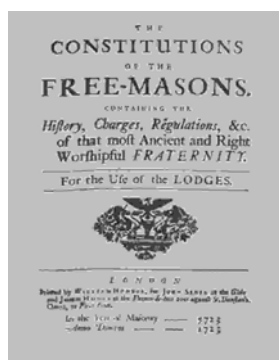
discussion of religion and politics at meetings!

In 1730, masonic ritual having been learned parrot-fashion up until then was widely published for the first time in Prichard's exposure entitled *Masonry Dissected*. Ritual prior to that point followed a two-degree system and took the form of a combination of catechisms, some simplified symbolism and the Old Charges (see Jones and Hamer's *The Early Masonic Catechisms* edited by Henry Carr). Some historians (eg Murray Lyon) believe that this two-tier degree system was expanded when Desaguliers (Grand Master in 1719) wrote the Third Degree and grew again when Laurence Dermott (probably) introduced the Fourth (ie Royal Arch) Degree in 1752.



It seems reasonably clear that by this time (ie the period between 1690 and 1725), owing to a spate of exposures, that numerous current Masonic usages, customs and ritual were already in practice: The words “hele” and “conceal” and “points of fellowship” are both found in the Edinburgh Register House Manuscript of 1696; the Square Compass and Bible are mentioned together in the Dumfries MS No. 4 of @ 1710, a London newspaper in 1723 salaciously described the five Noble Orders of Architecture and Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, made its appearance in print in a pamphlet printed in London in 1724. The word Tyler probably came into usage around this time and is thought to be derived from the French Tailleur, ie one who cuts.

The popularity of Freemasonry grew with great speed throughout the UK and around the world from 1717 following in the wake of British settlers, merchants and the military. In 1731 the first American Grand Lodge obtained its Constitution, The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, making it the first Grand Lodge in the United States of America. Over the next 100 years, Freemasonry attracted many leading lights forming the cream of the intellectual and scientific establishment including Sir Robert Walpole, Robert Burns, Mozart, Darwin, Frederick the Great and from the USA, Franklin, and Washington. Interestingly, the Duke of Wellington was initiated in 1790 at a cost of £2 5s 5d



However, initial successes in the UK were followed by a bad patch. This was caused by Premier Grand Lodge making drastic changes to the ritual and passwords and the creation of a third degree out of the previous two-degree ritual system. The reason for this change is unclear. One explanation might be Premier Grand Lodge's exasperation with increasing requests for alms from poor and distressed immigrant freemasons arriving in increasing numbers from Ireland and Scotland prompted by the Industrial



Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Fraudulent claims exploiting Masonic charity from information gleaned from the recent media “exposures” probably also upset them. Either way, the changes in the ritual effectively barred most Scottish and Irish Freemasons because they no longer had the right passwords; however, what they saved in misappropriated charity was lost in the goodwill of the established membership. Some traditionalists were so upset, they broke away and set up splinter groups.

The minor splinter groups included the “Grand Lodge of All England held at York”. They claimed roots from the Saxon King Edwin who supposedly presided over masons meeting at York. Other freemasons simply never recognised Premier Grand Lodge in the first place and remained on their own.

The next and much more significant group broke away in 1751 and was called The Grand Lodge of England, nicknamed The Antients. Those whom they left behind in The Premier Grand Lodge of England were nicknamed The “Moderns”. The break-away group called themselves “Antients” because they felt they were adhering more faithfully to the old ritual, passwords and customs. They also welcomed and heard numerous charitable petitions from Scottish and Irish Freemasons which contrasts markedly with Premier Grand Lodge priorities.

We know that Grand Lodge certificates were in circulation by 1755. UGLE’s oldest certificate (issued to Bro De Pinna in 1767) is shown below. Click [HERE](#) for a separate article about the history of English Grand Lodge Certificates



The Antients met initially in the Turks Head Tavern, (in what is now Gerrard Street), Soho. Their Constitutions, predominantly written by their Grand Secretary, Laurence Dermott, in 1756 were entitled Ahiman Rezon and it is commonly believed that under his influential regime, the RA ritual was augmented to include new esoteric texts now delivered by the three Principals. In 1775, Freemasons Hall in London was first built by Thomas Sandby. Freemasons Hall as we know it today was built on the same, but enlarged site in 1932 and is dedicated to the Glorious Dead who fought in the Great War.

The motto “Vide Aude Tace” made its first appearance in the Free-Masons Calendar from 1777. It is derived from a line of “leonine” verse (of a type much used in the Middle Ages) and in full is “Audi, Vide, Tace, Si Vis Vivere In Pace” meaning Hear, see and hold your tongue, if in peace you would live on.

From this time onwards, new degrees and rituals proliferated which fuelled fierce argument between the “Antients” and the “Moderns”. Indeed, French Freemason, JM Ragon estimated that at one point, there were over 1400 separate Masonic degrees complete with additional invented or regionalised symbolism. Consequently, sixty years of bitterness followed after the Antient and Modern schism. An example of dispute between these two Grand lodges would be that the Antients worked a four-degree system whilst the Moderns only recognised a three Degree system. To the irritation of the Moderns, they often found their members sympathetic to the fourth or Royal Arch Degree, to the point where it became regarded as an extension to the Third Degree.



Eventually a compromise was negotiated and on St John The Evangelists Day, 27 December 1813, United Grand Lodge of England was formed, largely through the combined efforts of the Earl of Moira presiding over

the Duke of Sussex (Moderns Grand Master) and the Duke of Kent (Antients Grand Master). The unification of these two bodies had enormous consequences for the ritual which had to be hurriedly reconciled, mainly in favour of the "Antients". Most of the regulations and ritual determined then still apply to this day, with the exception that in 1832, the Triple Tau and new banners were introduced into the Royal Arch degree as the symbols of that order.



More recently of course, certain colourful parts of RA and Craft texts have been toned down to satisfy the politically correct lobby. Further modernisation was undertaken in 2003 with the Inauguration of the Metropolitan Grand Lodge of London. This enabled some 50,000 London Freemasons to have a separate identity from United Grand Lodge of England and enabled UGLE to concentrate on its worldwide affairs and duties.



There is another aspect of the history of Freemasonry that should not be completely overlooked: The objection to Freemasonry by the Catholic Church. Freemasonry has been banned by the Catholic Church several times beginning in 1738 by the Papal Bull issued by Pope Clement 12th; this was followed by another Bull in 1751 and again in 1884. Finally these Bulls were rescinded in 1974 and the Vatican has since adopted a more tolerant stance towards Freemasonry.

The reasons the Vatican gave for their objections were varied. However, according to Matthew Scanlan (Freemasonry Today issue 25, 2003), the reason for the first Papal Bull was not based on any ideological objection to Freemasonry as is often supposed. Indeed in the wake of the 1738 Bull, the Popes brother, Cardinal Corsini wrote stressing that Freemasonry in England was merely an innocent amusement. The main objection, according to Corsini, was that a lodge in Florence founded by Freemason Baron Von Stosch had become corrupt. Stosch, it should be noted, was employed by the Foreign Office in London and was possibly using Freemasonry as a cover to spy on the exiled Stuart cause in Rome, of whom Pope Clement was sympathetic. The ensuing ban caused widespread misunderstanding for centuries with the assumption being that it was based purely on theological grounds.

Indeed, it is recorded that such was the ill feeling towards freemasons in some Catholic countries that in Portugal in 1810, for example, the Duke of Wellington had to curtail his officers public Masonic activities whilst stationed there for fear of public unrest (Yasha Beresiner MQ Magazine April 2004). In more recent times most dictatorships (including those of Hitler, Franco and Mussolini) and certain zealous politicians have shown aggression towards bodies of men, including Freemasons, who might frustrate their fanatical plans by upholding freedom of thought, law and order and tolerance for ones neighbour.

In modern times, it is therefore somewhat gratifying that the EU has now drafted legislation that coincides with and to a degree protects Masonic principles, namely Articles 9 (right to freedom of thought), 10 (freedom of expression) and 11 (freedom of assembly and association) of the European Convention which are maintained by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

Conclusion

So, on reflection, do we consider Freemasonry originated from Megalithic times, King Solomon, Athelstan, the Knights Templars, Medieval Stone Masons, Schaw, Box charities, the Invisible College or the Rosicrucians? Moreover, do we consider the roots of modern Freemasonry to be more vested in Scotland or England or perhaps France? We can only speculate. Whatever course Freemasonry actually followed, it has inspired millions of people across many countries for more than three centuries and has attracted famous personalities from Europe, United States of America and other Continents. Providing Freemasonry adapts to the times, explains its positive purpose more effectively (a task incumbent on each freemason) and learns how to handle media savvy opponents, it will doubtless continue to do so for several centuries more.

**Information obtained from:
Old Epsomian Lodge No. 3561**

Lodge Announcements

Please see the main page on the website. (secondmasonicdistrict.org)

District Advisor

Terry W. Posey
Junior Grand Warden

