

The Discoverer

The Monthly Newsletter of The Lodge of Discovery

In this Issue

Relief	2
Grip, Cowan, Brother	6
Old Tiler Talk	7
Did You Know?	9
Three Great Lights	10
Press article	11
Humour	15

Greetings Brethren,

Yet another has flown by and already we are thinking about our next Installation.

Wishing you all, wherever you may be, a Happy and Healthy New Year 2016.



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The V.S.L.

The V.S.L. is an essential part of the Lodge when in session and there is no specific rule as to which way round it should be turned. Symbolically, the Master reads and teaches from the book, but when the Candidate for the purpose of taking an obligation uses it, it becomes in a certain sense his book. Our Lodges are required to provide for each Candidate that particular version of the Holy Writ forming part of his faith and for the Obligation, at least, there is a lot of support for the view that the Book should be arranged that he can recognise and read it. It is the holy book of one's religion.

Membership e-mail address list

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



RELIEF?

The tenets of Freemasonry are brotherly love, relief, and truth. These are the doctrines of the Fraternity, the speculative truths which are taught to initiates.

A tenet is something held firmly; a doctrine is a working principle.

The tenets of Freemasonry, therefore, are the working principles which every Brother should hold, and practice with fervency and zeal. "Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished." Unfortunately, there is a wide gap between the ideal and the actual practice of the "average" Mason.

While this is characteristic of most human endeavours, a Builder cannot use that fact as an excuse or justification for his own failure or insufficiency. Freemasonry's doctrines are not dogmas; they are not authoritatively imposed.

They are accepted by each initiate, of his own free will and accord, as part of the universal truth which the Fraternity attempts to teach and to exemplify before the world. Among the reasons why some members of the Craft fail to make their tenets working principles may be insufficient instruction.

Brotherly love, relief, and truth are described in the third part of the lecture for the Entered Apprentice degree; but how many members remember those explanations? Indeed, aren't there many who have never really heard them?

Too much Masonic instruction is stream-lined or omitted, in order to make meetings shorter. "The great aim we have in view" is sacrificed for the sake of mass appeal, while the individual's need for Masonic indoctrination is ignored and then forgotten.

This paper is intended to help those Brethren who have not received sufficient instruction about the second tenet of Freemasonry, – relief.

It will attempt to show that Masonic relief is not merely the giving of alms or contributing to worthy benevolent enterprises. It will emphasize relief as a working principle, a necessary mode of conduct for the individual Mason in his efforts to discipline himself in "the way of initiation", to make a good man better and consequently happier.

One of the first, and one of the most dramatic lessons taught to every initiate is the importance of helping others. To relieve the distress of the unhappy victims of misfortune is a duty expected of all men, but it is particularly incumbent on Masons because they believe that an unbreakable chain of sincere affection binds them close together. The lesson presented in the ritual of the first degree, however, makes clear that such relief is not to be restricted only to Masons.

The initiate's moment of symbolic destitution is not intended to teach him merely how it feels to be poor. He is also made to feel embarrassed by his inability to contribute. The memory of that chagrin should help to make relief a working principle for every thoughtful Mason.

Destitution, however, may be a matter of the spirit as well as of the pocket. Everyone is challenged much more frequently to give comfort, encouragement, hope, kindness, patience, praise, sympathy, and understanding than to contribute money to alleviate distress. No man "who has trained himself to exemplify brotherly love" need ever be embarrassed by his inability to soothe the unhappy, to compassionate their miseries, and to restore peace to their troubled minds.

No other kind of relief is more needed in a troubled world. The poor in spirit suffer greater deprivation than the economically destitute. This is why the monitorial lecture about relief stresses the spiritual activities enumerated in the preceding paragraph.

It makes no mention of money. It emphasizes the fact that relief is primarily a matter of sharing one's feelings of brotherly love, whereby we are taught to regard the whole human species as one family, as created by one Almighty Parent and inhabitants of the same planet, and designed to aid, support, and protect each other.

Once a Mason has really trained himself to regard every man as his brother, it becomes natural for him to feel the impulses which prompt him to relieve the distressed, whether they suffer physical wants, fears, sorrows, wrongs, or bitter grief.

This is where the individual Brother plays his part in creating a favourable image of the Craft. Its importance must be emphasized in the instruction of initiates. In many jurisdictions a new member's first experience with Masonic relief is in contributing to the Masonic Home and/or Hospital. Part of his initiation fee may have been assigned to that.

As long as he continues his membership, he makes an annual contribution to the operating funds of the institution, in the form of a per capita tax levied by Grand Lodge.

In other Grand Lodges the individual Mason gives to a general charity fund. Unfortunately, per capita taxes rarely arouse the generous feeling that one is flying to the relief of a distressed worthy Brother. They become a routine requirement to comply with, uninspiring to most, and resented by a few.

Brethren need instruction in the purposes and accomplishments of the Grand Lodge charity funds. Where a Home or Hospital is involved, every Brother, especially a new one, needs to be told how his money is being used for that purpose. Such an explanation should be part of his initiatory instruction. A descriptive brochure will do much to enlighten him; but the best antidote to lack of knowledge and indifference about the Charity would be a visit to the facility itself.

Only such an experience will give the individual the pride he needs in a cooperative act of relief. Only such a visit will make relief a working doctrine for him. It's important that the individual member acquire such an understanding.

Modern life, increasing costs, and especially the tremendous growth and mobility of populations have made it necessary to organize larger and larger cooperative acts of relief, like Homes and Hospitals, Benevolent Foundations, and Masonic Camps. While they large projects make possible greater assistance and more complete relief for distressed individuals at large, they have, in fact, taken away from the sense of direct participation, that individual donors feel, and its resultant joy.

One of the problems of our contemporary Fraternity is to restore to the individual his feeling of participation in making its tenets working doctrines. Fundamentally, only the Worshipful Master can really solve this problem for the individuals who belong to his lodge. He can arrange to see that every new Mason is taken for a tour of a Masonic Home; Hospital or sponsored project.

He has to be alert and eager to act whenever he hears of a local opportunity to give charitable assistance. He has to stimulate the membership to enjoy such service, whether it be husking a neighbour's corn while he is in the hospital, painting a house for a paralytic Brother, or supplying a basket of food for a family which is temporarily in need.

It was such direct participation in the life of the community, without fanfare or publicity, which first earned for Freemasonry an image of men of good will.

The records of practically every lodge reveal praiseworthy efforts to furnish help, aid, and assistance to less fortunate brethren and neighbours in the local community. But how recent and how frequent are those examples? Then recognizing the tremendous power of the individual Mason when he is properly instructed and spiritually motivated, when the individual Mason was first brought to light, he was taught by a symbolic act of destitution that he must respond to distress as an individual.

It was not a committee or a foundation that he was asked to assist.

It was an individual friend or Brother he was taught to help. Such neighbours are always at hand, especially if one remembers that all men need spiritual relief and assistance no matter what their economic circumstances may be.

To soothe the unhappy is the first description of relief given in the lectures. With enough imagination, one can convince himself that he has helped to produce that result by his contribution to the Masonic Home, a Shiners' Hospital for Children, or the Grand Lodge Charity Fund.

To see a bewildered elderly widow settled comfortably in a pleasant room at the Home, her fears of want, her dread of illness, her loneliness soothed by the loving ministrations of the staff – all this can be imagined. But does such a mental image stir one's affection and joy to the same extent that direct relief to a neighbour can do?

To sympathize with their misfortunes is the second example of relief enumerated in the lectures. Sympathy, if it would really provide relief, must be more than feeling with another person. It must be more than pity; it must be deep compassion, the ability to suffer with the victim of misfortune. Only by such a deep involvement can one feel the need to act, the urgent necessity to do something to help. Relief then becomes a working principle. It is easy to write a check to assist in the rehabilitation of a community wrecked by disaster, like hurricane, earthquake, flood, or volcanic eruption. Such catastrophes are exceedingly dramatic. They compel our attention because of the immediate need caused by overwhelming destruction.

Men hasten to aid, support and protect each other when the forces of nature inflict such cataclysms upon the society of mankind. In such cases, men respond to the needs of the unfortunate as if they were personally involved. Support for Red Cross disaster relief on a global scale has demonstrated this frequently. The generous help from all Masonic groups during World War II to establish Masonic Service Centres at military camps was a similar response. In times of peril and of cataclysm, men find it easy to sympathize with the misfortunes of others. In fact, their imaginations are stirred enough to display the third kind of relief described in the Masonic lectures, "to compassionate their miseries." Relief has become a working principle.

But there are other victims of misfortune whose "misereries" are less dramatic because they are prolonged or more commonplace. Yet they need and deserve sympathy and compassion, as well as practical, material relief.

Does the lodge have a member with a weakness which creates difficulties for his family and the community? Even good men sometimes "go haywire" under intense pressures, like those of an unhappy marriage, too competitive a business situation, or frustrated ambition to serve the lodge. These problems develop gradually. Sometimes they are too patiently overlooked.

By some they are ignored. "It's none of my business." But where is brotherly relief – i.e., sympathy and compassion, tactful but practical advice, understanding and encouragement – more directly needed and more properly given?

What do the "points of fellowship" really mean?

Relief must be a working principle within the lodge itself. To visit the sick is one of the oldest traditions of Masonic relief. It needs re-emphasizing in the life of every "well-governed lodge". Each new Mason should be given the opportunity to serve on the sick & visiting committee; he needs to share in the joy of this simple yet satisfying "program of relief". He needs to make this kind of relief an active working principle.

The monitorial lecture concludes its description of this subject with a statement that makes relief more than a moral obligation incumbent upon Masons; it lifts the idea to the level of a universal spiritual principle: "To restore peace to troubled minds is the great aim we have in view."

That requires more than a piece of silver in the collection box and more than a check for a charitable institution. That requires an individual commitment to a way of thinking and feeling which will affect a man's personal relationships with every other human being, because every man has some need which requires love and understanding.

This is the same idea expressed by the Apostle Paul which has been rendered so poetically in the King James Version of the New Testament:

"Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge: and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, . . . and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity (i.e., love), it profiteth me nothing."

Author Unknown—from *The Educator*

VERY TRUE

There are many brethren who can recite our ritual from Alpha to Omega without the omission of a word or syllable, who are unconscious of the fact that behind the play of words lie concealed thoughts and meanings which invite our investigations and will repay us for our research. The demand of the hour is not for men who can recite the ritual, but for men who know what the ritual means, and who are willing to live by its teachings in their daily lives and conduct.



The Grip

The World at Large knows that the freemasons grip has caused much jesting, but this grip is not so strange since the mere fact of shaking hands as a gesture of faith and confidence was used in the symbolism of Roman law and has been continuously observed by all civilised people to the present day.

Some writers consider that a tangible object such as a piece of metal or coin should be employed, but this need not necessarily be so as the word comes from old German meaning to 'indicate' or 'to point out'.

The grip or token was and is used as recognition of skills obtained.

Sourced from Why? 'Coming to Terms with Freemasonry' by Bro. John Cane PPG Supt Wks (Surrey)

Cowan

Who and what was a Cowan? From old records it appears that cowans were permitted to carry out the less skilled work of a regular mason who was free to carry out tasks needing higher skills. They were the kind of workmen who learned their trade in an 'irregular' manner: an apprentice who failed to serve his full time? It has been suggested that a cowan is a 'mason without the word.' The word was entrusted to the apprenticed mason to prove his regularity and skill, and was highly prized as a guard to their professionalism. The term 'cowan' has variously been described as 'eavesdropper' and nosy-parker (and worse!) The 18th century brethren might indicate the approach of a cowan remarking 'it rains.' The eavesdropper got his name by hiding within the overhang of the eaves where the rainwater falls from the eaves, hoping to listen to the conversation in the house.

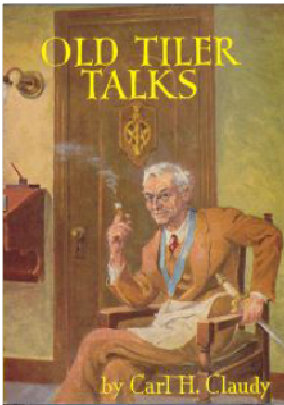
Sourced from Why? 'Coming to Terms with Freemasonry' by Bro. John Cane PPG Supt Wks (Surrey)

Brother

How did we come to be so called? Freemasons in calling each other 'brother' follows the practice of old guilds and operatives. The admission of a working mason to the fellowship of his craft in Scotland was at one time known as 'brothering.'

Freemasons have all passed through the same ordeal of Initiation, have been made brothers of Hiram Abiff, received the same modes of recognition and been taught the same philosophy. It seems fitting that we should have a fraternal means of address.

Friars and Monks are still called Bros, as a mark of their fraternal relationship. We also have 'brothers in Arms and fire service 'brothers.'



Old Tiler Talks— BURDENS

"I am inclined to think that Masons do too much for each other," announced the New Brother. "Who has been doing too much for you?" asked the Old Tiler.

" Why, no one, that I know of."

"Well, who have you been doing too much for?"

"Well, er--I wouldn't say I had been doing too much. But we all do too much. It gets to be a burden sometimes. "

"What do you mean, burden?" countered the Old Tiler.

"A burden is something heavy which you carry, isn't it?" asked the New Brother.

"You think what we do for our brethren is a burden?"

"Sometimes it seems that way. Too many calls on our time. Too many calls on our sympathy. Too many calls on our charity. Yes, I think it's a burden."

"Last week I walked to work" answered the Old Tiler. "I don't usually because my rheumatism says walking is too hard a job. My legs," his eyes twinkled, "are a burden to me! But that day it was so bright that the old legs forgot to growl, so I walked. I saw a little lad of about ten looking after a small child of about two, who toppled on his nose and yelled. Ten years old picked up the squalling baby and soothed him, then put him across his shoulder and staggered up the sidewalk with him.

"I asked him, 'Sonny, isn't that child too heavy for you?' 'Heavy?' he answered me, 'Heavy? Why, sir, he's my brother.'

"Little brother would have been too heavy for me -- maybe because of my old legs and perhaps because he wasn't my brother! The facts are that one weighed 60 pounds and the other 30 pounds. The stagger and the straining arms were facts. The cheek flushed with effort was a fact. But two years old was brother to ten, and that made him 'not too heavy.'

"A burden is, after all, what we think it. You would look desperately at the task of carrying a 200-pound sack on your back. But if it was 200 pounds of gold, and it was to be yours after a mile, you wouldn't find it 'too heavy.'

"Years ago a brother of this lodge went to Alaska in the gold rush days. He and his partner had to tramp five miles through a blinding snowstorm and heavy drifts to get food to a starving camp.

On the way this brother played out, or thought he did. He told his partner he was all in and they'd better abandon the load and try to get back before they died.

"'Oh, no,' said the partner. 'I'll pull it!' Which he proceeded to do. Whereupon the man who was 'all in' became so ashamed and angry at himself that he stepped back into the sled harness and pulled, too, and together they got the load to camp. It was 'too heavy' only while he thought it was.

"Masonry my son, is a state of mind. You can't put it on the scales or measure it with a scoop. Because it has no material existence it cannot carry a child of two, or a sack of flour. Its burdens are burdens of the heart.

"Minds and hearts have unlimited strength, if we but know how to call it up. The tired business man who can barely get up the steps at night and falls in bed as soon as dinner is over, forgets the physical weariness if his child is sick. He sits up all night nor thinks it a burden.

"I rather like you, my son; you say what you think and while you very seldom do think, you think you think. But I cannot agree that Masonry does too much for her brethren or that anything Masonry or a Lodge or an individual brother may do in the name of Masonry is a burden."

"Not all brethren are real Masons, any more than all that looks the part is real gold. Lots of men wear the pin and know the words and give the signs that are but shadow Masons; they are all show on the outside and as full of meat as a balloon. To these, doubtless, there are Masonic burdens. But to the real Mason, any weight which must be carried is not heavy because 'it's my brother!'"

"I will not be called a Masonic balloon!" objected the New Brother. "As I cannot quarrel with what you have said I will fill that balloon with a new attitude of mind. I will never think a Masonic duty is a burden again."

"It is your Masonic duty, my son," smiled the Old Tiler, "to give me a cigar if you have it."

"And here is a match and I'll light it for you, too!" agreed the New Brother.

VOTING

Except where ballots need to be conducted, the usual manner of voting by brethren in lodges on motions or nominations for appointment to positions to indicate assent (or non-assent) is by extending the right hand forward palm downwards horizontally so that it may be seen by the Master as the chairman of the meeting.

The Book of Constitutions provides that the votes of members in Grand Lodge are to be signified by each 'holding up' one hand but, in practice, hands are not brought higher than the horizontal position. Although in most outside organisations votes by hand are usually given with the right hand vertically above the head which would seem to facilitate counting as against the manner used in lodges, the Masonic method appears to have been accepted practice among Masons for a very long time.

Where there are an equal number of votes cast for and against any motion or nomination, the Master of the Lodge has the authority to exercise a second or casting vote.

Did You Know?

Why do the Officers leave their Chairs from the right side and return to their left side?

Masonry is usually operated in a clockwise direction. For example, one of the working tools in the First Degree, the 24- inch Gauge, represents the 24 hours of the day, in a clockwise direction. The WM opens the Lodge in the East, depicting the Sun rising in the East and the SW, on instruction from the WM, closes the Lodge in the West, depicting the setting Sun. So the Lodge is opened and closed in a clockwise direction. Perambulations around the Lodge Room at the beginning and end of ceremonies, installation and candidates passing in view of the Brethren, are all carried out in a clockwise direction. Therefore, Officers of the Lodge leave and return to their chairs in a clockwise direction.

Did You Know?

What is the significance of the Wardens Columns being raised and lowered? ?

Answer: In "Three Distinct Knocks" 1760 we find "Calling Off" and "Calling On". It begins with a series of whispered questions, carried by the Deacons, from the W.M. to the S.W. and J.W., after which the J.W. "declares with a loud voice" that "this lodge is called from Work to Refreshment; then he sets up his Column, and the senior lays his down; for the care of the lodge is in the Hands of the J.W. while they are at Refreshment." Here we have the earliest details relating to the raising and lowering of the Columns and the reasons for those procedures, showing that they were designed to draw a readily noticeable distinction between the lodge when open and when 'Called Off '. This would have been an important matter in those days, when "Work and Refreshment" (*i.e. ceremony, drinking and dining*) all took place in the same lodge room. The raising and lowering of the Columns is standard usage today, but the whispered instructions have been replaced by a brief catechism, spoken aloud.

Did You Know?

What is meant by "Regular Step"?

Answer: Regular, in this case, means recognized or correct. The word implies that it must be made in the manner in which the candidate has been instructed. Indeed, the step is actually a part of the mode of recognition that follows it; hence the emphasis on the word regular.

Lodge Birthdays

Adrian Carpenter	29
Gavin Struthers	14
Kevin Green	8
Jorg Schwartz	4

News from the South

The JW organized a very successful Saturday picnic at Dream Cove at the residence of W. Bro. Chris Kernot.

THE THREE GREAT LIGHTS

By Jack R. Levitt, PGM

The Holy Bible is a Great Light because from its place upon the altar in the centre of the Lodge it pours forth upon the east, west, and south its refulgent rays of Divine Truth.

In all lands a Volume of Sacred Law, not necessarily the Holy Bible, must be open upon the Masonic altar whenever Lodge is open. Freemasonry opens this Great Light upon her altar not as one book of one faith, but as all books of all faiths, the Book of the Will of the Great Architect read in what language, what form, and what shape we will. In it are found those simple teachings of the universality of Brotherhood, the love of God for his children and the hope of immortality, which are the very foundation of Freemasonry.

The Square itself is not a Light in its own right, but should be regarded as a reflector to direct the rays of the Great Light and to remind us of our duty to God, our neighbour, and ourselves. It is the first of the immovable jewels and the badge of office and emblem worn by the Worshipful Master. It denotes Morality, for by the square we are reminded that we are to test our thoughts, words, and actions that we may better fit in our contact with other fellowmen.

The Compass also reflects the lessons in the Great Light, and teaches us to circumscribe our desires and keep our passions within due bounds toward all mankind. The dot in the centre of the symbol in the east represents an individual Brother, which symbol is made by the Compass. One leg makes the dot and the other revolving about the dot forms the circle or boundary inside of which we live according to the tenets of Masonry.

The Square and Compass are old and were probably the first precise instruments of architecture and operative Masonry; yet the philosophical truths which the ancient Masons--who were both operative and speculative--read into them, have come down to us unchanged through the ages. Stonemasons use the Square to prove the perfect ashlar. Hence the universal significance of the word "square" meaning moral, upright, and honourable. The Compass can be used to draw a circle of any diameter and to prove the trueness of the square and should be used by all Masons to seriously and intelligently circumscribe his desires and to prove the worth of his square.

The world knows Masonry only by the action of its members, so we should circumscribe our desires by proper use of the Compass, and live by the Square, reflecting the rays of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth as taught in the Great Light, that the world may be the better for our having passed this way.



An interesting take on Freemasonry from the UK Daily Telegraph 9th December 2015 by Patrick Sawyer

Masons cut out the fluff and get straight to the handshakes. Masons are cutting their meetings short to accommodate busy commuters - but the handshakes and the noose remain centre stage.

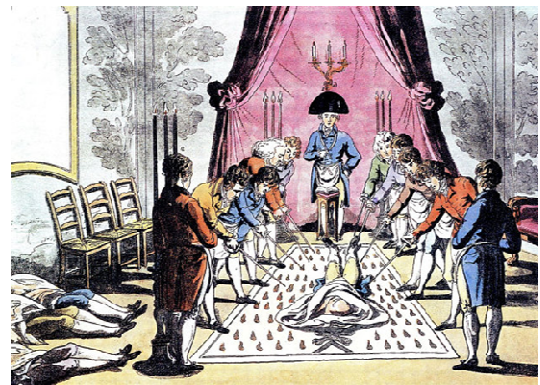


The traditionally lengthy meetings, whose initiation rituals are at the heart of Masonic societies, are being replaced with more quick fire affairs to cater for busy executives.

For centuries outsiders have been fascinated by their mysterious combination of arcane symbols, practices and props, amid the allure of a powerful cabal. But Masonic gatherings are now being overhauled to drag them into the modern world. The traditionally lengthy meetings, whose initiation rituals are at the heart of Masonic societies, are being replaced with

more quick fire affairs to cater for busy executives.

Masonic illustration



A new lodge has opened in southern England for professionals and office workers whose punishing working hours prohibit them from attending the more long-winded meetings of the brotherhood.

The Lodge of Brevity dispenses with much of the bureaucratic elements which traditionally open Masonic meetings – such as reading the minutes of previous meetings and noting apologies for absence - in order to get straight to the heart of the matter; the reciting of key phrases, the rolled-up trouser legs and the handshakes.

"All we're trying to do is attract a few new members. We're not trying to take over the world."

Member of Provincial Grand Lodge of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

The idea is to allow Masonic meetings to begin later in the evening, enabling commuters to arrive in time for the start of the rituals. David Foot, communications officer for the Provincial Grand Lodge of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, told The Telegraph: "We can no longer afford to have meetings which last for hours. It's simply off-putting for would-be members who have all sorts of competing pressures, such as work and family demands.

"In today's world it's impossible for busy people to leave work in time to get to a lodge meeting that starts at 5 or 6pm, so the Lodge of Brevity meetings will start at around 7.30pm. They will also be shorter, which means they won't eat into precious family time so much.

"By dispensing with mundane business such as the reading of the minutes – which usually takes an hour and can all be done beforehand on-line – we can get on with the substance of meetings and still get home at a decent time."

By the substance of things Mr. Foot of course means the ritual that accompanies all lodge affairs, such as swearing oaths of allegiance to the Crown and the law on a sacred text and the initiation of new members.

"Members are just as likely to be dustmen and office workers as doctors, civil servants and bank managers." David Foot, Hampshire mason

The initiation ceremony involves the existing members staging a short allegorical play in which significant phrases are uttered to symbolise the journey of the new member from a childlike state of innocence, through to living a full and worthy life to preparing for death. At one point a noose is placed around the neck of the applicant, to symbolise the cutting of the umbilical cord.

As the novice passes through each stage, a special handshake, known as 'the Grip' – which cannot be repeated or demonstrated outside of lodge meetings - takes place between members.

The brotherhood hopes the new fast-track meetings adopted by the Lodge of Brevity, based in Chandler's Ford, near Eastleigh, Southampton, will also help attract new members and stem the long-term decline in new blood being initiated into lodges.

Masonic symbol on door of Lodge in Langport, Somerset

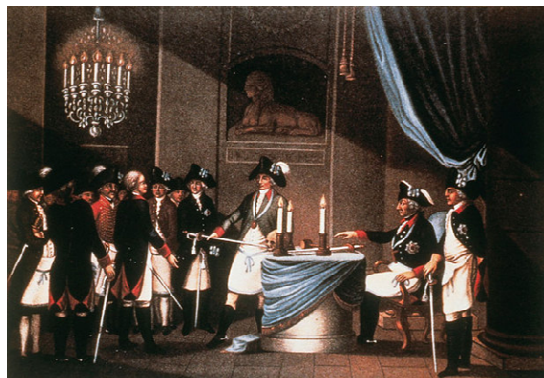


The United Grand Lodge of England – which draws together the country's lodges, has lost as many as 100,000 members over the past 20 years – about a third of its membership – from its post-war peak, when men who had experienced the camaraderie of life in uniform looked for organisations to continue that in peacetime.

The secretive rituals of the Masons, and the public suspicion that they are secret society exerting a **hidden influence on society**, have long inspired works of fiction from the Marquis de Sade's Juliette to The Da Vinci Code.

But modern-day Masons insist their affairs are much more benign and mainly involve charitable work carried out amid a clubbable atmosphere – the organisation donates £30 million a year to charity. Indeed Mr Foot points out that new lodges, far from being the preserve of captains of industry, financial moguls or high court judges and civil servants, are organised around more mundane lines. They include a rugby lodge, a yachting lodge and a motor sport lodge called 'Chequered Flag', which was recently consecrated in Southampton and has over 230 'brethren', or members.

Secret brotherhood of Masons



Mr. Foot said: "A new member could be sitting down to dinner with a vicar on one side and a plumber on the other. Members are just as likely to be dustmen and office workers as doctors, civil servants and bank managers."

The Masons have launched a membership recruitment drive ahead of the organisations' 300th anniversary in 2017.

Early lodges were formed as a "non-sectarian, socially egalitarian forum in which men of integrity could fraternise, while avoiding the vexed issues of religion and politics". Frequently meeting in coffee houses they adopted the working tools of the stonemason – the square, compass and apron – as their symbols, to denote the building of an upright life.



Close up of a plate glass window showing Masonic symbols in a Freemasons Lodge

In some countries however, masons did become shadowy groups of men operating within the establishment in opposition to democratic forces.

In Italy the **P2 – or Propaganda Due - lodge** drew together senior intelligence and military officers, industrialists and right wing politicians, including Silvio Berlusconi, as a 'state within a state', with the intention of keeping the left from power. P2 was also active in Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina, in support of the countries' military dictatorships.

British masons are at pains to emphasise they have no such subversive ambitions. "All we're trying to do is attract a few new members," said a member of one of the new Hampshire lodges. "We're not trying to take over the world."

When the man's put together right.

Father wished a little relief from answering questions while he read his Sunday paper. The paper contained a full-page map of the world. A brilliant idea was born. Dad took the map to the dining room table, cut it into zigzag pieces and told his little bunch of questions that she couldn't ask another until she had put the map together. He figured on a peaceful two hours, but in a few minutes the little tot called dad to see the completed work. "How did you get it together so quickly?" Dad wished to know. "As you started to cut the map up I noticed there was a picture of a man on the other side. I turned the pieces over, put the man together, and when the man was put together right the whole world was all right." I need not point out the moral in that story. Have we ever had a calamity, have we ever had a crisis, have we ever been in any kind of mess that wasn't due to men not being put together right? When men are put together right, the whole World will be all right. It is Masonry's job to see that men are put together right.



CONTINUING AID FOR VANUATU

Following the Grand Charity's £20,000 donation via the British Red Cross after a severe tropical cyclone hit Vanuatu in the South Pacific in March 2015, Warwickshire masons have also provided aid. More than £5,600 has been sent to the Vanuatu Recovery Fund thanks to 16 Warwickshire lodges, one very generous brother and the Province's Masonic Charitable Association.

The Vanuatu Recovery Fund, managed by Lodge of Discovery on the island, has decided to fund the rebuilding of the library at Suango Mele Primary School, and to create a bigger and better structure than had previously existed. The school will now have a media centre within the library to ensure it meets students' future study needs.

Extract from the current edition of Freemasonry Today

Humour

One day an English mason, a Scottish mason, and an Irish mason were in the bar after the meeting. They each proceeded to buy a pint of Guinness. Just as they were about to enjoy their creamy beverage, a fly landed in each of their pints and became stuck in the thick head. The Englishman pushed his beer from him in disgust. The Irishman fished the offending fly out of his beer and continued drinking it as if nothing had happened. The Scotsman picked the fly out of his drink, held it out over the beer and yelled "SPIT IT OUT!! SPIT IT OUT!!!!"

THE HORTH WHITHPERER

A guy calls his buddy the horse rancher and says he's sending a friend over to look at a horse. His buddy asks, 'How will I recognize him?' 'That's easy; he's a dwarf with a speech impediment.' So the dwarf shows up and the guy asks him if he's looking for a male or female horse. 'A female horth.' So he shows him a prized filly. 'Nith lookin horth. Can I thee her eyeth?' So the guy picks up the dwarf and he gives the horse's eyes the once over. 'Nith eyeth, can I thee her earzth?' So he picks the little fella up again and shows him the horse's ears. 'Nith earzth, can I thee her mouf?' The rancher is getting pretty ticked off by this point but he picks him up again and shows him the horse's mouth. 'Nice mouf, can I see her twat?' Totally mad at this point the rancher grabs him under his arms and rams the dwarf's head up the horse's fanny pulls him out and slams him on the ground. The midget gets up sputtering and coughing. 'Perhaph I should rephrase that, Can I thee her wun aound a widdlebit.'

There I was sitting at the bar staring at my drink when a large, trouble-making biker steps up next to me, grabs my drink and gulps it down in one swig. "Well, whatcha' gonna do about it?" he says, menacingly, as I burst into tears. "Come on, man," the biker says, "I didn't think you'd CRY. I can't stand to see a man crying." "This is the worst day of my life," I say. "I'm a complete failure. I was late to a meeting and my boss fired me. When I went to the parking lot, I found my car had been stolen and I don't have any insurance. I left my wallet in the cab I took home. I found my wife with another man and then my dog bit me." "So I came to this bar to work up the courage to put an end to it all, I buy a drink, I drop a capsule in and sit here watching the poison dissolve; then you show up and drink the whole thing! But enough about me, how's your day going?"

Whatever you may look like, marry a man your own age. As your beauty fades, so will his eyesight.
-Phyllis Diller

Housework can't kill you, but why take a chance? -Phyllis Diller

Cleaning your house while your kids are still growing up is like shovelling the walk before it stops snowing. -Phyllis Diller

The reason women don't play football is because 11 of them would never wear the same outfit in public. -Phyllis Diller