



Pillars of Light



Compiled by the
Editorial Team of the
Grand Lodge Library

Volume 2 Issue 3

March 2006

Editorial

An historic moment.

Nothing can equal the satisfaction we had to be able to offer to our members the benefits of a step forward in the advanced technology of the 21st Century. Just days ago, I hosted in the Library, the Inauguration Ceremony of the newly installed electronic system.

The Grand Master MW Bro. Raymond B. Brooke assisted by the Deputy Grand Master RW Bro Greg Levenston and the Assistant Grand Master RW Bro Paul Fletcher, in the presence of a distinguished audience - many of whom have made this great step possible - inaugurated the Computers of the Library.

The symbolical ribbon was cut and with this solemn traditional gesture, our Grand Master opened a new era in the life of our Hub of Knowledge.

The Deputy Grand Master, RW Bro Greg. Levenston named the Study Centre - two computers dedicated to the use of our members wishing to develop knowledge and study more profoundly our Craft, in the memory of RW Bro. Harry Kellermann PDGM, Grand Librarian who passed to the Grand Lodge Above in 2000, almost 6 years ago to the day. His memory will enlighten the generations of Masons to come and inspire their willingness to acquire more and more knowledge.

Representatives of Lodge Kellerman, Lodge Woolahra, together with individual brethren who have followed the example and joined the practical effort towards the realisation of this project, assisted at the Ceremony. Our appreciation is expressed to them for the donation of this modern equipment.

Our sincere gratitude is presented to our MW Grand Master.

To the Chairman of the Board of Management, the Grand Secretary as well as to the many Brethren who along the way, have assisted to advance our dream, our sincere thanks to all and every one of you.

The Library dedicated team of volunteers, encouraged by your gesture and by the commitment of our Administration to improve the cultural level of this jurisdiction, will continue to deploy every possible effort to assist.

Joseph V. Haffner
Grand Librarian

A Clarification on Symbols - II

The Nature of Symbols

Symbolism is an essential component of all our intellectual functioning; it would be quite difficult to express our ideas without the use of symbols. The very words that you read just now are symbols of my thoughts.

The researchers in theological writings have discovered that religious ideas are almost impossible to convey without Symbols. The older the religion, the greater is its content of symbols; e.g. there are more symbols in the Hindu religion than in the Jewish; more in the Jewish than in the Roman Catholic and more in the Roman Catholic than in the Protestant Churches. In fact, the puritans have made an attempt in the 16th Century to abolish symbolism in worship all together, but found it could not be done.

Throughout history symbols have been used to communicate and as a means of communication to the illiterate. Thus, symbols provide a more imaginative medium than ordinary words can provide. In India, the spinning wheel was the symbol of home industry which Ghandi sought to promote as a means of raising the people's standard of living. But one must be careful to regard the meaning and not the object of a symbol. Symbols in themselves are empty, valueless things; it is what they represent that is important.

Development of Symbols

Symbolism has a very long history but not in connection with Freemasonry. It began when man first desired to bridge the gap between practical objects and the abstract. As such it is very ancient.

The art of primitive peoples is characterized by symbolism – a bird may signify speed, a protruding tongue as in Maori carving – defiance. Consider the Australian Aborigines' carvings with the drawing of totem animals and strange shapes that enshrine symbolical meanings. (A Totem is a particular kind of emblem). In the same context, modern artists claim that abstract presentations have a hidden symbology.

Brethren will be interested to know that the following ecclesiastical symbology on the Masonic pattern is to be found in the writings of Bishop Durendas who died in 1296:

... "The winding staircase, which are initiated from King Solomon's temple ... point out the hidden knowledge which they only have who ascend to celestial things. In the temple of God, the foundation is faith; the roof, Charity, which convert a multitude of sins; the door, obedience; the pavement, humility; the four side-walls, the four cardinal virtues: justice, fortitude, temperance, prudence..."

Here is another such example. It is dated 1655 and comes from "a Commentary upon the Epistle to the Hebrews" by W. Gouge.:

"We are by nature rough, untoward, unfit to make a Temple to God, we are dead in sin. Unless by the Axe of God's word, the cooperation of God's spirit accompanying the same we be hewed and squared; unless the hard knocks of obstinacy be chopped off; unless the bark of civility and formal profession be pulled away; unless the sprouts of pride be pulled off; unless the hollow dates of hypocrisies be made plain and even; unless the rotten holes of lusts be cut off; unless we be quickened and made living stones for a spiritual building; unless we be gathered together, and to one another, as mutual parts of the same building, we can never make up a Temple for God to dwell in."

This early representation of the moral qualifications of a man by a temple, is symbology that Freemasonry was later to adopt.

(to be continued in the next issue – "Masonic Symbolism")

***Are you in love with our Traditions and the richness of our Heritage?
Would you invest a few hours a week and be recognized
as a valuable member of our Volunteers Team?***

All you require is a true love for the Craft and its Literature and a Masonic heart that is ready to offer, and glean the rewards and satisfaction of serving the Order.



Ancient Fraternities

The Gypsies

So far as one can gather the only reasons for even vaguely ascribing the origins of Freemasonry to the weird traveling community known as the Gypsies, lie in the facts that their ancestry is ancient, and that they possess language, signs, secrets and magic pretensions peculiar to themselves.

The early eighteenth century produced a very remarkable Masonic alleged impostor, one Joseph Balsamo, better known as Count Cagliostro, who invented mystic rites of various kinds, and who certainly possessed remarkable gifts.

He has been acclaimed by some to have been a gypsy; others maintain that he came of quite a noble family. He finally died, after torture, in an Inquisition prison in Italy.

Unfortunately most of the knowledge we possess of him emanated from the Inquisition authorities – obviously a most unreliable source. It is quite possible that further research will yet largely vindicate his character, but that the Gypsies brought Freemasonry from Egypt is pure fiction.

(in a next edition we will endeavour to bring some more information about the charlatan, alchemist, master cheater but imposing personality of the creator of the “Egyptian Masonry”)

The Druses

A sect or tribe existing to this day in Lebanon and northern part of Israel, claiming to be direct descendants of the Phoenicians and the actual builders of King Solomon’s Temple. They have ceremonies of initiation, and though an agricultural people, use building tools as emblems of moral truths. Masonic students are inclined to be sympathetic with their claims.

The Devil

In India, Masonic lodges are known as Devil’s Houses. Gradually their true import is permeating the native brain and why they are ascribed Masonic doings to the machinations of His Satanic majesty is not quite clear.

Probably the term is now used more, as a parrot repetition without real significance, than as any expression of fear of the unknown.

Gnosticism

Gnosticism was a very ancient attempt to construct a philosophical system of faith. It seems to have been chiefly concerned in combining the elements of pagan mysticism with the Jewish and Christian traditions. According to the historians there were over fifty sects among them. Much of their symbolism and practices have apparently influenced Masonic speculative building, but so little that is really definite and authentic is known of the system, that most Masonic writers ignore the subject altogether.

Kabbalism

This is a generic term, a Hebrew word meaning reception, or doctrinal teaching communicated orally from individual to individual, and thus down through the corridors of time. According to its own traditions, its records were first delineated in writing during early Christian times. Kabbalism has thrown a lot of light on the more important Masonic symbolisms, particularly concerning the Great Pillars.

This esoteric doctrine claimed more than one fantastic origin, but was, so historians figure, derived from an admixture of Greek, Egyptian and Oriental fancies.

Gould, the great Masonic historian, thus summarises the Kabbala into three portions: the *Theoretical*, which treats of the highest order of metaphysics, that relating to the Divinity and the relations of Divinity to man; the *Enigmatical* consisting of certain symbolical transpositions of the letters or words of the Scriptures, and the *Practical*, which professed to teach the art of curing disease.

It is believed that students of Kabbala grafted the symbolism of the temple and the idea of the Divine Name on the Craft ceremonies. The evidence, however, is not convincing though no doubt there are at least traces of Kabbalism in our present day Masonic ritual.

Some powerful influence in the Craft.

Still briefly traversing all the well-trodden paths leading back to Masonry’s hoary and double ancestry, one must not omit to remind readers that in all countries and in all climes have been found emblems and symbols known to Freemasons. In China, Japan as well as in Peru and Mexico, in Egypt, Persia, India and Arabia, indeed in all ancient lands, the Square and the Compasses have for countless ages been known. So have other Masonic symbols. Our signs, too, are equally ancient and universal, and by no means confined to Masonry. The craft then, would appear to have assimilated all the best moral teachings of the ages, drawing its symbolisms almost exclusively from the working tools of the operative Masons.

The re-spiritualising of the institution came during the period of transition from operative to speculative Masonry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when clear evidence meets us at every step and turn that some powerful and esoteric influence was at work remodeling the whole scheme, but whether from within or from without, is doubtful.

That this influence has been for the world’s good, who can deny? Masonry as we now have it stands for square as the world’s greatest factor towards the goal of Universal Brotherhood. That it could have become so’ merely as a building society is obviously absurd.



Book review

The Invisible Life of Elias Ashmole

This new book in the UGL Library, "*Magus – The Invisible Life of Elias Ashmole*", by Tobias Churton, is a definitive biography of one of the great magi (wise men) of Renaissance Britain and from a Masonic perspective he is known for recording the first written reference to English "Speculative" Free Masonry. In Ashmole's diary dated Oct 16, 4.30 pm, 1648 – "I was made a Free Mason at Warrington in Lancashire with Coll: Henry Mainwaring of Karincham in Cheshire. The names of those that were then of the Lodge, Mr. Rich Penket, Warden, Mr. James Collier, Mr. Rich Sankey, Henry Littler, John Ellam, Rich Ellam and Hugh Brewer".

From an historical point of view, as opposed to solely a Masonic perspective, Elias Ashmole was an important figure of the mid to late 17th century as a magus, spy, code-maker, Gnostic, alchemist, Speculative Freemason, Rosicrucian, Founder Member of The Royal Society, and creator of both the Ashmolean Museum and the Bodleian Library in Oxford. His great creations (Ashmolean Museum and Bodleian Library) still exist today and represent important resources for both historical and Masonic research.

Elias Ashmole (1617-1692) was born in Lichfield, Staffordshire. His public life was lived through a traumatic period of British history when one had to be fleet footed to stay popular (or even alive) with loyalties being switched from Royalist to Puritan and back to Royalist again. It is almost certain that Ashmole was a "spy" during his time at Oxford during the Cromwellian rebellion but somehow managed to survive without betraying his Royalist leanings.

In truth he was an esoteric or Gnostic, modelling himself on his great hero, Dr John Dee, the famous alchemist, and he managed to bridge the transition from alchemy to modern science. Ashmole thought he may have been the "fulfilment of Dr John Dee's (1524-1608) prophetic promise". As one of the 12 foundation members of The Royal Society, he, along with other great scientists of the day who were also secretly or openly Freemasons or Rosicrucians, were able to create the "scientific method" which directly led to science and technology as we know it today.

In fact Ashmole published (under a pseudonym for safety) one of the famous alchemical treatises still used as a reference. Ashmole's study of alchemy and English alchemists was "*Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*", published in 1652. In case there is any doubt about the dangers involved in admitting an interest in esoterica or the hermitic arts, there is an interesting plaque in Lichfield Market Place (Ashmole's birthplace) reading: "Edward Wightman of Burton-on-Trent was burnt at the stake in this market place for heresy, 11th April 1612, being the last person in England so to die."

Ashmole was a giant in his day and a true "Magus" with his wide ranging knowledge of so many varied and interesting subjects. His legacy is today the Ashmolean Museum and Bodleian Library in Oxford. Ashmole died on 19th May, 1692.

Magus – The Invisible Life of Elias Ashmole is a valuable reference book not only to Ashmole but to the historical times of the Reformation. It is somewhat academic in its readability and gets bogged down in the itemisation of its reference material, but it is worth persisting as it is chock full of useful information on both Masonic and historical subjects. It is highly recommended.

Michael J Noakes



Dear Grand Librarian,

My name is Chris Mataczynski born 11/06/1981 Entered Apprentice initiated at Lodge Ingleburn 185 in September 2005 along side with my father.

I would like to congratulate you and your team on publishing The Pillars Of Light every month I find it a great read and also a great source of information about the craft.

I am very much interested in the history of freemasonry and it's rituals.

I have read several books which include: Inside Freemasonry: (Richard Leigh)

The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail: (Baigent, Leigh, Lincoln)

The Messianic Legacy: (by the same authors)

Also I have other books but I would rather not read them if they reveal any descriptions about the 3 basic degrees in the craft as I am still an EA (my passing to the 2nd degree is in early march).

Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

Fraternally

Chris Mataczynski

To RW Bro. Haffner and the volunteers of Grand Lodge Library,

Thank you very much for providing us with the Pillars of Light, apart from your great work in the library which I have visited many times already in my very short life as a freemason. The POL is an excellent vehicle not only for learning more about Masonry, but also for creating interest in learning more about Masonry. My only regret is that I cannot be of more service at the present moment to the publication or the library because of work schedules, but I certainly promote it to all the brethren I meet. I am a student of history and if I can do any work from home or online, then please just ask.

Once again, many thanks for the great work!

Bro. Louie Reyes
Lodge Woronora 414



Enlightened Pillars of the Grand Librarian



The forget-me-not - Das Vergissmeinnicht

The true story behind this beloved emblem of the Craft in Germany

I realized, lately that many Masons in our Jurisdiction are wearing the little blue flower pin on their lapel, and when asked about its significance, the answers given are different and far from the reality.

At a certain stage it was obtainable from the Grand Lodge shop and was widely acquired but like so many other symbols, it was adopted without trying to penetrate its origin and meaning, one of the most respected Masonic signs, the only one in modern times.

As early as the year 1934, soon after Hitler's rise to power, it became apparent that Freemasonry was in danger. In the same year, the German Grand Lodge of the Sun in Bayreuth (one of the pre-war German Grand Lodges), realized the imminent problems facing them and elected to wear a little blue flower, the Forget-Me-Not, in lieu of the traditional Square and Compasses, as a mark of identity for Masons. It was felt the new symbol would not attract attention from the Nazis, who were in the process of confiscating and appropriating Masonic Lodges and property. Masonry has gone underground and it was necessary that the Brethren have some readily recognizable means of identification.

Through the entire Nazi era, a little blue flower marked a Brother.

In the concentration camps and in the cities a little blue Forget-Me-Not distinguished the lapels of those who by a tacit act of heroic Resistance, refused to allow the light of Masonry to be extinguished.

In 1947, When the Grand Lodge of the Sun was reopened in Bayreuth by Past Grand Master Beyer, a little blue pin, in the shape of a Forget-Me-Not was proposed and adopted as the official emblem of the first annual convention of those who survived the bitter years of semi-darkness, and rekindled the Light of Masonry once again.

At the first annual Convent of the United Grand Lodges of Germany of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, in 1948, the pin was adopted as an official Masonic emblem honouring those valiant Brethren who carried their work on under adverse conditions. At the Grand Masters Conference in the United States, Dr. Theodor Vogel, the Grand Master of the newly formed United Grand Lodge of Germany, presented one of the pins to each of the Representatives of the grand Jurisdictions with which the UGL of Germany enjoyed fraternal relations.

Thus, did a simple flower blossom forth into a meaningful emblem of the Fraternity and became perhaps the most widely worn pin among Freemasons in Germany. In most of their Lodges, the Forget-Me-Not is presented to newly raised Master Masons at which time, its history is briefly explained. When I asked my father, a Mason of German origin, to obtain for me the small pin, he explained that it represents the pride and love for the Order, of those who fought for its survival in Germany, and though widely recognized in the world, it should remain, the distinctive privilege of German Masons to wear it. I have inherited my father's pin, but out of respect for him and for those who have a distinguished and unique right to wear it, I would do as he wished.

Joseph Haffner

We need you !!!

Do you have a Stand and an Opinion?

Do you want to express your views and enlarge our knowledge?

Then come and join in our Study Circle.

Call the Grand Librarian, (02) 9284 2825

e-mail: library@uglnsw.freemasonry.org.au