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A Few Words from the Editors

The Editorial Cooperative, alongside our continuing development of CQ magazine as a way to bring Walter Wilmshurst's ideas writings to a new audience of modern Freemasons, have continued with our ongoing project to create modern editions of Wilmshurst's Rituals and Procedures for use by interested lodge.

Wilmshurst taught that Freemasonry's greatest secret cannot be seen or depicted, given away or stolen. It is an experience that can only be felt and understood by an individual. Such awareness is the key to inner transformation and the dawning of enlightenment that Masonry aims to impart. He set out to define his relationship with the Supreme Being and discover a path to this knowledge. Then he encouraged others to follow him. He formed a Study Lodge, The Lodge of Living Stones. For it he created a series of rituals and procedures.

In a series of books, Drs Lomas and Harrison have set out to curate, edit and expound his ideas in an approachable, modern format.

He wrote beautiful rites for Opening and Closing the Lodge. [These are significant in their own right and should be studied and practiced independently from the larger ceremonies they complement and enhance.] He wrote a whole series of procedures, rituals and study papers for his Lodge of Living Stones, to share his knowledge and encourage further research. He hoped to set up a network of similar lodges. Unfortunately, that did not happen in his lifetime but there is still hope it might yet.

Wilmshurst had a strong educational grounding in the Christian religion. Then, during his early years in Freemasonry, he studied Eastern, Celtic, and Native American mysticism. He took a great interest in the spiritual dimensions he saw in the newly republished Old York Masonic rituals. He disliked the Emulation omission of moralising the working tools of an Old York Master. So included it in his ceremonies for installing the masters of his lodge.

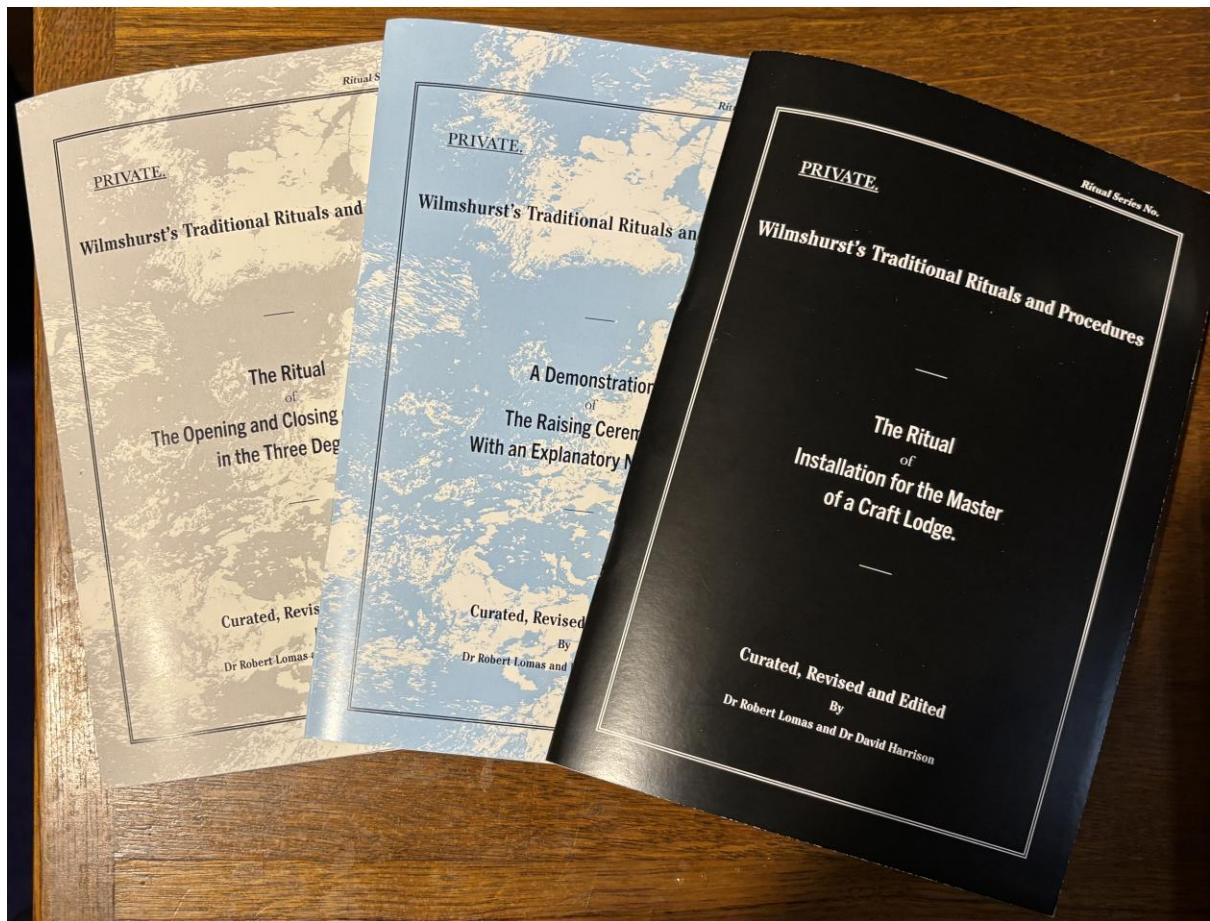
The Rituals for Opening and Closing have been worked used by Coronation Lodge throughout this last year and copies can be purchased from Bro Secretary by Member, Associates or Visitors, with profits going to support lodge funds.

In September 2025, our Narrated Demonstration of the Third Degree was completed. The lodge is hoping to work this beautiful, explanatory, demonstration ritual over two consecutive meetings in the coming season. We hope that friends of the lodge will visit to see this historic demonstration worked again the first time in the twenty years. It will also be the first opportunity to see the Symbolic Keys of the Newly Repurposed Coronation Lodge presented for the first time. (Our retiring WM has written about these keys and their import in his final Message from the Chair.

The lodge has been using our working draft of *The Ceremony of Installation for the Master of a Craft Lodge* to prepare for the impending Installation of our third Master since the lodge's repurposing. We hope to see as many as possible of regular visitors coming to watch this momentous ceremonial moment in the repurposing of the Coronation Lodge..

So far we have Ritual Series No. 1 *The Ceremony of Opening and Closing the Lodge in All Three Degrees*, and Ritual Series No 4. *A Demonstration of The Raising Ceremony With an Explanatory Narration completed* available..

If any visitors, associates or friends of lodge members would like to obtain copies of these privately printed Ritual Books—copies can be bought from Bro Sec. John Karran karranjohn@hotmail.com with proceeds going to lodge funds. (Hint: they make a novel and thoughtful Christmas present for your Masonic Friends)



All that remains is for us to wish all our readers a Happy Winter Solstice and the Seasons Greetings of your personal avocation.

The CQ Editorial Cooperative

Notes from the Secretary of Coronation Lodge

Winter Solstice & Fraternal Greetings Brethren

Thank you to all of you for your continued support for Coronation Lodge . At our next meeting we will be honoured by the presence of W Bro David Littlewood as the Representative of the Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master. Let us give him a big welcome.

We will be conducting the Wimhurst version of the Installation Ceremony and WBro Wayne Warnick will be Installed into the Chair of King Solomon by WBro Dan Wilson. This is the first time we have attempted this and thanks to the hard work by the team, the WM and DC this will be a tremendous achievement.

Coronation Lodge will be two years old in new current format at our December meeting. We have had an interesting start on our journey, but we are now formed and stable and the foundations are well laid for further progress. The goal is to have a lodge that conducts its rituals with a more esoteric format whilst also bringing in discussion and lectures of an esoteric nature to the meeting. The Coronation Lodge Ritual, based on the Wilmshurst version from the Lodge of the Living Stones, is moving on. The Opening / Closing is complete, and now also the Installation ritual. Please see me for your ritual book if you have not already received. Then they will be available for purchase for Associate Members, then any other interested brethren. The Third Degree is also completed. These Ritual books again will be available and please contact me for a copy if required. There are also plans for all the degrees from Wilmshurst's collection being worked upon. Hopefully by the end of this year we will have the Wimhurst degrees Collection ready, thanks again to Robert Lomas and David Harrison.

The plan on a Third-Degree ceremony has been put on hold, but the plan is to have the candidate go through his third at the Lodge of the Living Stones and then we can demonstrate it at Coronation Lodge afterward.

The Associate Membership of the Lodge is progressing well with well over 45 members from all over the Globe. The Journal of the lodge is called; 'Coronatio Quadrans' is available all members and Associate Members via the OpenLodge portal. We actively encourage you to use the OpenLodge portal for both Coronation Lodge general business (summons, minutes, etc) but also, and perhaps more importantly, for use of the educational side, the Lectures, the Papers, the Discussion Board, etc.

The Coronation Lodge Writing Challenge paper, we encourage members both full and associate to put in a paper as set out on Masonic and Esoteric matters. These should be submitted to the Secretary before each lodge meeting and will be gratefully accepted, long or short.

Our home of Runcorn Masonic Hall has been very helpful, and we thank the hall for all their assistance and understanding. We will continue to look for new and innovative ways to practice our Freemasonry within the Constitution, with the goal of Truth and the 'Return to the Centre'. Our next meeting on the 24th of March, close to the Spring Equinox. We look forward to seeing you all and if you have any other interested brother who would like to visit and / or join us on the journey, feel free. Our mantra is: 'to get more Freemasonry into men'.

Fraternal Greetings Brethren

God Bless, John

A Message from

The Worshipful Master of Coronation Lodge

WBro Dan Wilson

Dear Brethren,

As the year draws toward its long night, our discussions have turned once more to Wilmshurst, that steadfast interpreter of the Craft whose pages still unsettle the dust and stir the inner chambers of the mind. In recent meetings we have only begun to trace the outlines of his thought, yet already his insights have opened fresh paths for reflection.

With the winter solstice approaching, we look toward the forthcoming extensio workings, when the light will return and a new Master will rise to preside over our continued journey. Under his guidance, we shall press further into Wilmshurst's writings, seeking the deeper meaning of the symbols entrusted to us.

May the close of the year bring peace to the brethren, and may the returning light find us ready for the work ahead.

In my last address I will also introduce you to the concept of the Keys to the Lodge also being the Keys to the Temple

The Lodge Keys

Introduction

Towards the end of the installation ceremony, the Worshipful Installing Master presents the newly-installed Worshipful Master with the warrant of the lodge, along with the Book of Constitutions, the Provincial and Lodge by-laws, the furniture of the Lodge, and finally the books of the Secretary and Treasurer. In the Wilmshurst workings, the WM is also presented with *The Lodge Keys*. In the Lodge of Living Stones No. 4957, the keys are two large Church keys – oversized keys that are used on sacristy doors where the priest would enrobe with vestments and prepare himself before Holy Mass. This has clear symbolism: they are the keys to the Temple, and there are several references to keys in the Volume of the Sacred Law.

Keys in the Volume of the Sacred Law

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

–Matthew 18:19

Here, Jesus gives Peter "the keys of the kingdom of heaven." In the ancient world, keys represented authority, access, and responsibility. The person who held the keys could open or close doors (admit or exclude) in a household, city, or palace. By giving Peter the keys, Christ is symbolically granting him spiritual authority: the power to "bind and loosen", that is, to teach, guide, correct, and govern the faith community under Divine inspiration. It's not just institutional power. It's also an invitation to spiritual *guardianship*: to open the way for others, to unlock the mysteries of Heaven, and to steward Sacred Truth with Wisdom and Humility.

And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

—Isaiah 22:22

This Old Testament prophecy refers to Eliakim, a servant appointed to high office. But early Christian tradition sees this as a foreshadowing of Christ: the true key-bearer of David's royal house. The imagery of placing the key on his shoulder shows weighty responsibility and divinely granted authority. This passage links directly to Revelation 3:7, where the same language is applied to Jesus, affirming His sovereign power to grant access to God's kingdom.

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

—Revelation 1:18

Here, the Risen Christ proclaims His dominion over the ultimate forces of bondage and separation: death and the grave (Hades). The “keys” He holds symbolize His victory over death and His power to release souls from it. Christ does not merely possess symbolic authority: He has wrested control from death itself, becoming the Lord of life and the gatekeeper to eternal destiny.

So they and their children had the oversight of the gates of the house of the Lord, namely, the house of the tabernacle, by wards. In four quarters were the porters, toward the east, west, north, and south. And their brethren, which were in their villages, were to come after seven days from time to time with them. For these Levites, the four chief porters, were in their set office, and were over the chambers and treasuries of the house of God. And they lodged round about the house of God, because the charge was upon them, and the opening thereof every morning pertained to them.

—1 Chronicles 9:23–27

These verses describe Levites tasked with guarding the entrances to the temple. They were entrusted with keys to open and close the temple gates each day: a literal but sacred responsibility. The fact that only specific men, chosen and consecrated, could access the temple precincts emphasizes that entry into the presence of God required purity, authority, and calling.

This is the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you entering on the sabbath, of the priests and of the Levites, shall be porters of the doors; And a third part shall be at the king's house; and a third part at the gate of the foundation: and all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the LORD. But let none come into the house of the LORD, save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites; they shall go in, for they are holy: but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD.

—2 Chronicles 23:4–6

Here, in the context of protecting the temple during the coronation of young King Joash, the priests and Levites guard the doors. Their control over access, aided by the keys they bore, ensures the integrity and sanctity of the worship space during a time of political and spiritual transition.

Thus, keys represent authority and responsibility in leadership, control over access or revelation, power to permit or forbid, and spiritual authority given by God.

The Keys of Coronation Lodge

The Keys of Coronation Lodge are seven stylised keys looped together with a cord. Each key is tagged with a verse from the Lodge's Volume of the Sacred Law. Representing the three theological virtues (Faith, Hope, and Charity), the three Masonic pillars (Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty), and spiritual illumination (Light), they are intended as guiding principles for a new Master's authority. To use them effectively, the verses are to be recited and meditated upon until their meanings are internalised and embodied by the Master.

Faith: *1 Corinthians 4:1–2*

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God... it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

This verse speaks directly to the Masonic conception of office. A Master is not a ruler by possession but a steward of the mysteries and entrusted with forms, symbols, and teachings older and greater than himself. Faith here means fidelity: the willingness to guard the landmarks, preserve the ritual, and transmit the Light uncorrupted. In Masonry, a man does not own the Chair, he occupies it as a trustee. Paul's words capture that charge with perfect clarity: a steward must be faithful to what he has received, and faithful in what he hands on.

Hope: *Hebrews 6:19*

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.

Hope is the Mason's steadyng force. When the tempests of life rise, the Mason is taught to look to the East, the place of Light, and to anchor his soul in things eternal. This verse mirrors the Craft's teaching that a man firmly grounded in Hope cannot be shaken from his principles. It is the virtue that holds the structure together when every wind presses against it. On the First-Degree tracing board, Hope is represented as an anchor on Jacob's ladder.

Charity: *1 Corinthians 13:13*

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

There are many words for Love in Greek, but in Latin there are three: amor (romantic love, comparable to the Greek *eros*), dilectio (brotherly love, comparable to the Greek *philia*), and caritas (unconditional love, comparable to the Greek *agapē*). This is where we get the word charity from, it does not simply mean almsgiving, but to be genuinely charitable is to be tolerant of the faults of others as we hope the Lord is tolerant of our own faults. Charity in Masonry is the disposition of the heart that binds Brother to Brother and man to Mankind. It is the spirit of benevolence, forbearance, and goodwill that ensures the Lodge operates not as a collection of individuals, but as a moral fraternity. This verse expresses the Craft's highest ethical aspiration: that the Builder's work is made perfect only when animated by love.

Wisdom: *Proverbs 4:7*

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom.

Solomon's name stands at the head of Masonry, and Wisdom is the stone upon which all further labour rests. The Master must judge with discernment, weigh matters with clarity, and govern with skill. This verse is a reminder that no rank, ritual, or regalia can substitute for the virtue that makes

leadership just: a wise heart that seeks understanding. Wisdom in this verse is displayed through its simplicity. You hold the Chair of King Solomon, so go find Wisdom like that great monarch did.

Strength: *Isaiah 40:31*

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles.

Strength in Masonry is not brute force, but steadfastness of character. It is the resolve to stand upright when trials press in, the endurance to complete one's designs, and the vigour to support those who falter. This verse expresses the Craft's teaching that true strength comes from patience, discipline, and a higher source of renewal. The Mason rises because he draws from something greater than himself.

Beauty: *Psalm 27:4*

To behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.

Beauty is the harmony behind all the Lodge's proportions. It is the virtue that tempers Strength and gives form to Wisdom. Masonry teaches that Beauty is found in the moral symmetry of a well-governed life, in the fitting disposition of acts and words, and in the contemplative seeking of the Divine Order. This verse aligns Beauty with sacred inquiry: the vision of the Temple not merely as stone, but as a place where the soul is elevated.

Light: *Psalm 119:105*

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

These are the words that the Master utters during the Ceremony of Lesser Lights. This verse reminds him that all power proceeds from the Divine Centre and to that Centre must be accounted for and returned. From the moment the candidate first receives Light, Masonry presents illumination as both gift and obligation. Light reveals the path; Light dispels confusion; Light enables the Builder to work with understanding. This verse encapsulates the entire movement of the Craft: from darkness toward greater Light, step by step, guided by a moral lamp that shows the way a man ought to walk.

Conclusion

The Lodge Keys, both literal and symbolic, are far more than ornamental objects or traditional tokens. They are enduring emblems of responsibility, spiritual guardianship, and inner transformation. Rooted in Scripture and Masonic tradition, they bind the Master of the Lodge not merely to authority, but to sacred duty. To hold the Keys is to be entrusted with access, not only to the physical lodge room, but to the Temple of Wisdom, the House of Discipline, and the Pathway of Light. They open the doors to service, discernment, and contemplation. They remind the Master that he is a steward of something greater than himself: a custodian of the mysteries, a servant of Truth, and a guide for others walking the same Way.

Each of the seven symbolic keys — Faith, Hope, Charity, Wisdom, Strength, Beauty, and Light, forms part of the greater key-ring of moral leadership. When their corresponding verses are meditated upon and internalised, they do not merely inform the Master's work; they transform it. Thus, may every Worshipful Master who receives the Keys do so with humility, reverence, and resolve. For the doors they unlock are not only those of the Lodge, but of the heart, the soul, and the sacred journey from darkness to Light.

The Keys of Coronation Lodge



A Message from

The Master Elect of Coronation Lodge

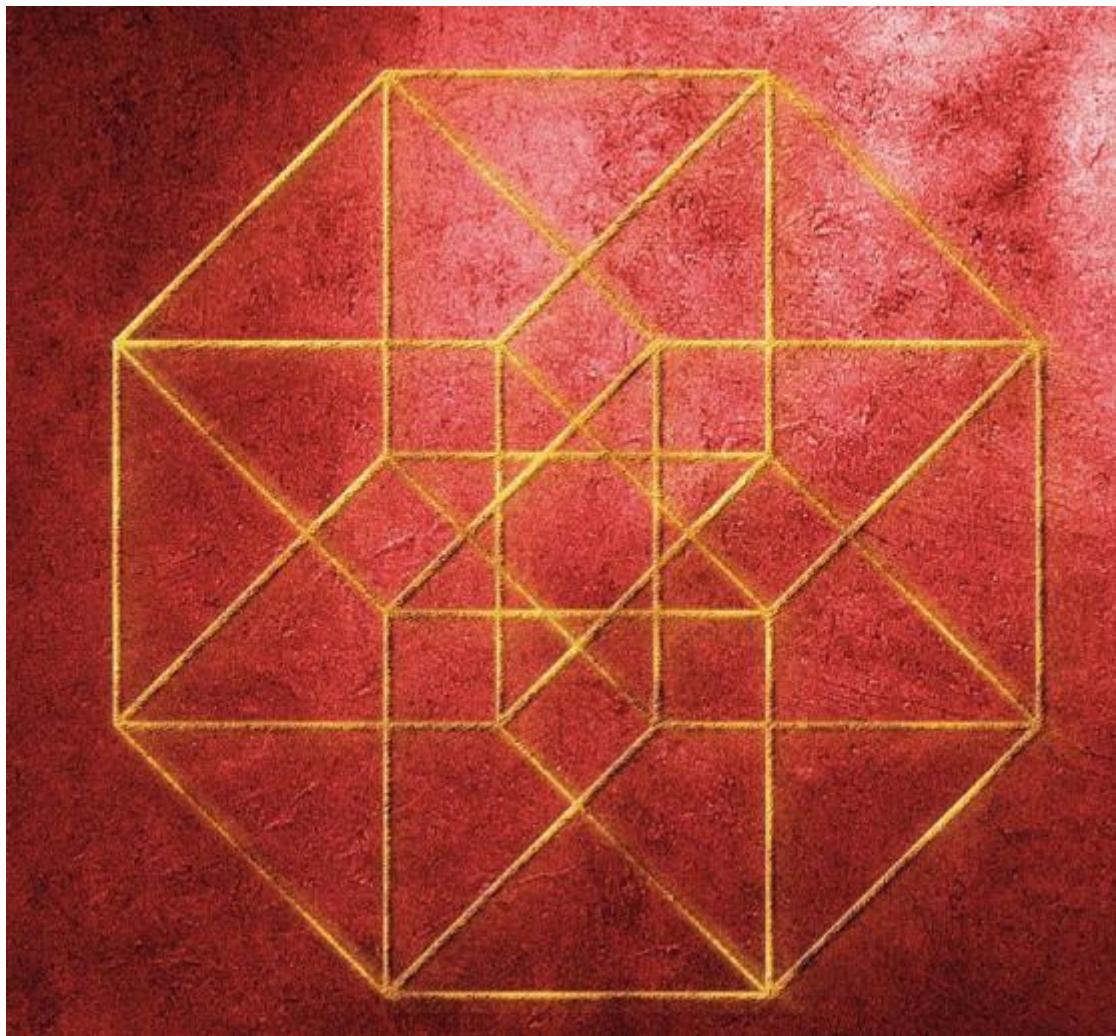
WBro Wayne Warnick

"One can go through an initiation, and one can be initiated. Unfortunately, these are not always mutually inclusive. In *The Meaning of Masonry*, Wilmshurst indicates that there are those so bereft of intellectual and spiritual insight that undergoing initiation would be of no benefit to them. He also indicates that stepping onto the spiritual path is not a decision to be rushed or taken lightly, and that once you have stepped onto the path, turning back would be "moral suicide."

During this year, I would like for us to consider what it means to undergo an initiatory experience, the significance of Masonic initiation, and how that relates to the wider esoteric path."

The Tesseract and Freemasonry

WBro Dr David Harrison

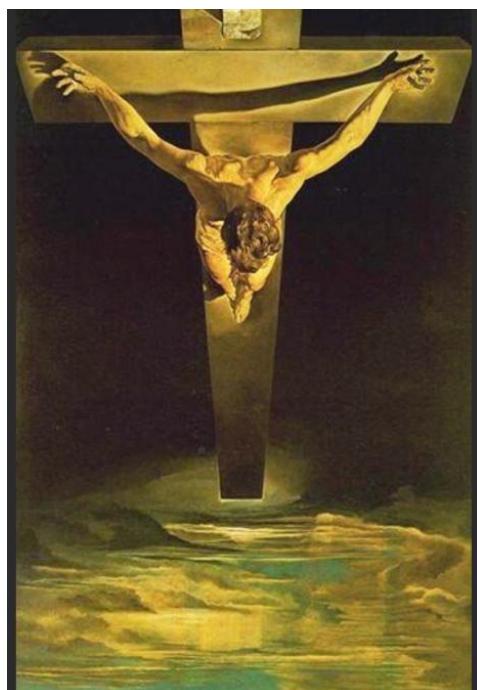


The symbol of the tesseract emblazons the cover of my book, *Rediscovered Rituals of English Freemasonry*. There are a number of reasons why I chose this image, so I thought I would discuss the history and meaning of this highly spiritual symbol in this article for CQ.

The tesseract is a four-dimensional hypercube consisting of eight cubic cells that can be unfolded to form a cross. The term was first used by British mathematician Charles Howard Hinton in 1888, who presented his ideas to the Washington Philosophical Society in 1902 before publishing his book *The Fourth Dimension* two years later. In his book, Hinton presented diagrams of cubic cells, instructing how they could be mentally assembled into a tesseract, explaining that 'the higher world is four-dimensional' and 'within space are given the conceptions of point and line, line and plane, which really involve the relation of space to a higher space'.¹



Thus, the four-dimensional tesseract is inaccessible to the mind, just like the concept of God is incomprehensible to humans, the unfolding of the tesseract into a cross allows us to comprehend a three-dimensional image of it, akin to comprehending Christ as a human form of God.



This image that can be seen in Salvador Dalí's 1954 painting Crucifixion (Corpus Hypercubus), comparable to the way that a cube can be unfolded into six squares.

Hinton's ideas influenced an OTO ritual decades later, which similarly constructed the tesseract line by line, to reconstruct the universe by the magician, while reciting a number of Hebrew letters.

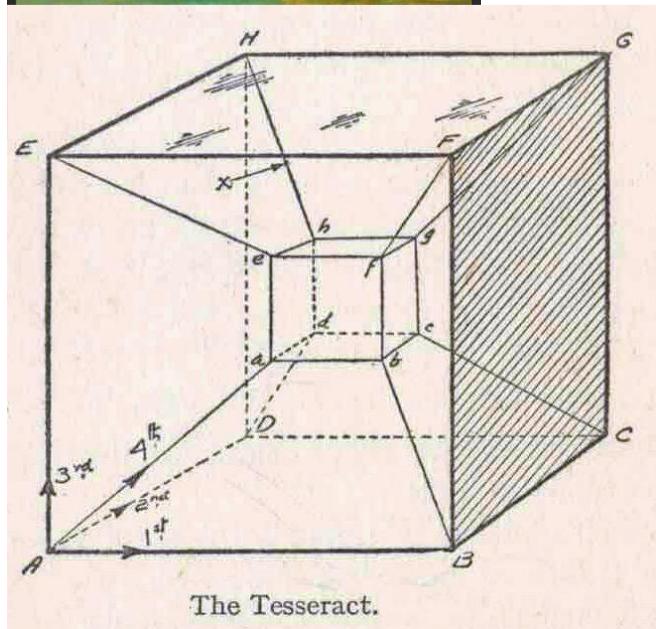
Hinton's work was certainly an influence on English Freemason and occult author Dudley Wright, who delved deep into the more spiritual aspects of Hinton's ideas, the tesseract being seen as a way to access an alternative reality, Wright publishing his own work in 1906 entitled *The Fourth Dimension*.

Wright was attracted to

spiritualism and theosophy, researching various religions, eventually converting to



Islam in 1915. He became a Freemason in 1912, being initiated into Eccleston Lodge No. 1624, was Exalted into the Royal Arch and joined a Mark lodge. Wright was a colleague of Arthur Edward Waite, both having contributed to the Occult Review, and also worked on the editorial team of



the Builder, bringing him into the sphere of US based Masonic author Joseph Fort Newton.²

Alexander Horne also discussed the more mystical properties of the tesseract in his book *Theosophy and the Fourth Dimension*, which was published in 1928. Horne lectured regularly to lodges of the Theosophical Society on various subjects, specifically in the San Francisco area, publishing a variety of works with the Theosophical Press and in journals such as *World Theosophy*. As an editor, he had worked on Blavatsky's *Alchemy and the Secret Doctrine*, but it was his work on the fourth dimension that Horne is better known, his diagrams of the tesseract and mystical views on the topic still influencing writers and mathematicians today.³

References

1. See Charles Howard Hinton, *The Fourth Dimension*, (London: George Allen & Co., 1912), pp.2-3.
2. See John Belton and Simon Mayers, 'The Life and Works of Dudley Wright', *Heredom*, 23, (2015), pp.11-53.
3. See Alexander Horne, *Theosophy and the Fourth Dimension*, (Theosophical Press, 1928), and for an examination of the visual aspect of the tesseract in a geometrical context see John Barnes, *Gems of Geometry*, (London: Springer, 2012), pp.85-86.

Questions from the Chair of Coronation Lodge

Question for June 2025

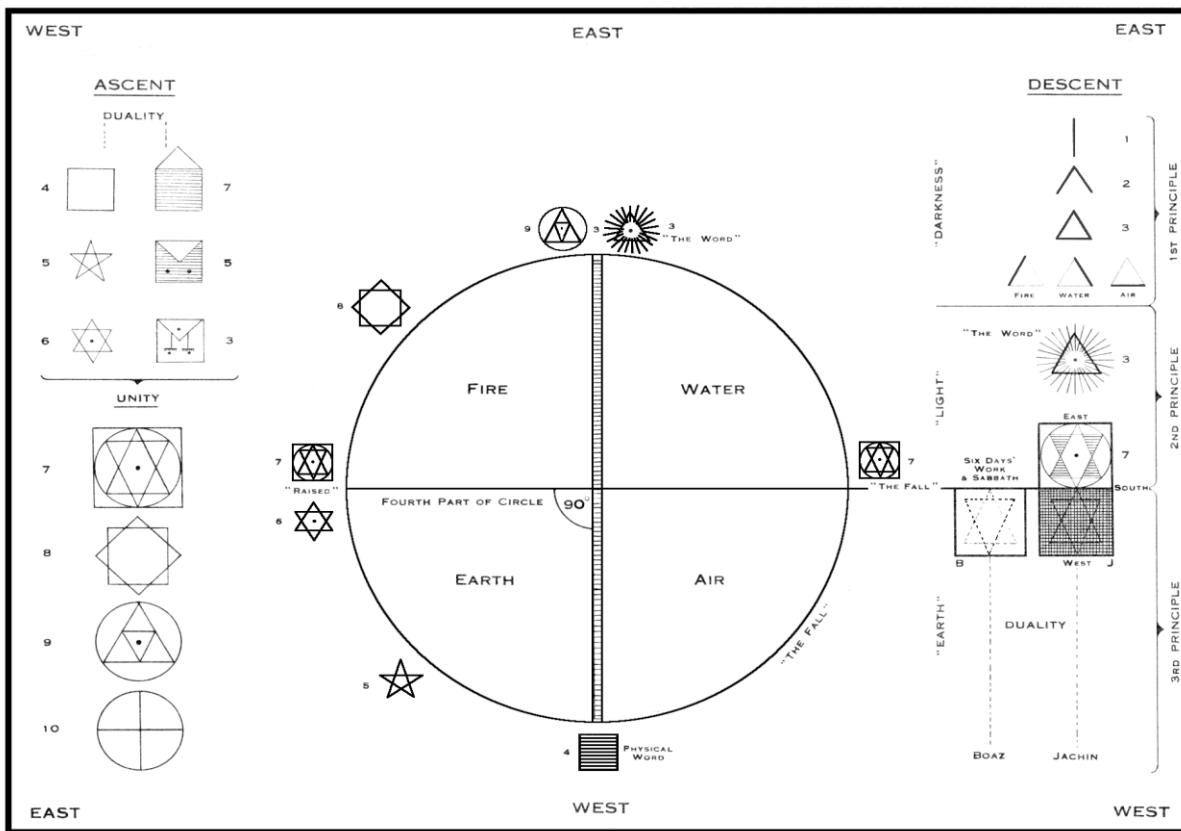
Question: "Can you write a guide to understanding Wilmshurst's Plan for reaching the Centre, something that gives someone studying it a foundation to making sense of it?"

11

Robert Lomas

The quick answer is Yes. The longer one is to be found below:

The Symbolic Meaning of Wilmshurst's Plan of the Route to the Centre



The plan is set with the boundaries of the lodge, and its purpose is to draw attention to the four symbolic directions. East, West, South and North. The symbolism of these directions is a theme, which Wilmshurst returns to often, so I will summarize his ideas.

The main direction of the plan runs from East at the top to West at the bottom. This is no accident as Wilmshurst sees the transition from West to East as vitally important. He says:

“Our Ritual, after explaining the cultural purpose and discipline of the first two Degrees, goes on to say, ‘Masonry finally teaches you how to die’. This involves something deep. The Craft prescribes for its followers a technique of *living*, so why does its ritual speak of a definite technique of *dying*? Is this

a secret science of the process of mystical death and resurrection, which qualifies candidates to learn?"

Wilmshurst said it is a delicate and deeply concealed subject, never openly discussed and only to be learned from the private instruction of the Master to whom a Candidate is affiliated.

The Ritual hints at this secret technique. Most unenlightened people dread death in any form and wish to hear as little of it as they can. But Wilmshurst insists is that it is a mystical dying that results in "raising" and makes a Candidate an Initiate. The aspirant "suffers a sea change, into something rich and strange." This change is an inward, transforming consciousness by a literal "renewing" of the mind.

It does not change your outward appearance. You return to the "companions of your former toils" and resume your usual activities. Yet your whole being is "raised" to a higher power and reinforced by life of a higher quality and voltage. This was once called being "made perfect". "To be perfect is to be initiated" was an old saying, and in Greek the same word was used for both "perfection" and "initiation."

But to return to the four quarters of the lodge. The North is the side of un-enlightenment, the place of darkness. It calls for exertion in the teeth of opposition. It presents darkness and difficulty that call forth the energy of the spirit. The North is associated with mental darkness and signifies the place of imperfection and un-development. Wilmshurst notes that in olden times the bodies of suicides, reprobates and unbaptized children were always buried in the north or sunless side of a churchyard.

Junior members of The Craft are seated in the north, for, symbolically, it represents the condition of the spiritually unenlightened, the novice whose spiritual latent light has not yet risen above the horizon of consciousness to disperse the clouds of material interests and the impulses of the sensual life.

The East of the Lodge represents spirituality, the highest and most sacred mode of consciousness. Often this is little developed but is still latent to become active in moments of stress or deep emotion.

The West, the polar opposite of the East, represents normal rational understanding, the consciousness we employ in everyday affairs. It is material-mindedness or common sense. Midway between East and West is the South, the meeting place of spiritual intuition and rational understanding. It is a point denoting abstract thought and intellectual power at its highest. Opposite this is the North, a sphere of benightedness and ignorance, controlled by sense-reactions and impressions received by our lowest and least reliable mode of perception, our physical senses.

Thus, the four sides of the Lodge point to four different, yet progressive, modes of consciousness. These are sense-impression (North), reason (West), intellectual ideation (South), and spiritual intuition (East), making up four possible ways of knowing.

According to your development and education you tend to employ only the first two or perhaps three of these. This limitation on your outlook on life means that your knowledge of truth is restricted and imperfect. Full and perfect knowledge is possible only when the deep-seeing vision and consciousness of your spiritual principle has been awakened and added to your other cognitive faculties. This is possible only to the true Master, with all four methods of knowledge in perfect balance and adjusted like the four sides of the Lodge. This is why the Master and Past-Masters are placed in the East.

The personality of the Mason is made up of four basic metaphysical elements called by the ancients fire, water, air and earth. In the plan this is represented a circle made up of four equal parts. The four segments of this circle is a reminder that the human organism is compounded of those four elements

in balanced proportions. Water represents the psychic nature; Air, the mentality, Fire, the will and nervous force; whilst Earth is the condensation in which the other three become stabilized and encased.

The circle in the Centre of the plan represents our personal temple and within it are four right angles, each forming the fourth part of the circle of yourself.

In the north-west is the earthly body which concentrates on the irrational demands of the flesh. It is represented by the element Earth.

The south-west is the rational mind which can control and counterpoise the irrational body. It is represented by Air.

The south-east quarter is the emotional or psychic mind which can be swayed by both rational and irrational elements and will be influenced by whichever is allowed to predominate. It is represented by the element Water.

The north-east quarter is the spirit, a supra-rational principle which is capable of comprehending the transcendental nature of the unifying principle of the universe. It is shown as the element of Fire.

This diagram helps us to understand the purpose of the three degrees of the Craft. The First degree equips us to develop a rational mind and bring our intellect (Air in the plan) into balance with the irrational urges of the flesh (shown as Earth in the plan). To aid us in this we are equipped with postures, a lodge structure to focus our thinking and a set of symbols and spiritual tools. Only when we have balanced our rational mind against our bodily urges, learned how to use posture, to comprehend symbolism and gained proficiency in the use of spiritual tools are we ready to move on the Second degree.

The Second degree helps us to balance our intellect (Air) and our emotions (Water) so that we learn how to recognise truth and discriminate between irrational urges of the flesh (Earth) and the truth of the spirit (Fire). We are given further postures, tools and symbols to help us strengthen our rational mind and learn to handle our emotions so that we are prepared for the discovery of the blazing star of truth, which is as yet only visible as darkness at our centre. Here we meet the spiral symbol, which can teach us how to approach the centre. The postures affect our body and feedback hormonal responses into our rational minds so helping us learn how to subdue emotion. But before we can proceed to the Third degree we must be prepared to let go of our ego and self-regard.

In the Third degree we allow our ego and rational mind to die so that our spirit may be reborn as the keystone of our being and be supported in its quest to attain the vision of light that emanates from the centre. The ritual of death and rebirth stills the urges of our body, our intellect and our emotion and brings forth the suppressed spirit. In this degree the circle of our being is rendered complete and perfect by acquiring mastery over its four component parts. When this is fully achieved a master of the craft has undergone a radical transformation of the mind and a regeneration of his entire nature. Now are we ready to allow the light of the centre to flow through fresh channels in the brain such that the true secret of the Craft may be internalised.

In the ritual of the Third Degree this is symbolized as the gates of will, intellect, and feelings respectively. At each entrance stands an aspect of our lower self, each traitor, seeking the secrets of the spirit for selfish ends. An intuition of right conduct arises in the Initiates spirit and attempts to escape through the southern *gate of will*. Our lower self, afraid that it must reform its bad habits and prune its excesses, refuses to let our spirit rise free.

Now our inner wisdom tries to escape through the northern *gate of intellect*. Here another aspect of the lower self resents it, afraid of the need to make fresh mental adjustments. Once more our spirit is struck down.

Finally, this higher self staggers to the eastern *gate of feeling*, where all inspiration of spiritual vitality is stifled by our lower sensual nature. Our spirit, finding that its retreat cut off at the only three gates it knows from the outer life of the world, is slain and must await the master light of all our seeing. We must learn to discipline those three ruffians enlisting the principal officers in our personal lodge. Then, like Hiram Abif we are raised to become a balanced and harmonious personality, with the Blazing Star at our Centre controlling all aspects of our life.

Wilmshurst calls this state of initiation the fifth kingdom of nature. He says that we should recognize it as a transcendental condition of consciousness. It is within you, not of this world yet personally realizable here and now. It is a treasure hidden in everyone's personal organism towards which all Masons should constantly aspire.

It is not a matter of time or place but of consciousness. He says that it comes as lightning coming from East to West, noting that these in the Masonic sense are our spiritual and material poles. The East represents Spirituality and the West Material and Rational thinking. The tension between them is implied by placing the symbolic eternal flame in the Centre of the Lodge to represent the light of consciousness.

The awareness of this state of consciousness is a change, which can be experienced in Initiation. When it happens it is a solemn crisis of psychological expansion which Wilmshurst says feels like a rending of one's mental veil, the subjectively heard ripping and crashing, like "the sound of a trumpet," of the delicate nerve webbing which hitherto has shut off perception from super sensual things, and finally the blinding blaze of light immortal which makes a man an Initiate.

The initiate placed in the N.E. corner is intended to see that on the one side of him is the path that leads to the perpetual light of the East, into which he is encouraged to proceed, and that on the other is that of spiritual obscurity and ignorance into which it is possible for him to remain or relapse. It is a parable of the dual paths of life open to each one of us; on the one hand the path of selfishness, material desires and sensual indulgence, of intellectual blindness and moral stagnation; on the other the path of moral and spiritual progress, in pursuing which one may decorate and adorn the Lodge within him with the ornaments and jewels of grace and with the invaluable furniture of true knowledge, and which he may dedicate, in all his actions, to the service of God and of his fellow men. And mark that of those jewels some are said to be moveable and transferable, because when displayed in our own lives and natures their influence becomes transferred and communicated to others and helps to uplift and sweeten the lives of our fellows; whilst some are immoveable because they are permanently fixed and planted in the roots of our own being, and are indeed the raw material which has been entrusted to us to work out of chaos and roughness into due and true form.

The lodge is shown as an oblongated (or duplicated) square because man's organism does not consist of his physical body alone. The physical body has its "double" or ethereal counterpart in the astral body which is an extension of the physical nature and compound of the same four elements in an impalpable and more tenuous form. The oblong spatial form of the Lodge must therefore be considered as referable to the physical and ethereal nature in each of us.

During the rituals the candidate follows a path of spiral pilgrimage around the circumference of the circle, which contains the self. This path is described in terms of a sequence of symbols. Inspiration begins in the East with an upward facing equilateral triangle with a blazing light at its Centre. This

represents the rising of the bright morning star within the earth-based triangle of rational thought. The base of the triangle is aligned along the balance between the emotions and the intellect. (Earth-Air) whilst its apex points towards the spiritual East. It suggests that there is a spiritual star shining at the Centre of the rational and emotional urges of the candidate.

The path continues to the south, the area of intellect. Here there is a more complex symbol consisting of a square, a circle, two interlaced equilateral triangles and a Centre. The triangle can be drawn with the apex pointing upwards or downwards. These were known in mediaeval Kabbalism as the triangles of fire and water respectively. Symbolically the triangle of fire refers to the spiritual nature, and the triangle of water to the mental or rational nature. Wilmshurst says that one meaning of the interlaced triangles is when the spirit is in perfect balance with the mind. He goes on to state that the square, triangle, circle, and point, are symbols known as the "Platonic solids," i.e., the basic geometrical principles of the invisible Real and Eternal World that lie behind and controls the phenomenal and temporal world. This science of spiritual geometry reveals the true principles upon which our personal temple must be built.

The Square is the symbol of the human spirit as it is generated out of the inspiration, which underlies it. That spirit was created "square", perfect, though invested with freedom of choice and capacity for error.

But this symbol also has a circle with a Centre point, within a square. The circle within a square has special significance. The square represents the spirit as it exists in the outward Universe, symbolized by the lodge with its directions and their significances. As the candidate moves around the circumference, he is searching for the light of inspiration which initiated his quest. If he can make contact with that central principle by a voluntary renunciation of the intervening obstructions and inharmonious elements in himself, then he ceases to be a rationalized animal and becomes aware of omniscience. In this way he recovers the lost and genuine secrets of his own being as he reaches a point from which no Master Mason can ever err, which is the end, object and goal of his search.

The opening and closing of the Lodge in the Third Degree reveal the philosophy of the Masonic system. It says that the human spirit originated in the eternal East, in the world of Spirituality and not to any geographical direction - and that thence it has directed its course towards the West - the material world which is the antipodes of the spiritual. Its purpose in journeying from spiritual to physical conditions is a quest to recover something it has lost, but which by its own industry and suitable instruction it hopes to find. What it is that has been lost is not explicitly declared but is implied and is stated to be the genuine secrets of a Master Mason. It is the loss of the essence of our own being. In other words, the spirit has ceased to be aware of the cosmos and has degenerated into a limited terrestrial consciousness.

The square is the influence of the outside cosmos that evolved this searching spirit. The circle was used by the old Initiates to demonstrate the microcosmic and all comprehensive nature of man. This symbol shows the candidate simultaneously as a square, finite, material and form-fettered, and yet as potentially a circle, spiritual, infinite and free. It indicates that when his outward temporal self attains balance with his inward immortal spirit, the square of the former becoming equal to and in equilibrium with the circle of the latter, his evolution is complete; he has wrought the purpose through of that which made him man. He must gradually digest the Masonic teaching in the closed circle of his own mind. to extract their final values. When he does, he will square the circle. This is an occult expression signifying that deity, symbolized by the all-containing circle, has attained form and manifestation in a square or human spirit. It expresses the mystery of the Initiation within the individual spirit.

But inside this symbol is a triangle with its apex downwards and base upwards, which is an ancient symbol of the psychic constitution known as the water triangle. It is interlaced with a fire triangle, a symbol of the spirit that imparts functional energy. Of itself the spirit would be passive, a negative quantity unbalanced by a positive opposite. Its active properties are the product of its union with an underlying and inspiring basis, modified by the good or evil tendencies of the personality. So, by the interaction of the individual qualities of the personality represented by the interlaced triangles the spirit may hope to find the glory at the Centre within the square creation of the cosmos. And this symbol is first encountered in the southern part of the lodge, the area dominated by the logic and learning. It is also found on the cusp point where the religious inclinations of the spirit (symbolized by water) meet the rational arguments of the material mind (symbolized by air).

Here is the point where the Masonic pilgrim is forced to rationalize his longing for spiritual understanding. What does he seek? What are the lost secrets he hopes will lead him to the brightness of the Centre, which he first glimpsed through dimly through the imbalance of his emotions and rational mind. To find answers he must move on towards the west. The point where his emotions and reason will come into intimate contact with one another in the region of the most material region of the lodge.

The symbol you meet at this point is a square, but a dark, black and threatening square. What does it mean? You are now deep in the work of the 2nd Degree — the education, discipline and control of your mental faculties, the gradual discovery of the secrets and mysteries of Nature and of yourself as part of Nature. You are trying to turn yourself into a true die or square. It is at this point that your individualization as a unitary Ego attains its climax. The Perfect Cube represents man brought to perfection in the natural order. But perfection in the natural order is not your final goal. It is only a halfway house to the spiritual or ultra-natural order. It is where, when the Perfect Ashlar stage has been reached, there awaits for everyone the last and greatest trial, the death prefigured by our 3rd Degree, involving the annihilation of all sense of the personal self, the killing out of the strongly individualized Ego-consciousness. The darkness of this square is that of death itself. This is the valley of death that our ritual tells us we need to travel towards if we are to rise and shine as the stars forever. And the first star is visible in the fading light of the south-western corner of the lodge.

As in the outer heavens of nature the sun, moon and stars exist and function, so in the personal heavens of man there operate metaphysical forces inherent in himself and described by the same terms. In the make-up of each of us exists a psychic magnetic field of various forces, determining our individual temperaments and tendencies and influencing our future. To those forces have also been given the names of sun, moon and planets, and the science of their interaction and outworking was the ancient science of astronomy, or, as it is now more often called astrology, which is one of the liberal arts and sciences recommended to the study of every Mason and the pursuit of which belongs in particular to the Fellow-Craft stage. Now we are prepared for our first meeting with the five-pointed star as it sets in west.

To become initiated involves dying; not a physical death, but a moral way of dying in which the spirit is loosened from the body and the sensitive life, and becoming temporarily detached therefrom is set free to enter a world of Eternal Light. This, after drastic preliminary disciplines, was achieved in a state of trance and under the supervision of duly qualified Masters and Adepts who intromitted the candidate's liberated spirit into its own interior principles until it at last reached the Blazing Star or Glory at its own Centre. In that light it simultaneously knew itself and God and realized their unity and the points of fellowship between them. The five-pointed star represents meanings that will either disclose themselves to advancing experience or be imparted privately by a teacher to approved pupils. Until one possesses a high degree of understanding, such research is not permitted, the Craft thus

perpetrates a principle uniformly insisted on by teachers of wisdom throughout the ages. One of the greatest of these declared that where the carcass is, there are the eagles gathered together, implying that if the human personality suffers itself to become passive and evacuated of its controlling principle, to lose contact with the central spiritual Ego appointed to dominate it, it becomes as but an empty shell or carcass liable to invasion by all manner of undesirable and insidious entities. To reach the glory of the Centre we must be ready to let our Ego die. Here Wilmshurst warns that this is a dangerous process unless it is undertaken at that critical moment when the light of the bright morning star is about to rise in the night sky.

To a candidate of strong virtue and level-headedness, who knows beforehand what he is doing and acts under a competent teacher, there is no danger in venturing onto the hidden paths. He will act, and with safety, upon the age-old enjoinder of the Mysteries: To know; to will; to dare; and be silent.

Five *upward* steps lead from the First to the Second Degree. That is why we are told to lift our eyes to a bright five-pointed star whose rising in ourselves brings peace and salvation. From this symbol it is possible to develop five points of fellowship and self-identification and appreciate why the number five recurs so prominently in our system.

Nature loves the number five says the poet; seeing the hosts of five-petalled flowers and five-pointed leaves she produces, and that our human senses are five and our hands and feet ramify into five extremities, we may perhaps regard them as Nature's prognostic efforts to prepare her creatures for eventual advancement to a kingdom which, in our secret science, has always been associated with the number five. The geometrical symbolist would think of the five kingdoms in terms of the point, the line, the square, the cube, and finally the pentagon or five-pointed star), each new kingdom involving an extra dimension of consciousness.

All things in Nature, then, shape towards a fifth kingdom. But understand this important truth; every kingdom is self-contained, shut off as it were by closed bulkheads; their bounds are set through which we cannot pass, and no leap from a lower to a higher kingdom is possible save on one condition, a previous death to the kingdom below it. No biologist can trace the point where decaying rock gives way to the minute lichen springing from it; nor the point where vegetable food becomes animal tissue, nor where sensory tissue permits the miraculous birth of human intelligence. For the transition, not being physical change is not physically demonstrable, it occurs on subtle or subjective levels, at the interval or gap between the rungs of our symbolic ladder. All we know is that a change, a transmutation, occurs somewhere, that a death of something precedes every new and higher begetting. And so, it is when a man aspires to pass from the merely human to the Initiate degree of life; a death is involved, a death signified by our Third Degree. Such a death was always the culminating feature of the Ancient Mysteries and remains so with us. When our Ritual, after explaining the cultural purpose and discipline of the first two Degrees, goes on to say Masonry finally teaches you how to die, something much deeper is involved than meets the casual ear. The phrase veils the fact that, just as the Craft prescribes for aspirants a definite technique of *living*, so too it prescribes a definite technique of *dying*, a secret science of the process of mystical death and resurrection, which qualified candidates can come to learn. This is a delicate and deeply concealed subject, never openly discussed and only to be learned from the private instruction of the Master to whom the Candidate is affiliated. In the phrase just quoted, our Ritual only gives a bare hint of it for the benefit of the perspicacious. The ordinary unenlightened man dreads death in any form and wishes to hear as little of it as he can. All that can be added here is that it is a mystical dying that results in raising a man to the Fifth Kingdom and makes him an Initiate and citizen thereof. He suffers a sea change, into something rich and strange. But the change is a subjective one, occurring in his inward parts and transforming his consciousness by a literal renewing of his mind. Other people will see no difference in his outward

appearance; he returns to the companions of his former toils and resumes his usual activities, yet his whole being is thenceforth raised to a higher power and reinforced by life of a higher quality and potential. To be perfect is to be initiated.

But of this fifth kingdom I must add one more word, and it is one towards which the foregoing argument has been leading. This fifth kingdom is a transcendental condition of consciousness that is implied by the eternal flame burning in the Centre of the Lodge of consciousness. And it comes suddenly, in an eyewink, and we are changed. It is the change, which is experienced, in real Initiation. In that solemn crisis of psychological expansion there comes a rending of one's mental veil, it is subjectively heard ripping and crashing, like the sound of a trumpet as the delicate nerve webbing which had previously shut off perception from super sensual things rips apart and the blinding blaze of light immortal makes you an Initiate.

The Masonic path leads from the fading light of the west and the dark inner thoughts of the dying ego towards the black ignorance of the north. During the dark night of the spirit, we must strive for balance, first within ourselves then without, in our relationship with the cosmos. So next we see the symbol of the fire and the water triangles interlaced about the Centre, showing that we have balanced our mind and emotions with our urges and spiritual impulses at which point we can fit this newly balanced individual into the rest of the world. Now the symbol we met in the south appears again. But this time we are not studying it, we are living it. This symbol now shows our personality in balance with the cosmos, and our mind has perceived the Centre allowing us to reach a new level of consciousness, and the path is now open to the spiritual East.

As the faint light of the bright morning star rises in our spiritual east, we meet another symbol of balance and harmony. It is two squares rotated by an angle of 45 degrees. This symbolizes the balance of an individual spirit set within a balanced universe. At this point we know our place in the cosmos. The square of our spirit is merged into the square of the cosmos, as represented by the lodge, and we are now in harmony.

Finally, we reach the east and meet the final symbol of the pilgrimage. It is the circle with the Centre but now surrounded by two other triangles. A large upward facing fire triangle containing a smaller downward facing water triangle each centred on the point which is always equidistant from the Centre. This is the point from which no Mason can err, the point of universal consciousness where our mind expands to understand our place in the cosmos.

There is one last item on the main part of the plan. A ladder, symbolizing Jacob's Ladder, reaching from the dark square of the west to the bright, centred triangles of the east. This is the route we can willingly travel from the darkness of the west to the light of the bright morning star rising in our spiritual east.

What then is this Centre by which we hope to regain the secrets of our lost nature? We may reason from analogies. As the Divine Will is the Centre of the whole universe and controls it; as the sun is the Centre and life-giver of our solar system and controls and feeds with life the planets circling round it, so at the secret Centre of individual human life exists a vital, immortal principle, the spirit. This is the faculty which, once we have found it, we can never err. It is a point within the circle of our own nature. In this physical world, the circle of our existence is bounded by two grand parallel lines; one representing Moses; the other Solomon, that is to say, law and wisdom; the divine ordinances regulating the universe on the one hand; the divine wisdom and mercy that follow us all the days of our life on the other. Very truly then the Mason who keeps himself thus circumscribed cannot err.

Masonry is a system of philosophy that provides us with a doctrine of the universe and of our place in it. It has three purposes. Its first purpose is to show that man has fallen away from a high and holy Centre to the circumference or externalized condition in which we now live; to indicate that those who so desire may regain that Centre by finding the Centre in ourselves, for, since Deity is as a circle whose Centre is everywhere, it follows that a divine Centre, a "vital and immortal principle", exists within ourselves by developing which we may hope to regain our lost and primal stature. The second purpose of the Craft doctrine is to declare the way by which that Centre may be found within ourselves, and this teaching is embodied in the discipline and ordeals delineated in the three degrees. The Masonic doctrine of the Centre is in other words that "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you". Its third purpose is to accept that it is difficult for any individual to discover Truth without the support and guidance of a lodge of willing and dedicated searchers and teachers.

Brethren, may we all come to the knowledge how to open the Lodge upon the centre of ourselves, within the Lodge of our fellow seekers after Truth and so realize in our own conscious experience the finding of the "imprisoned splendour" hidden in the depths of our being, whose rising within ourselves will bring us peace and salvation.

W.BRO JAMES CLAXTON – SMITH MEMORIAL LECTURE 2025

Masonic Contemplation

Delivered by

Brother Timothy Leng Johnson.

St Oswald Lodge 910, Mother Lodge Rockley Abbey 7644, Barnsley.

Wednesday 17th September 2025.

Introduction

Brethren, before I begin I would like to point out that the views I am about to put forward are my views on my Masonic journey, which commenced on 11th January 2000, in The Rockley Abbey Lodge Number 7644, in Eastgate, Barnsley, prior to joining, in 2003, this esteemed St Oswald Lodge 910, in my hometown of Pontefract. I have built this lecture from lectures I have heard, reading various books, articles and papers on Freemasonry, so basically this is my view on Masonic Contemplation and any feedback, good, bad or indifferent is welcome. I am an author, and also a retired Detective, so I am used to the whole spectrum that might come my way.

I got the inspiration to write this lecture following a visit to The Lodge of Living Stones No 4957 in Leeds. I had been aware of this lodge for over 20yrs and finally visited the Lodge on a snowy night in January this year with fellow brethren from this Lodge, and as a result, felt compelled to put pen to paper, or these days, finger to keyboard.

Brethren, as we gather within the sacred walls of this, our Lodge and temple, we are called not just to perform ceremonial duties or to engage in rituals but also to engage deeply in the art of contemplation. Contemplation to me, is central to our work as Freemasons, for it is through thoughtful reflection that we can uncover the mysteries of our Craft, the true purpose of our lives, and the deeper meanings hidden within the symbols and teachings of Masonry. It is a process by which we come to understand, not just the world around us, but also the world within us.

In this lecture, I invite you to reflect with me on the nature of Masonic contemplation, its role in the development of the Mason, and how we can practice it to achieve greater spiritual and moral growth. By engaging in this deep, meditative process, we can walk the path of enlightenment, guided by the principles of the Craft and the wisdom imparted through the ancient and time-honoured rituals of Freemasonry. I will outline each area of contemplation as I go along so it breaks the lecture down into relevant sections.

The Nature of Masonic Contemplation

Contemplation is an act of stillness, a sacred moment of pause where the noise of the world falls away, and the individual focuses inwardly. In our modern world, filled with distractions and demands, it is easy to forget the power of reflection. Yet, within the context of Freemasonry, contemplation is not simply a personal exercise in quieting the mind. It is a disciplined effort to engage with the symbols,

rituals, and teachings of the Craft in a manner that encourages self-transformation and spiritual insight. We can do this in a Lodge, on a beach, sat in your favourite armchair, or even a mind blowing Genesis concert.

From the moment we first step into the Lodge and are initiated, we begin a journey of profound personal and spiritual development. As we advance through the degrees, the Craft urges us to look inward, and yes, also outward, into the world that changes constantly, to search for truth and understanding, and to explore the deeper meanings embedded within our Masonic symbols. These symbols are not mere representations; they are keys to unlocking higher truths, both about us, the greater universe, and a greater being above.

Masonic contemplation, therefore, is a form of spiritual meditation. It is through the act of contemplating the meaning behind our rituals and symbols that we open ourselves to wisdom. It is not enough to memorise the rituals and recite them mindlessly, rather, we must contemplate the lessons they impart and apply them to our lives. Only through such active reflection can we hope to understand the true purpose of our Masonic journey

The Three Pillars of Masonic Contemplation:

The role of the Masonic lodge as a whole is multifaceted, it serves as a place of fellowship, personal growth, and community service. At its core, the lodge is a sanctuary where Freemasons come together to uphold and practice the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth.

The lodge also preserves tradition and symbolism, ensuring that the teachings and rituals of Freemasonry are passed down with reverence and authenticity. Moreover, it serves as a beacon in the local community, exemplifying the values Freemasonry stands for.

In Freemasonry, it could be said that the principles of Brotherly love, relief and truth could also fall in alignment to another three pillars that I feel our attachment to Freemasonry reflects to, that adds a further three pillars—Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty, and these could serve as a guiding light of our contemplation. This forms the foundation of the Masonic temple, both external and internal. They represent the qualities that we must cultivate within ourselves to grow as Masons and as individuals.

I start with Wisdom – Wisdom is the pursuit of knowledge and understanding. It is the ability to see things as they truly are, to discern truth from falsehood, and to make decisions based on sound judgment. To contemplate wisdom is to ask ourselves: “Am I seeking knowledge not just for its own sake, but for the good of my character and my life?” Wisdom encourages us to be lifelong learners, always striving to understand more deeply the principles that guide our lives.

Next is Strength – Strength is not merely physical power but the moral and spiritual fortitude to face life’s challenges with courage and resolve. It is the strength to live by our principles, to stand firm in our convictions, and to endure adversity without compromising our integrity. To contemplate strength is to reflect on how we meet the challenges that life throws our way. Are we resilient in the face of adversity? Do we rely on the strength of our character to persevere, or do we allow ourselves to be swayed by external circumstances.

Finally, brethren I give you Beauty, no, not me, but the beauty in Freemasonry which is the harmony and balance that we seek to cultivate within ourselves and in the world around us. It is the quality that brings order and grace to our lives. Beauty is not limited to aesthetics but is about recognising the divine order in all things. To contemplate beauty is to reflect on how we bring harmony into our

relationships, how we act with kindness and love, and how we create a balanced and harmonious life for ourselves and others. Beauty, in this sense, is the manifestation of goodness in the world.

As we meditate upon these pillars, we see how they complement and support one another. Wisdom without strength can lead to indecision and inaction. Strength without beauty can lead to tyranny and harshness. Beauty without wisdom can lead to superficiality. The key to a well-rounded life is to nurture all three of these pillars simultaneously, balancing them in our thoughts and actions.

Symbols as the Language of Contemplation:

In Freemasonry, our rituals and teachings are steeped in symbols, each of which holds profound and layered meanings. These symbols are not arbitrary; they are, in fact, the language of the soul. They speak to us in ways that transcend ordinary understanding, offering insights into the mysteries of life, death, and rebirth.

Take, for example, the Square and Compasses, which are the most recognisable symbols of the Craft. The Square represents the squareness of morality, the foundation of our conduct, and the principle of living a life based on truth, fairness, and justice. The Compasses symbolise the limits of our desires and the need for self-control.

When we contemplate these symbols, we are asked to consider how our actions align with the moral principles of the Craft and whether we are living according to the virtues of honesty, integrity, and fairness. The contemplation of the Square and Compasses calls us to measure our behaviour against the highest ideals and to adjust our course whenever we fall short.

Similarly, the All-Seeing Eye, often depicted as a symbol of the supreme beings watchful presence, invites us to reflect on the omnipresence of the divine. It serves as a reminder that our actions are never truly hidden from view. No matter where we are, no matter what we do, we are always in the sight of the Great Architect of the Universe. The eye encourages us to live in a state of constant self-awareness, to be mindful of our thoughts, words, and deeds, knowing that we are accountable for them.

In the plan, we find a multitude of other symbols that represent different stages of the Masonic journey. The Pillars, for instance, remind us of the strength and wisdom we need to navigate the trials of life. The journey through the various steps of the plan represents the steps we must take in our own lives to achieve wisdom, strength, and understanding.

As we contemplate these symbols, we are not merely reflecting on their surface meanings but are being called to understand their deeper implications. They are an invitation to awaken to a higher consciousness, to see beyond the mundane and superficial aspects of life, and to delve into the spiritual truths that shape our existence.

Contemplation as a Means of Personal Transformation:

Freemasonry teaches us that the true work of the Craft is not just in building physical structures but in building the inner temple. Contemplation is a central part of this work. It is through contemplation that we are able to refine ourselves, to grow in virtue, and to become better men. We are called not only to reflect on the lessons of Freemasonry but also to apply them to our daily lives.

As we contemplate the symbols and lessons of the Craft, we begin to see ourselves and the world in a new light. Our actions become more deliberate, our thoughts more aligned with the principles of

the Craft, and our hearts more open to love and compassion. Through this process of reflection and self-examination, we are transformed, not into perfect beings, but into better versions of ourselves, constantly striving toward moral excellence and spiritual enlightenment.

The Role of Silence in Contemplation:

Masonic contemplation is a practice within Freemasonry that encourages deep reflection and introspection. It often involves meditating on the principles, symbols, and teachings of Freemasonry to gain a better understanding of oneself and one's place in the world. This process can be spiritual, philosophical, or moral in nature, depending on the individual's focus.

This method of contemplation is a silent practice, it can be within the silence of the Lodge or elsewhere, for example at home, on a train, even fishing amongst a number of opportunities, where we are able to reflect most deeply. Silence is not just an absence of sound but a state of being that allows us to listen more attentively to our inner selves and to the divine wisdom that speaks in the stillness. In the quiet moments of contemplation, we can hear the voice of our conscience, the whisperings of our higher self, and the guidance of the Great Architect.

In the Lodge, the quietness and relaxation of the ritual serve as a sacred space where each Mason is invited to reflect inwardly, to connect with the symbols, and to seek the deeper truths hidden within them. Silence allows us to transcend the noise of the external world and to focus on what is truly important: our own moral and spiritual growth. It is in the silence that we can cultivate the wisdom needed to navigate the challenges of life.

Conclusion:

Brethren, Masonic contemplation is a lifelong journey, one that invites us to explore the depths of our own souls and the vastness of the universe. It is through contemplation that we unlock the hidden meanings within the symbols of the Craft, gain greater understanding of the divine order, and refine our moral and spiritual selves.

Let us remember that the true purpose of Freemasonry is not only to build grand structures but also to build the temple within. Through contemplation, we gain the wisdom, strength, and beauty to live meaningful and virtuous lives. As we continue our journey as Masons, let us dedicate ourselves to the art of contemplation, ever striving to grow in knowledge, to be strong in character, and to bring beauty and harmony into the world around us.

The Masonic lodge as a whole serves as a cornerstone of fellowship, moral growth, and charitable work. It provides a sacred space for members to uphold the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, while preserving traditions and fostering unity. Through its rituals, contemplation, and community, the lodge not only nurtures the individual but also serves as a beacon of virtue and service to society. Its enduring purpose is to inspire members to live with integrity and to uplift the world around them. May the light of Freemasonry guide us and may our contemplation lead us ever closer to the divine truths that reside within us all.

So Mote it Be.

Timothy Leng Johnson. Master Mason. St Oswald Lodge 910, Pontefract.

The Mason who inspired the WBro James Claxton – Smith Memorial Lecture

James Claxton - Smith had a membership of St Oswald Lodge 910, Pontefract West Riding of Yorkshire Province for over 50 years and followed his father's membership of it. He was a great supporter of Masonic Charities and had Patronage recognition of all the Major GL Charities extant during his membership. He even had a personal cheque book with a Gift Aid Declaration printed on it, in order to maximise his giving.

He did a great deal of work at the Provincial Office and was eventually elevated to the rank of PProvSGW.

He gave commendable service to the Lodge, had a deep knowledge of masonic traditions, rituals and tenets; being noted as supportive of junior brethren by personally altering the "blue" emulation ritual books to include St Oswald Lodge variations; which was of great value to those who received them. He did eventually move away to Solihull with his wife Anne, to be closer to his daughter, but maintained his membership.

He left a legacy in his will to the Lodge. It was decided to instigate a Memorial Lecture in his name to be delivered annually; and to use the proceeds to secure a suitable honours board on which each lecturer's name would be added.

This commenced in 2011 and was held that year and for several years after on Scroll night in March.

Between 2011 and 2018 - with the exception of 2014 - these lectures were given by W Bro Peter Sutherland, the Provincial Orator.

2014 saw the lecture given by W Bro Dr John Wade, a well-known speaker on Masonry.

After the Provincial role of Orator was discontinued, the Lodge brought the lecture in-house and the recent lectures have been given at the September meeting - lately coinciding with Lodge's Yorkshire Night.

The recent St Oswald member lecturers have included

2022 W Bro G Lewis Blackman

2023 Bro Robert Cunningham

2024 Bro Christopher Eyre

2025 Bro Timothy Leng Johnson

The Sacred Journey Through Shapes

A Personal Exploration of Geometry in Western Mysticism

Bro Jasper Whitlock

Finding Meaning in Lines and Angles

There's something profoundly moving about standing in an old cathedral or Masonic lodge and realizing that every angle, every geometric pattern around you was placed with intention. These aren't just pretty decorations—they're a language, one that speaks directly to something deep within us.

For centuries, mystics, Freemasons, and Kabbalists have used geometry as more than mathematics. They've seen it as a bridge between our everyday world and something greater, something transcendent. Each shape, from the simplest point to the complex eight-sided star, carries a story about who we are and who we might become.

Where Everything Begins: The Point

What it represents: Unity, potential, that first spark. Think about the moment before anything happens—before you take that first step on a new path, before you speak, before you act. That's the point. It has no size, no dimension, yet everything flows from it.

In numerology, we call this "one"—the beginning, the source. Ancient philosophers called it the Monad, the indivisible whole. In Freemasonry, you'll see it in the symbol of a point within a circle, teaching that there's a divine centre within each of us, a moral compass we can always return to.

The Kabbalists place this at the very top of their Tree of Life diagram, calling it Keter—the Crown. It's pure potential, the unknowable source before anything takes form. W. Kirk MacNulty, a Past Master of the Lodge of Living Stones and a Masonic scholar who's spent decades exploring these symbols, puts it beautifully: "The point is the beginning of the journey, the place where the divine touches the human." We all start here, at this point of pure possibility.

Taking the First Step: The Line

What it represents: Choice, direction, relationship. The moment we move from that point, we create a line. Suddenly we have direction, purpose, movement. And with that comes duality—up and down, forward and back, light and shadow.

This is where life gets interesting and sometimes difficult. The ancient Hermetic saying "As above, so below" captures this perfectly—we exist between heaven and earth, spirit and matter, constantly navigating that tension.

In Masonic lodges, you'll see the plumb line—a simple tool that checks if something stands straight and true. But symbolically, it asks us: Are we living with integrity? Are we walking a straight path? MacNulty sees the line as that crucial moment when we begin to perceive the world outside ourselves, when consciousness awakens to relationship. "The line is the first step away from unity," he writes, "a necessary division that allows consciousness to perceive itself."

In Kabbalah, these are the pathways connecting different aspects of the divine channels of energy that we must learn to navigate and balance.

Building Toward Stability: The Triangle

What it represents: Synthesis, balance, the integration of opposites The triangle is the first shape that actually encloses space, and there's something powerful about that. Take three points, connect them, and suddenly you have something that can stand on its own. It's the first stable form.

We see trinities everywhere because they resonate with something true: body, soul, and spirit; past, present, and future; creation, preservation, and transformation. Three brings opposites together and creates something new. In Freemasonry, the triangle appears in the all-seeing eye within a triangle, representing divine wisdom watching over us. The three degrees of Craft Masonry—Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason—mirror this threefold progression. Each degree isn't just learning new rituals; it's about integrating what we've learned, finding balance, growing.

MacNulty describes the triangle as representing our ability to balance the forces within us. "The triangle is the first form that can stand on its own," he observes. "It is the symbol of stability, of the soul's ability to balance the forces of creation."

The Kabbalists see this in their Tree of Life: three pillars—Severity on one side, Mercy on the other, and Balance in the centre. This isn't just abstract theology; it's a map for living. We all have harsh and gentle impulses; wisdom lies in finding the middle path.

Getting Grounded: The Square

What it represents: Foundation, integrity, the material world There's a reason we talk about "getting our affairs squared away" or someone being "a square dealer." The square, with its four equal sides and right angles, speaks to something fundamental about order, fairness, and solid ground.

Four connects us to the physical world—four elements (earth, air, fire, water), four seasons, four directions. It's where spiritual ideas meet everyday reality.

In Freemasonry, the square is central. The famous Square and Compasses emblem teaches Masons to "square their actions"—to live with integrity and treat others fairly. The black and white checkered floor you see in lodges reminds us that life contains both darkness and light, and we must walk carefully through both.

MacNulty emphasizes this ethical foundation: "The square is the measure of the soul's readiness to receive higher truths. It is the foundation upon which the temple of wisdom is built."

Without this grounding—without discipline, without doing the hard work of living ethically—the rest of the journey falls apart. You can't build a house without a foundation, and you can't build a spiritual life without integrity.

In Kabbalah, this corresponds to Malkuth, the Kingdom—the physical world where we actually live. This is where the rubber meets the road, where all those lofty spiritual ideas have to manifest in how we treat our neighbour, do our work, raise our children.

The Human Shape: The Pentagon and Pentagram

What it represents: Humanity, transformation, the individual as a small universe Stand with your arms and legs outstretched, and you form a rough five-pointed star—the pentagram. This is why five has always been associated with human beings.

Five represents our five senses, our ability to experience the world. It's also about freedom and transformation—we're not fixed in place; we can change, grow, evolve.

The pentagram, when it points upward, shows spirit ruling over the four elements of matter. It's a symbol of human potential, of what we can become when we integrate all parts of ourselves. In Masonic tradition, the Five Points of Fellowship represent brotherhood and unity. MacNulty sees the pentagram as "the image of man in harmony with the cosmos... the symbol of the initiate who has mastered the elements and walks the path of wisdom."

The Kabbalists connect this to Gevurah—strength, willpower, discipline. This is the force that shapes us through challenge. We don't grow in comfort; we grow when life pushes back, when we have to dig deep and find strength we didn't know we had.

Interestingly, Venus traces a pentagram pattern in the sky over eight years—ancient astronomers noticed this and connected it to beauty, love, and divine harmony.

Finding Balance: The Hexagon and Star of David

What it represents: Harmony, the marriage of opposites, integration. The six-pointed star—two triangles interlocked, one pointing up, one pointing down—is one of the most powerful symbols of balance. Spirit descending into matter, matter ascending toward spirit. Heaven and earth meeting. The divine and human embracing.

Six is about responsibility, love, and harmony. When you've done the work of the earlier stages—found your centre, chosen your direction, integrated your opposites, built your foundation, claimed your humanity—then you can find this deeper balance.

Bees build their honeycombs in perfect hexagons, and there's something profound about that—nature itself showing us that cooperation and efficiency create beauty. MacNulty describes the hexagram as "the symbol of the soul in balance, where the divine and the human meet in sacred union."

In Kabbalah, this corresponds to Tiferet, Beauty—the heart of the Tree of Life. It's positioned perfectly between mercy and judgment, balancing all the forces. This is the goal: to live from the heart, balanced, integrated, whole.

The Mystery Number: The Heptagon

What it represents: Inner wisdom, spirituality, the search for truth Seven has always been a mystical number seven days of creation, seven classical planets, seven chakras, seven colours in the rainbow. There's something about seven that speaks to completion and mystery simultaneously.

The seven-sided heptagon is harder to construct geometrically than the others, which somehow fits—it represents the part of the journey that's harder to grasp, more internal, more about wisdom than knowledge.

In Freemasonry, seven appears constantly: seven steps in certain rituals, seven officers of the lodge, seven liberal arts and sciences (Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, Astronomy) that form the foundation of education. MacNulty sees seven as the threshold: "Seven is the number of the inner temple, the place where the initiate meets the divine in silence and contemplation."

This is the stage where we turn inward, where external achievements matter less than internal realization. It's about developing intuition, connecting with something beyond words and logic.

Coming Full Circle: The Octagon and Eight-Pointed Star

What it represents: Rebirth, transformation, bridging worlds. Eight is special because it bridges the square (representing earth and material reality) and the circle (representing heaven and eternity). The octagon appears in baptismal fonts, in cathedral domes, in Islamic architecture—always at thresholds, always marking transitions.

Eight represents regeneration, the eternal cycle, spiritual rebirth. It's the infinity symbol standing upright. It's the completion of one cycle and the beginning of another at a higher level. You'll see octagons in the floor designs of some Masonic lodges, subtly marking that this is sacred space, a place between worlds. The eight-pointed star shines with balanced light in all directions.

MacNulty writes: "The octagon is the sacred threshold. It is the place where the soul, having mastered the square, prepares to enter the circle of eternity." In Kabbalistic terms, eight represents moving beyond the seven lower realms of emotion and ethics toward understanding and wisdom—toward the divine itself.

The Living Diagram: The Tree of Life

All of these shapes, all of these numbers, find their place in the Kabbalistic Tree of Life—a diagram that maps both the cosmos and the human soul. It's composed of ten spheres (Sefirot) connected by twenty-two paths, and it integrates everything we've discussed:

- *The Point at the Crown
- * Lines connecting the pathways.
- * Triangles forming relationships between spheres.
- * The Square grounding everything in reality
- * All the other shapes finding their place in this living geometry.

Freemasons may not explicitly teach the Tree of Life, but MacNulty and others have shown how Masonic symbolism mirrors its structure. The journey through the three degrees parallels the ascent through the Tree—from the material world toward divine understanding. He writes: "The Tree of Life is the architecture of the soul. It is the sacred geometry of consciousness, guiding the initiate from the outer world to the inner temple."

The Craftsman's Path: Freemasonry as Spiritual Geometry

What makes Freemasonry fascinating is how it takes these abstract geometric principles and makes them practical through ritual, symbolism, and community. The tools of the stonemason—the Square, Compasses, Level, Plumb Line, Trowel—become instruments for building character.

Each degree represents a stage of growth:

- * Entered Apprentice: Learning the basics, understanding the point and line—where you come from and where you're headed.
- * Fellowcraft: Building stability, mastering the triangle and square—integration and foundation.
- * Master Mason: Transformation, the pentagon and beyond becoming something more.

The lodge itself is a geometric space designed to reflect cosmic principles. Walking through it during ritual is a physical enactment of the soul's journey. MacNulty sees this clearly: "Freemasonry is a journey from the outer to the inner, from the material to the spiritual. Geometry is the language of this journey, the sacred script by which the soul is shaped."

Why This Matters for Us Today

You might wonder: what's the relevance of all this ancient symbolism in our modern world? I think it's this: we're still human beings trying to make sense of existence, looking for meaning and purpose, struggling to integrate the different parts of ourselves. These geometric symbols give us a language for that journey that transcends words.

When we understand that the point represents our divine spark, that the line represents our choices, that the triangle shows us how to balance opposites, that the square grounds us in integrity—these aren't just pretty ideas. They become tools for living.

Every time we face a decision, we're standing at a point choosing a direction—drawing a line. Every time we try to balance work and family, justice and mercy, discipline and compassion, we're working with triangles. Every time we try to live with integrity despite temptation, we're squaring our actions.

These shapes appear in sacred architecture because the people who built cathedrals, temples, and lodges understood something profound: our external environment shapes our internal experience. Surround yourself with beauty, order, and symbolism, and something in you responds.

The Journey Continues

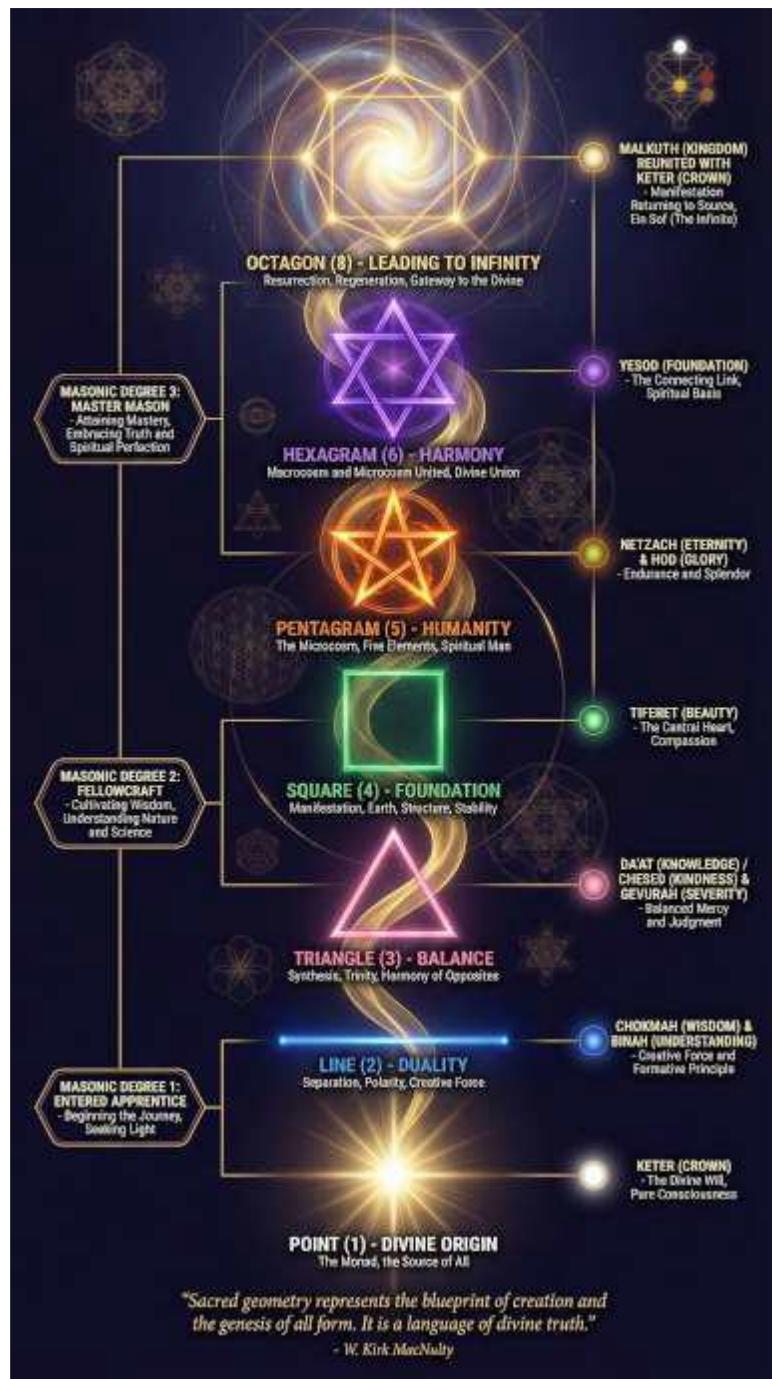
From the simple point to the eight-pointed star, this geometric journey maps something real—the path from who we are to who we might become. Each shape teaches a lesson:

- * Unity in the point
- * Relationship in the line
- * Balance in the triangle
- * Integrity in the square
- * Humanity in the pentagon
- * Harmony in the hexagon
- * Wisdom in the heptagon
- * Rebirth in the octagon

These aren't just Masonic or Kabbalistic teachings—they're human teachings, wrapped in geometric form. The universe does seem to be built on pattern, order, and beauty. And we, as conscious beings, are invited to align ourselves with that pattern. As MacNulty reminds us throughout his work, the tools of the builder are also the tools of the seeker. The Lodge is a temple of consciousness. And geometry isn't just mathematics—it's a sacred language that speaks directly to the soul.

Whether you're a Freemason, a student of Kabbalah, or simply someone drawn to these mysteries, the invitation is the same: to see the patterns, to understand the symbols, and to use them as guides for your own transformation.

CORONATIO QUADRANS



The journey from point to star is the journey from potential to actualization, from separation to wholeness, from sleep to awakening. And it's a journey we're all on, whether we recognize the geometric language or not.

The Importance of Tracing Boards in an Esoteric Lodge.

By Robert Lomas

When you knock upon the door of the Lodge, humbly petitioning admission into our Masonic Order, you declare that you enter in the name of your Supreme Being. In so doing, you affirm that the predominant wish of your heart is to seek the Light of Knowledge. By that act, the Light of the Centre is solemnly invoked upon you, forging a spiritual link that transcends time and circumstance.

It matters little whether you, or those who perform the rites on your behalf, are consciously aware of this truth. Awakening to it may take time, yet be assured: our rituals, even when enacted with imperfect understanding, are never performed in vain. They are spiritually potent rites. When a ray of that central Light, which splits rainbow-like into Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty, falls upon your spirit, it remains with you, whether you choose to cultivate it or neglect it.

Among the key instruments of instruction in our Craft are its Tracing Boards. These evolved from the chalked floor designs of early Lodges, through floor cloths, to the painted boards we employ today. They are not mere decorations, but teaching tools, embodying the allegories and symbols of our Order.

The ritual concerning the Furniture of the Lodge instructs us: *“The Tracing Board is for the Master to lay lines and draw designs upon, the better to enable the Brethren to carry on the intended structure with regularity and propriety.”* In this sense, the Tracing Board is both practical and symbolic.

Indeed, the Volume of the Sacred Law itself may be regarded as the supreme Tracing Board of the Great Architect of the Universe. Within its pages are inscribed Divine laws and moral plans, which, if studied and faithfully adhered to, would guide us to that ethereal mansion—*“not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.”*

Bro. W. L. Wilmshurst, founding Master of the Lodge of Living Stones, described how Tracing Boards evolved from chalked floor designs, through floor-cloths, to the painted boards of today. He wrote:

“The symbols of the degree to be conferred would be drawn upon the floor of the Lodge and later erased by the candidate. In earlier days, when the Craft was not a popular social institution but a serious discipline in a philosophic and sacred science, instruction was not treated casually. The Tracing Board was not, as now, a product of the Masonic furnisher’s factory; it was the most revered symbol in the Lodge. It was a diagram which every Brother was taught to draw for himself, so that both his hand and his understanding might be trained in Masonic work. Literary records show that at each Lodge meeting the Tracing Board of the Degree about to be worked was actually drawn from memory with chalk and charcoal by the Master, who from practice was able to do this quickly and accurately. In advancing from West to East during the Ceremony, the Candidate took the steps of the Degree over the diagram. The diagram was explained to him as an integral part of the Ceremony, and, before being restored to his personal comforts, he was required to expunge it with mop and water, so that uninitiated eyes might not see it, and that he might learn a first lesson in humility and secrecy.”

Freemasonry has always used symbols as a universal language to communicate its ideas. Once expressed in symbolic form, an idea can be transmitted without corruption, ensuring continuity of tradition. A modern Mason undertakes his symbolic work in the same way as a Mason of five centuries ago. The problems faced are perennial, and the symbols provide the same answers across time.

Approximately sixty basic symbols are taught to aspiring Master Masons as they progress through the degrees of the Craft, the Mark, and the Royal Arch. These symbols are combined into pictorial narratives called Tracing Boards. In Craft Lodges there are three principal Boards, each conveying distinct philosophical lessons. They serve both as instructional tools and as aids to meditation and reflection.

To aspire to knowledge of Truth, the Mason must learn how the Tracing Boards disclose the secrets of his own nature and guide the practical work required of him. In doing so, he fulfils the intentions he declared upon entering the Craft. This technique has been tested and proven by the experience of Brethren who have faithfully followed the path traced upon the Boards.

Tracing Boards embody the continuity of Masonic tradition, linking the chalk sketches of operative masons to the symbolic universe of speculative Freemasonry. They condense complex teachings into a single image, making them at once artistic artifacts and ritual instruments. Their survival and adaptation across the centuries highlight their enduring importance as visual summaries of Masonic philosophy.

Since moving to Castle Grove, the Lodge of Living Stones had employed a set of standard Harris Tracing Boards. Around the turn of the millennium, however, a Mason from Ireland joined the Lodge as an Associate Member: WBro Martin Jackson. He possessed both a keen interest in Tracing Boards and an acute visual imagination.

Before joining Living Stones, and working with his brother Trevor, Bro Jackson had produced a striking digital reproduction of the Kirkwall Scroll, restoring its original colours. Inspired by this achievement, he developed a wider interest in Tracing Boards generally. Taking to heart Wilmshurst's words that *"The Tracing Board was not, as now, a product of the Masonic furnisher's factory; it was the most revered symbol in the Lodge,"* Bro Jackson set himself the task of creating a complete set of Boards that would embody Wilmshurst's vision in a modern digital format.

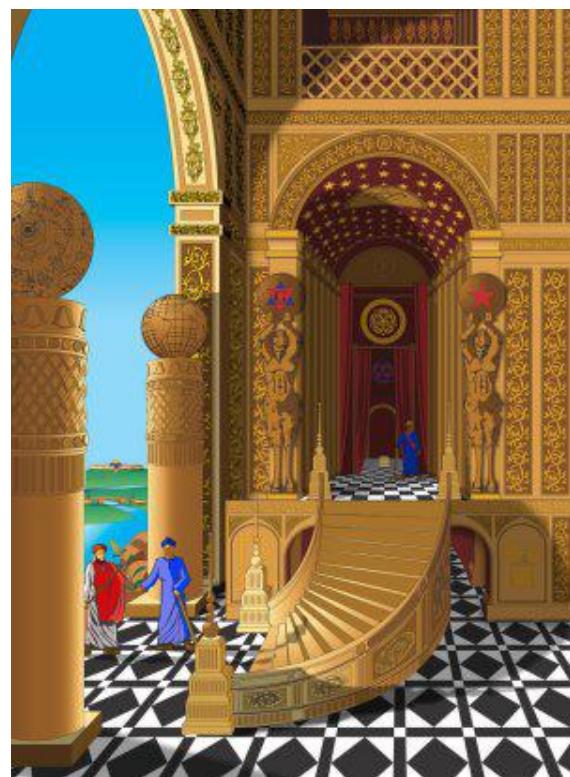
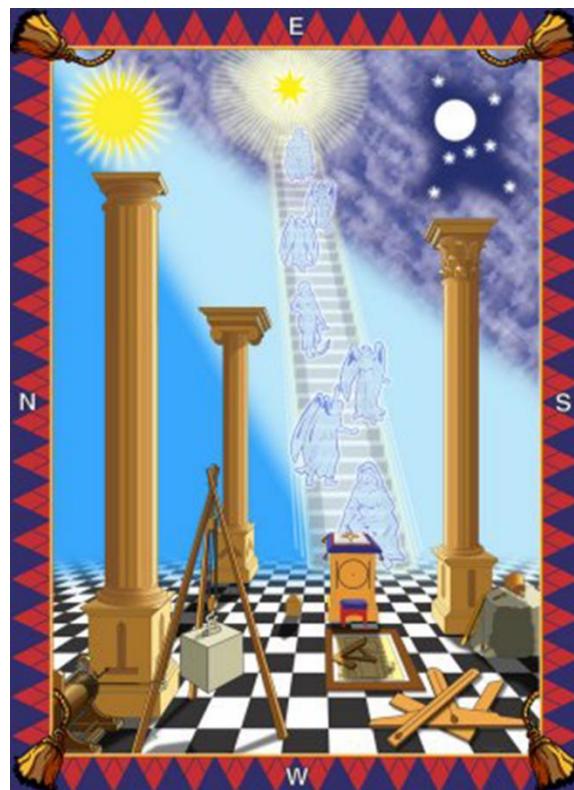
When I published *Turning the Hiram Key*, Bro Jackson generously gave permission for his Boards to be used as illustrations. He also provided the cover image. [For readers' interest, I have included in this edition of CQ the late WBro Douglas Ingelsent's review of that book. Bro Ingelsent, long-serving Librarian of the Lodge of Living Stones, offered a perspective that remains valuable today.]

Jackson immersed himself in Wilmshurst's writings and ideas, and resolved to produce a set of Tracing Boards based on his understanding of those teachings. In all, he created six: the First Degree, Second Degree, Mark, Third Degree, Holy Royal Arch, and Wilmshurst's *Tracing Board of the Centre*, designed for use in the Ceremony of Installation.

He offered his three Craft Degree Boards to Living Stones, but at that time the Past Masters chose to retain their Harris Boards. Jackson then entrusted the set to me, hoping that I might one day find a Lodge that would appreciate them.

I have recently donated them to Coronation Lodge and presented them to our Master..

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Once suitably framed, I hope they will be placed before the Master's and Wardens' chairs during future meetings of Coronation Lodge, fulfilling Bro Jackson's vision of his Tracing Boards becoming living instruments of Masonic instruction.

For those of you who are interested you can obtain high quality prints of the Jackson [Wilmshurst-Inspired] Tracing Boards from Lewis Masonic.

<https://www.lewismasonic.co.uk/card-posters/>

Beyond the Grave: The Widow's Son and the Hero Freemasons Deserve

WBro Peter Maguire - Coronation Lodge 2927

"Ye Sons of the Widow" is an interesting phrase as it part of the distress call of a Master Mason from a different constitution, when we are raised to this sublime degree, we are told a phrase that will enable us to assist in helping a fellow brother in a time of need. But why are we considered "Sons of the Widow"?

Simply put the Hiram Abiff is said to be the Son of a Widow. As the bible clearly refers to him as such:

Now King Solomon sent and brought Hiram from Tyre. 14 He was a widow's son from the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in bronze; and he was filled with wisdom and understanding and skill for doing any work in bronze. So, he came to King Solomon and performed all his work.

1 Kings 7:13-7:15

And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, of Huram my father's, The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father.

2 Chronicles 2:13 -2:14

These two references highlight that the man sent to aid King Solomon was called Hiram (Huram) who was a son of a daughter from an Israelites tribe. There are some discrepancies as to which tribe his mother was from Naphtali or Dan but does this matter as the founders of each tribe were brothers.

It is worth noting that I am taking the biblical references from the King James Bible, so you get Huram, where others have translated the Hebrew as:

- Hiram-abi > International Standard Version
- Huram-abi > New International Version, which are the closest the bible gets to the name Hiram Abiff.

The variations of the name I have come across are Hiram, Huram and Chiram and their meaning is still the same; "exalted brother". Exalted can mean either noble or elevated which are synonymous with the word sublime ergo something of excellent or unparalleled beauty.

As society of men, we call ourselves Brethren, a Fraternity and Brothers. Breaking this down:

Brother - noun; plural noun: brothers; plural noun: brethren. Which in one version of its meaning is defined as a male associate or fellow member of an organization.

Fraternity - noun. That can be defined as:

- a group of people sharing a common profession or interests

- friendship and mutual support within a group.

The dictionary clearly describes what Freemasonry is in its rawest form. A group of men that share common interests of friendship and mutual support within the group but also outside the group in the charity work we done.

It is interesting that from the start of one's journey into masonry we are aware that it is a fraternity as we have all gone through an initiation into the order and all have passed to degree of Fellowcraft. At this stage we are all brothers, but we are not at this time all Sons of the Widow.

Only being raised to the Sublime degree of a Master Mason does one become a **Widow's Son**; but why?

As we know from the bible there was no actual murder of the Chief architect of King Solomon's Temple, if the Bible is treated as fact he completed the tasks assigned to him:

And Hiram made lavers, and the shovels and the basons.

So, Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made king Solomon for the house of the LORD.

1King 7:40 King James Bible

However Masons have a story that says otherwise, he was in fact murdered for not sharing the secrets of a Master mason. On his death the genuine secrets were lost until time, or circumstances restore the genuine. This story is often referred to as the Hiramic legend which shows a good/Perfect man who has his integrity challenged and, in the process, sacrifices himself in being true to his obligations and doing his duty to his order.

A Candidate for the third degree, takes part in the ceremony as Hiram, where he is slain for not telling the evil ruffians the secrets. It is going through this ceremony that makes you a Master Mason and a Widow's Son, for you have been although allegorically murdered to teach you the lessons of Truth, Integrity and Honour. On passing through the valley of the Shadow of Death you have emerged a new man, a perfect man with his Spirit and Body in union.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

1 Corinthians 3:16

It is the idea that if you are prepared to look internally at oneself you see a Divine spirit at your centre, which as the lodged is opened in the third degree says that point from which a Master Mason cannot err. Even the closing of the second degree illustrates that you are a temple and as with lodge the Sacred symbol is in the **"Centre of the Building"** the letter G symbolising God/Divine spark.

The biblical figure of Hiram who had the knowledge to build and adorn King Solomon's temple in such splendour that made it an envy of the ancient world. Who was he and what do we really know about him, well we don't know who his father was, we can surmise from the previous biblical references that he was from Tyre as he was known to King Hiram who sent him to work for King Solomon. His mother however was a from the tribe of Naphtali or Dan. Which suggests therefore that the Widow took her lineage from either Naphtali or Dan.

Naphtali and Dan were brother and were the Sons of Jacob and Bilhah, after Rachel was unable to provide Jacob with sons. If we follow the lineage up, we find that Hiram is a on his mother's side a descendent of Abraham and therefore Adam and Eve.

This on the surface is interesting that at a certain level, their ancestor Shem; the 3 Grand Masters of the Craft are brothers. Yet King Solomon and Hiram Abiff are brothers from the patriarch of Jacob. In the grand scheme of things this is not a surprise as at a genetic level we are all connected.

The reason I point this out during my research I came across following phrases: descendants of Ruth, were known simply as "Sons of the Widow".

The Ruth they are speaking about is the Wife of B.... As your brain is already chanting the Great Grandfather of the David a Prince and Ruler of Israel. The bible tells us that Obed was their only son; other Jewish texts suggest that the day after consummating their marriage B... died the next day. Therefore, Obed was a Widow's Son and the first descendant of Ruth to get the title. Why is this of interest as this is the line of David and therefore leads to Jesus.

Here we have a nice symbolism in Christianity being linked to Freemasonry where you find that Jesus was Sacrificed/Murdered by the State of Rome, Council of the Sanhedrin and the Mob. Which Manley P Hall translates this to:

Thus considered, Chiram becomes the higher nature of man, and the murderers are ignorance, superstition, and fear.

Suggesting that Chiram and Christ are one in the same as both were put through an ordeal that resulted in their death. Hall's quote uses CHiram version of the name Hiram and according to "behindthename.com" website Chiram is the Latin version of the name.

As Master Masons we were raised from a symbolic grave, our ritual tells us that this done to bring to our attention that we are mortal yet within us there is an immortal spirit. There is a line of thought that suggests Hiram was resurrected which is why to the uninitiated they might see it as Freemasons attempting to become gods otherwise known as apotheosis (the elevation of someone to divine status.) Whereas I see this more as the return of the prodigal son.

In the parable the son went off and spent his inheritance and lost everything and, in the end, returned to his father. Who treated him with love and rejoiced in welcoming him back into the family.

It is my belief this is part of what Freemasonry trying to teach its brethren.

As Man has fallen from the grace of God, thus losing that strong connection with Our Most High. That through the rituals of the three degrees we finally come home or in this case the centre of our own temple and find that the divine spirit (our Father, the most high) waiting for us. With this a master mason "reincarnated" into a new Perfect Man. Which is not a resurrection, but a different person entirely!

The Story of Hiram Abiff otherwise known as the Hiramic Legend has the purpose of teaching the participant or watcher of the ritual a lesson that is about themselves. There is theory that this myth reoccurs in different parts of the world. The Egyptians we have Osiris and Typhoon, the Dionysian cults of the Greeks and Syrians. One of the thoughts is that as the masonic and biblical Hiram are wise in the knowledge of metal work, carpentry, and Stonework as well as architecture he is the embodiment of Hermes the messenger of the gods. Which implies he is:

- Egyptian - Thoth
- Greek - Hermes
- Roman - Mercury

- Assyrian - Enki
- Inca - Viracocha
- Hebrew - Enoch

All these characters are said to have taught humans the attributes of becoming civilised. But again, Hermes is the main character that stands out as he is often known as Hermes Trismegistus (Hermes Thrice-Greatest). This gentleman is the archetype for the hermetic cults of the Greeks looking at wisdom and spiritual knowledge (Gnosis). Which is a major aspect of all mystery schools that have existed throughout time.

The dove on the Deacons' canes up until the creation of UGLE was statuesque of Hermes. The Deacons' collar jewel in the Mark Degree still has Hermes on it.

It is known from the bible and Josephus' writings that the Israelites did not have the skillset to build and construct the Temple. As such the King Hiram was drafted in and paid for providing the skillset required. It would be here that the people of Tyre and Jewish workers would intermingle and share ideas. Hence, we have a Jewish tale with the undertones of older cults.

The idea of A widow's Son, comes up a lot with respect to the fringes of Freemasonry, take for example the myth of the Entered Apprentice Pillar at Rosslyn Chapel. The basics of the story are, St Clair requested that the Master Mason carve the pillar based on one that existed in Italy. He said he would but would need to study it more in order to do it justice. Off he went to Italy and research and sketch the Italian pillar.

Whilst he is away his apprentice took it on himself and carved the beautiful and glorious pillar that can be seen at the Chapel. On the Master's return, he saw the pillar that his apprentice had carved and in fit of jealous rage he killed his student. It is said his apprentice was a widow's son, and the face of the apprentice, master and widow are carved into the stonework of the ceiling in the westerly part of the nave. With the Master's view towards the pillar of his apprentice, for him to see for all time.

Here is an example of the Hiram myth with a slight twist of the Apprentice had an ability that surpassed his Master and due to the sin of jealousy, the Master killed him. Again, we are seeing moral teachings through the Widow's Son.

Grail Lore is also connected to this idea, Parsifal (Percival) was a widow's Son, who in some legends was thought to be a decedent of Ruth and therefore related to Jesus. Parsifal was called a Fool, in the Wagner and Wolfram version of the legend. Which required a Fool made wise can heal the king, retrieve the lance and save the country. The other version of the story, he fails to recognise the grail when he is at the Fisher King's castle. As such vows to return to the castle to fulfil his quest, but the story stops here. It almost as if these grail tales are telling us that the protagonist of the story is overlooked or their true worth is undervalued, which to me is reminiscent of the Mark Degree.

The most interesting thing about King Charles, the first
Is that he was 5 foot 6 inches tall at the start of his reign
But only 4 foot 8 inches tall at the end of it because of
Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England Puritan

Monty Python - Oliver Cromwell

Charles the Second was a widow's son due to the death of his father at the order of Oliver Cromwell not everyone agreed with the deposition of the King, so a secret society was formed which include Bro Elias Ashmole. According to Manly P Hall it was Ashmole that created or assisted in the creation the Hiramic legend. Ashmole would later be associated in the founding of Royal Society.

Brother McKay also agrees with this Political society of freemasons looking to restore the Stuarts to the throne and suggests that the Master Mason's word can find it conception for it:

So, instead of the old Master's word which had hitherto been used, they invented macbenac out of the Gaelie, which to them was, on recount of their Highland supporters, almost a sacred language in the place of Hebrew. Now, in Gaelic, Mac is son, and benach is blessed, from the active verb oeannaichy to bless.

What can we take from this well to borrow a phrase from Dr Lomas, Hiram Abiff is a "Straw Man" he is what you need him to be. To freemasons he is symbol of honour and integrity to others he may appear a false prophet. Some legends about him say that he was resurrected by Solomon and it was only at that point did Solomon declared the genuine word was lost. Some describe him being found with a vine growing within him thus he becomes a Green Man of such.

In essence Hiram is... **BATMAN!!!!**

James Gordon Jr.: Batman? Batman! Why's he running dad?

Lt. James Gordon: Because we have to chase him.

Cop: Okay we're going in! Go, go! Move!

James Gordon Jr.: He didn't do anything wrong.

Lt. James Gordon: Because he's the hero Gotham deserves, but not the one it needs right now. So, we'll hunt him. Because he can take it. Because he's not our hero. He's a silent guardian. A watchful protector. A Dark Knight.

Quote from the Film "The Dark Knight"

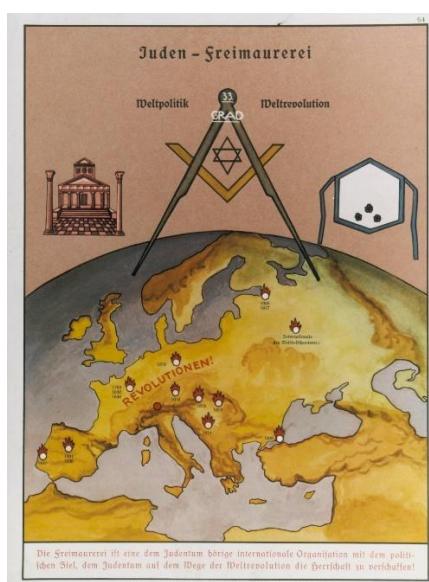
Persecution of French Freemasons in the Second World War

By WBro Wayne Owens

The roots of anti-Masonic sentiment in France run deep, nourished over centuries by two powerful and often intertwined forces, those of political reactionism and religious orthodoxy. Freemasonry, with its heritage of Enlightenment, commitment to liberty of conscience, and republican ideals, has long been viewed by its detractors as a destabilizing influence, an affront to traditional authority and ecclesiastical control. Its most persistent enemies were found among the right-wing anti-Republican factions, who saw the Craft as a breeding ground for liberal and secular thought, and within the Catholic Church, which condemned Freemasonry as heretical and subversive.

This ideological hostility reached its zenith during the Second World War, when the Vichy government, established after France's capitulation to Nazi Germany on 22nd June 1940, became an active collaborator in the persecution of Freemasons. Following the armistice, France was divided into two zones: the Occupied Zone, under direct German control, and the Unoccupied Zone, governed from the spa town of Vichy under Marshal Philippe Pétain. Though nominally autonomous, the Vichy regime quickly aligned itself with Nazi policies, embracing a program of national regeneration that included the eradication of perceived internal enemies, among them, Freemasonry.

The initial anti-Masonic actions were instigated by the German authorities, who sought to uncover evidence of Franco-British collusion as a justification for their aggression. Freemasonry, with its international networks and liberal ethos, was an easy target. German forces began by sealing Masonic Lodges, confiscating archives, and searching for documents that could implicate the Craft in wartime conspiracies. These measures were later extended to the Channel Islands, including Jersey and Guernsey, where Lodges were similarly shuttered and their contents seized.



Eugenics poster entitled "The relationship between Jews and Freemasons."

Yet it was in France that the persecution of Freemasonry reached its most systematic and virulent form, not merely because of German pressure, but due to the zealous cooperation of the Vichy regime. In no other occupied country did the Nazis receive such enthusiastic assistance in their anti-Masonic campaign.

For the ideologues of Vichy, the suppression of Freemasonry was not simply a matter of compliance, it was a deliberate act of retribution. Many within the regime viewed the Craft as emblematic of the Third Republic's moral decay and political failures. Freemasons were blamed for everything from secularism and socialism to France's military defeat. The persecution thus became a means of settling old scores, silencing dissent, and purging the nation of what the regime saw as corrosive influences.

On 13 August 1940, less than two months after the armistice, the Vichy government enacted its principal anti-Masonic legislation, preceding even its anti-Jewish measures. Notably, the law did not explicitly mention Freemasonry; instead, it targeted "*secret associations*", a euphemism that allowed the regime to cast a wide net while avoiding direct reference to the Craft. This rhetorical sleight of hand reflected both the regime's desire to obscure its true intentions and its broader campaign against pluralism and civil society.

A letter addressed to Marshal Pétain by two senior officials articulated the rationale behind the legislation: "No government can allow, and in the present circumstances more than ever, the existence of groups pursuing clandestine or secret activities." Pétain, who harboured deep antipathy toward Freemasonry, endorsed the measure with chilling clarity, stating: "*A Jew is not responsible for his rights, a Freemason has always the choice.*" This remark underscored the regime's view of Freemasonry not as a matter of identity, but of culpable ideology, one that could and should be renounced.

The new law imposed sweeping penalties. All Masonic premises and meeting places were to be sequestered, their contents inventoried and auctioned. Any attempt to continue the activities of such organizations was punishable by fines and imprisonment. Freemasons were systematically excluded from public life: they could no longer hold positions in the Civil Service, local government, or education unless they submitted a formal declaration.

This declaration required the individual to affirm, on his honour, that he had never belonged to an illegal organization, or if he had, that he had resigned and would never rejoin, even if the organization were reconstituted. Failure to make such a declaration, or making a false one, resulted in immediate dismissal and double penalties. The law thus forced Freemasons into a moral and civic dilemma: renounce their affiliation or face professional ruin.

On 9 August 1941, the Vichy regime escalated its campaign against Freemasonry by enacting a law that mandated the public disclosure of the identities of senior members of the Craft. This decree required that the names of Lodge officers, Master Masons, and those holding Provincial or Grand Office be published in the official press. The intent was clear: to shame, isolate, and professionally ruin those associated with Freemasonry by exposing them to public scrutiny and suspicion.

The resulting publication listed over 30,000 names, but the accuracy of these records was deeply flawed. Many names appeared multiple times, while others belonged to Brethren long deceased. Despite these inconsistencies, it is estimated that between 14,000 and 18,000 of the individuals named were active Freemasons at the time. The consequences were swift and

severe: more than 1,000 civil servants lost their positions, and nearly 150 cases of false declarations, where individuals had denied or concealed their Masonic affiliation, were referred to the courts for prosecution.

The French public responded to these revelations with a mixture of shock, denial, and indifference. Some individuals, upon seeing their names in print, rushed to disavow any connection to the Craft, claiming to have resigned years earlier or never to have been members at all. Others were perplexed by the omissions, noting the absence of prominent figures known to be Freemasons, while some were surprised by the inclusion of names they had not expected.

In rural towns and villages, however, the lists revealed little that was not already known. There, Freemasons were not shadowy conspirators but familiar faces, schoolteachers, railway workers, hospital staff, and other modest, civic-minded men who had long been pillars of their communities. Far from being viewed as subversive, these Brethren were often respected and trusted, and their forced resignations were met with quiet resentment by local populations who valued their service and character.

To enforce its anti-Masonic decrees, the Vichy regime established a special police unit tasked with identifying and monitoring suspected Freemasons. This apparatus operated alongside other branches of the state's repressive machinery, targeting not only Masons but also Communists, Gaullists, and black marketeers. Yet a revealing directive from within the regime instructed that information on such individuals was to be prioritized only if they had demonstrable links to Freemasonry. This chilling detail underscores the regime's obsession with the Craft, not merely as a political threat, but as a symbolic enemy of its authoritarian vision.

The persecution of Freemasons persisted throughout the German Occupation, sustained by both ideological fervour and bureaucratic momentum. It was not until 15th December 1943, with the Allied advance gaining momentum and the Free French Government asserting its authority, that a formal decree was issued annulling the anti-Masonic legislation of 1940 and all subsequent measures derived from it. This act marked the beginning of the legal rehabilitation of Freemasonry in France.

For those Brethren who had endured years of harassment, dismissal, and public vilification, the decree brought a measure of relief and vindication. Though many had suffered irreparable harm, the spirit of the Craft had endured. Lodges that had gone dark began to rekindle their lights. Brethren who had met in secret or maintained their principles in silence now prepared to reclaim their rightful place in the civic and moral reconstruction of post-war France.

To understand the moral and political collapse that enabled the persecution of Freemasons and other marginalized groups under the Vichy regime, one must examine the complex figure at its helm: Henri-Philippe Pétain. Once revered as the saviour of France during the First World War, Pétain would later become a tragic emblem of capitulation and collaboration in the Second.

Born in 1856 to humble peasant parents in Pas-de-Calais, Pétain's early military career was unremarkable. By the eve of the First World War, he had reached the rank of General, having never commanded in battle. Yet fate intervened in 1916, when he was appointed to lead the defence of Verdun, a fortress city under relentless German assault. For ten harrowing months, Pétain orchestrated a masterful and dogged defence, earning the admiration of the French

people and the enduring title of “Hero of Verdun.” His reputation as a brilliant strategist and a man of stoic resolve was cemented, and he became a symbol of national endurance.

By 1940, France once again faced existential crisis. Defeated by Nazi Germany and plunged into chaos, the nation turned to its aging war hero. At 84 years old, Pétain was summoned from retirement and appointed Marshal of France and Prime Minister of the newly formed Vichy government. But the qualities that had served him in wartime command, discipline, conservatism, and paternalism, proved ill-suited to the treacherous terrain of political leadership under occupation.

Pétain was not a politician. His worldview was steeped in traditionalism and shaped by a deep mistrust of liberal democracy, which he blamed for France’s decline. These convictions made him susceptible to manipulation by Hitler’s emissaries, who skilfully extracted concessions from the Vichy regime under the guise of cooperation. Pétain’s government enacted policies that aligned with Nazi ideology, including the suppression of Freemasonry, the deportation of French workers (many of them Masons) to German factories, and the complicity in the deportation of foreign Jews to extermination camps.



Philippe Pétain shakes hands with Adolf Hitler, at Montoire sur le Loire, 24 October 1940

Though some historians argue that Pétain sought to shield France from harsher occupation, the record shows a man who rarely resisted, often acquiesced, and at times actively endorsed measures that betrayed the very values he once defended. His age, 88 by war’s end may have spared him the fate of his successor, Pierre Laval, who was executed for his enthusiastic collaboration. But age alone cannot absolve moral responsibility.

As the war drew to a close and the Allies liberated France, Pétain was held in German custody, confined to a castle in the waning days of the Reich. Upon learning that he was to be tried in absentia, he insisted, perhaps out of a lingering sense of honour, on returning to Paris to face his accusers. His trial was deeply divisive, with the final verdict rendered by a narrow margin: 14 votes to 13. He was condemned to death, a sentence later commuted to life imprisonment

by General Charles de Gaulle, who recognized the symbolic complexity of executing a man once hailed as a national saviour.

Pétain spent his final years in solitary confinement on the Île d'Yeu, a bleak and windswept island off the Atlantic coast. There, in a modest cell, he lived out the last six years of his life, dying in 1951 at the age of 95. His burial was swift and subdued, and the French Republic, eager to move forward, consigned his memory to silence.

Henri-Philippe Pétain remains one of the most ambiguous figures in modern French history, a man who embodied both heroism and betrayal, patriotism and collaboration. His legacy is a cautionary tale of how military virtue can be corrupted by political naïveté, and how national reverence can be weaponized to justify moral compromise.

For Freemasons, his story is particularly poignant. Under his leadership, the Vichy regime enacted some of the most aggressive anti-Masonic policies in Europe, targeting Brethren not for crimes, but for their principles, liberty of conscience, fraternity across divides, and commitment to truth. Pétain's fall from grace reminds us that the defence of freedom requires more than courage in battle, it demands moral clarity in governance.

Let us now return to the harrowing consequences of Marshal Pétain's regime for the Freemasons of France. The anti-Masonic legislation enacted by the Vichy government did more than dissolve Lodges and confiscate property, it stripped thousands of Brethren of their livelihoods, their reputations, and their civic standing. Teachers, civil servants, railway workers, and hospital staff, men who had long served their communities with quiet dignity, were suddenly branded as enemies of the state. The injustice of these measures stirred deep resentment, and for many, it ignited a fierce resolve to resist.

From the earliest days of the Occupation, Freemasons were among the first to join the Resistance. Their commitment to liberty, fraternity, and truth made them natural opponents of fascism, and their persecution under Vichy gave them both motive and moral clarity. As the war progressed, increasing numbers of Brethren took up clandestine roles, sheltering fugitives, distributing underground newspapers, gathering intelligence, and sabotaging enemy operations.

The cost was devastating. More than 500 Freemasons were executed, deported, or died under torture at the hands of the Gestapo and Vichy police. Their sacrifice is a solemn testament to the courage and conviction that the Craft inspires. Among the earliest martyrs was Brother José Roig, a committed supporter of General de Gaulle and the Free French Government in exile. He was executed by firing squad at Ivry-sur-Seine on 1 August 1941, having been arrested for his role in recruiting and organizing resistance cells. His death marked the beginning of a long and bloody chapter in the history of Masonic resistance.

French Freemasonry, with its emphasis on mutual trust and structured fraternity, was uniquely suited to clandestine activity. Even before the war, many Lodges operated in "Triangles", groups of three Brethren bound by discretion and shared purpose. This structure, rooted in French Masonic tradition, proved ideal for covert operations. Triangles could operate independently, communicate securely, and expand organically, forming a web of resistance that was difficult to infiltrate or dismantle.

Despite the official dissolution of Freemasonry, many Brethren continued to meet in secret, gathering in private homes, back rooms of cafés, and rural barns to maintain their bonds and coordinate their efforts. These gatherings were not merely symbolic, they were acts of defiance, affirmations of identity, and seeds of future renewal.

Even before the war had fully ended, Freemasons began to prepare for the reconstruction of the Craft. In January 1944, while France was still under occupation, a group of Brethren formed the Provisional Council of French Freemasonry. This body sought to preserve the principles of the Order, support surviving members, and lay the groundwork for the restoration of Lodges once liberation came.

Their efforts bore fruit. After the fall of Vichy and the liberation of France, Freemasonry emerged from the shadows, not broken, but tempered. The movement had endured persecution, betrayal, and war, yet its ideals remained intact. The Brethren who had resisted tyranny now stood ready to help rebuild a nation grounded in liberty, equality, and fraternity.

The French Resistance, a mosaic of clandestine networks and courageous individuals, undertook a wide array of perilous tasks in defiance of Nazi occupation and Vichy collaboration. Their roles were as varied as they were vital: gathering intelligence, disseminating underground propaganda, coordinating parachute drops of arms and supplies, and aiding the escape of Allied airmen, refugees, Jews, and French citizens evading forced labour. They produced clandestine newspapers, forged identity papers, and maintained secret lines of communication across occupied territory. Among their ranks were many Freemasons, whose commitment to liberty and fraternity made them natural allies in the struggle against tyranny.

On 3 March 1943, the Resistance suffered a devastating blow. The apartment of Brother Kirchneyer, a meticulous and respected leader within the movement, was raided. A trap had been laid, and any visitor to the flat was immediately arrested. Kirchneyer himself was taken into custody, and though the police, whether through ignorance, negligence, or quiet sympathy, failed to conduct a thorough search of his extensive files, they uncovered enough evidence to identify him as a central coordinator of a vast Resistance network.

The penalty for such a role was death. Yet, in a twist that remains enigmatic to this day, several incriminating documents mysteriously vanished before the Germans could transfer him to prison. Even more curiously, these documents were later returned to him by the examining magistrate following the Liberation of France, a gesture that hints at hidden loyalties and quiet acts of defiance within the judicial system.

Brother Kirchneyer endured solitary confinement from 1941 to 1944, a psychological ordeal designed to break the spirit and extract confessions. Yet he revealed nothing. His silence was an act of resistance in itself, a refusal to betray his Brethren or the cause. Eventually, he was deported to the infamous Buchenwald concentration camp, and later to the extermination camp at Mauthausen, one of the most brutal in the Nazi system. Against all odds, he survived, returning to France in 1945 as a living testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the enduring strength of Masonic conviction.

Many others were not so fortunate. Across France, Freemasons active in the Resistance were hunted, tortured, and executed. Some were shot, others beheaded, and many perished in concentration camps or died under interrogation. In the Dauphiné region, two Brethren were

executed by firing squad, and at least twenty Freemasons from local Lodges lost their lives either in combat or in captivity. Among those arrested, tortured, or imprisoned were Brother Alix Bertlet and Brother Jean Pain. The latter's fate was particularly harrowing, his mutilated body was discovered discarded in a ditch, a grim reminder of the cruelty inflicted upon those who dared to resist.

The Brethren who perished under the Vichy regime and Nazi occupation did not die in vain. Their sacrifice was not symbolic, it was substantive. In the face of tyranny, they upheld the eternal ideals of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, not as abstract principles but as lived truths. The Masonic virtues they embodied Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, were not confined to ritual halls or ceremonial language. They were expressed in acts of courage, quiet defiance, and unshakable solidarity.

These men laid the moral foundation for the post-war revival of Freemasonry in France. Their memory continues to inspire Brethren across the globe, reminding us that the light of the Craft shines brightest in the darkest of times.

For those of us fortunate to live in lands untouched by occupation (ours in particular) their stories serve as both a warning and a call to vigilance. The freedoms we enjoy were denied to them. The fraternity we cherish was, for them, a cause for persecution. To honour their legacy, we must remember their names and reflect on their fate.

Below is a Roll of Honour from two French Lodges, chosen at random. Each name is a life cut short, a Brother lost, a light extinguished, but never forgotten.

- Leopold Welting – Hunted by the Gestapo, he took his own life to avoid capture.
- Darius Oldenburg – Arrested in May 1944, deported, and never seen again.
- Jacques Glass – Deported to Auschwitz in 1941; disappeared without trace.
- Charles Goldenburg – Deported to Auschwitz in 1941; vanished in the camps.
- Jacques Lapon – Arrested in 1941, deported, and never returned.
- Marc Munk – Arrested in 1941, deported, fate unknown.
- Eugène Courbet – Arrested on 4 December 1943; assassinated by the Gestapo in Nice, January 1944.
- Robert Thivin – Arrested on 4 December 1943; tortured and killed by the Gestapo on 10 February 1944.
- Wladimir Joukoff – Arrested in Haute-Savoie; executed by the SS in March 1944.

These names are not merely entries in a ledger. They are testaments to courage, symbols of resistance, and reminders of our duty. These men did not die in vain. Their sacrifice helped to preserve the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity in the darkest of times. The Masonic principles they upheld, Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, were not confined to ritual; they were lived in action, in suffering, and in defiance. Their courage laid the foundation for the post-war revival of Freemasonry in France, and their memory continues to inspire Brethren around the world to live our principles with integrity, to defend the rights of others, and to ensure that such darkness never descends again.

While the persecution of Freemasons under the Vichy regime and Nazi occupation was widespread and often brutal, history offers rare glimpses of unexpected mercy, moments when individual conscience transcended ideology, and humanity prevailed over hatred. Not all German officers were unwavering in their hostility toward the Craft. In isolated instances,

personal respect, shared values, or quiet defiance led to acts of compassion that defied the machinery of repression.

One such story is that of Brother Louis Letnaire, a high-ranking Freemason and builder by trade, whose courage and ingenuity became a lifeline for those fleeing tyranny. Amidst the chaos of occupation, Letnaire used his construction yard as a sanctuary, concealing escaping Allied soldiers and airmen among stacks of timber, bricks, and building supplies. His actions were perilous, and as with many acts of resistance, they did not go unnoticed. Inevitably, he was denounced and brought before a senior German officer, an elderly man whose demeanour suggested experience rather than fanaticism.

During the interrogation, Letnaire was asked his age. But the phrasing of the question as well as the context, led him to understand that he was being asked not for his chronological age, but for his Masonic age: the number of years he had been initiated into the Craft. When he quietly gave the number, the officer paused, then dismissed him without punishment. In a gesture both enigmatic and telling, Letnaire was even given the name of his informant, a rare act of transparency that suggests the officer may have harboured sympathy for Freemasonry, or at least a respect for its principles. What became of the informant remains unknown, but the moment stands as a poignant reminder that even within oppressive systems, individual conscience can flicker through the cracks.

These stories do not diminish the scale of suffering endured by Freemasons during the Occupation. Rather, they illuminate the complexity of human behaviour in times of moral crisis. They remind us that Brotherhood can transcend borders, and that the principles of the Craft, truth, justice, and compassion, can resonate even in the hearts of those raised in opposing systems. And it challenges us, as Brethren, to remember that our duty is not only to resist injustice, but to recognize and honour the humanity that survives within it.

As I draw this paper to a close, I would like to offer a brief but meaningful reflection on a small emblem many of us wear with quiet pride: the forget-me-not, that modest blue flower often seen in the lapels of Masons across the world. Though diminutive in size, its significance is profound, rooted in one of the darkest chapters of our history and emblematic of the enduring spirit of the Craft.

In 1934, scarcely a year after Adolf Hitler's rise to power, it became tragically clear that Freemasonry in Germany was under grave threat. The Nazi regime, with its totalitarian ideology and deep suspicion of independent thought, began a systematic campaign to suppress Masonic Lodges, confiscate property, and persecute Brethren. The Grand Lodge of Bayreuth, recognizing the peril, took a quiet but courageous step. They adopted the forget-me-not, a small, unobtrusive blue flower, as a discreet symbol of Masonic identity, replacing the traditional square and compasses, which had become too dangerous to display openly.

The choice was deliberate. The forget-me-not was commonplace, innocuous, and unlikely to attract the attention of Nazi authorities. Yet among Brethren, it became a silent signal of recognition, a token of solidarity, and a symbol of resistance. As Freemasonry was forced underground, the forget-me-not allowed Brethren to identify one another, to maintain their bonds, and to affirm that the light of Masonry, though dimmed, had not been extinguished.

Throughout the Nazi era, this humble flower marked those who refused to surrender their principles. In the cities, in the countryside, and even within the concentration camps, the forget-

me-not was worn by those who held fast to the tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, often at great personal risk. It became a symbol not only of remembrance, but of defiance, resilience, and hope.

In 1947, following the defeat of the Nazi regime and the reconstitution of Freemasonry in Germany, the Grand Lodge of the Sun in Bayreuth formally adopted the forget-me-not as the official emblem of Masonic survival. It was worn by those who had endured the years of persecution, those who had kept the faith, and those who now sought to rekindle the flame and restore the Temples of Light.



The Forget-me-not

Today, in many Lodges across our own country, the forget-me-not is presented to newly raised Master Masons. It serves as a living link to our history, a reminder of the sacrifices made, and a charge to uphold the values that sustained our Brethren through oppression. It is not merely a decorative pin, it is a symbol of remembrance, a badge of honour, and a call to vigilance.

Let us wear it with reverence. Let us remember those who wore it in silence and in suffering. And let us ensure that the principles it represents, freedom of conscience, moral courage, and fraternal unity continue to guide our steps, in peace and in adversity.

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Chaplin's Corner

Our regular Chaplin, Bro Revd Roger Quick, has suffered a severe bout of influenza which meant he was not well enough to meet the CQ deadline. He sends his apologies to his regular readers. Thankfully he is now recovering well and hopes to return to this spot in the Spring Issue.

Luckily a substitute, Bro Monk, stepped in to the breach. Some of you will recall Bro Monk's presence in the Lodge anteroom; others might place him beneath a winter constellation, neither arriving nor departing, simply there. No one seems to remember shaking his hand, yet most are certain he has offered them Light in some form, even if they cannot recall the words used. He is associated with Light, though not as seeker or herald. More as a witness. Some say he listens to the cosmic consciousness, as one listens to faint music, hearing phrases before the rest of us notice they are forming. His insights rarely explain; they open and continue opening, they are inviting. Whether he walks in Lodge rooms or in the long corridors of the mind is debated without resolution. His influence may be subtle or immense, depending on who recounts the story.

Of Light and Shadow: A Comparison of a “Good” and a “Bad” Esoteric Lodges: From the Zen Hermitage

By Brother Monk

I am sitting in a small Zen hermitage in Kyoto, Japan, the sort of place that seems to exist outside of time. The building has no walls, only wide openings to the garden, so that the sound of wind through the pines is as present as the faint fragrance of incense rising from a single stick. Before me, a stone basin catches the morning rain, and beyond it, moss spreads in quiet green abundance. I sit in zazen, letting thought fall away until there is nothing left to hold on to, emptying myself so as to be filled by what some might call the Cosmic Consciousness. The openness of this space is more than architectural; it is a spiritual condition. There is nothing to block the view, no separation between the inside and the outside. In such a place, one comes to realise that the true walls are those we build in our own heart, and that the work of any serious path, whether Zen or Freemasonry, is to open these walls.

In this Zen hermitage, I am meditating, reflecting in 只管打坐 *shikantaza*— the practice of “*just sitting*”, resting in the awareness of no-thing — emptying myself so that I may be filled by the Cosmic Consciousness, what the Japanese Zen-monk Dōgen Zenji (*1200, + 1252), in his monumental work *Shōbōgenzō*, names simply “the realisation of the Buddha Way” (fascicle *Genjōkōan*). There is no self here, no possession, no agenda. The breeze moves through me as it moves through the pines. The hermitage itself seems to breathe.

This absence of walls is not an architectural quirk, but a teaching. In the *Shōbōgenzō* fascicle *Kūge* (“Flowers in Space”), Dōgen reminds us that form and emptiness are not two — the walls we build in mind and in stone are provisional, and wisdom often begins when we can let them go. “Open the hands of thought!” is a Zen saying. A Masonic Lodge, too, can be like such a hermitage: open to the wider air, allowing the wind of the Spirit to move freely through its work. Or it may, instead, enclose itself in walls so high and thick that no light enters, and no fresh wind can stir.

This hermitage meditation is not far from my other practice, 茶道 *Chadō*, the Way of Tea, also called Tea Ceremony in the West. In the Tea Ceremony, we do not perform tea-making for ourselves alone; we create a space for harmony (和 *wa*), respect (和 *kei*), purity (清 *sei*), and tranquillity (寂 *jaku*). The

tea hut, like the hermitage, is humble, open, and oriented towards an inner simplicity. The host and guest meet as equals. In this setting, the boundaries between spiritual practice and daily life vanish.

It is from such a place here on this veranda in Kyoto that I wish to consider the life of a Masonic lodge. What might it mean for a lodge to be “without walls” in the sense of spiritual openness? And what happens when the opposite occurs, when those walls are built too high, shutting out the living air of the Craft’s deeper purpose? This openness, this sense of structure without confinement, is the image that comes to my mind when I think of a good esoteric Lodge. It has form, tradition, and discipline, the beams and pillars, yet it does not wall itself in with dogma or vanity. Instead, it allows the winds of truth to pass through, carrying fresh insight, while still providing shelter for the work of transformation. A bad Lodge, by contrast, is like a room sealed up against the elements: its air grows stale, its members forget the living sky outside, and the space meant for spiritual growth becomes a chamber of echoes.

Why This Comparison Matters

In every generation of Freemasonry, certain Lodges burn brightly, attracting seekers who yearn for spiritual growth, while others fade into a dim echo of their own potential. This is particularly true of Lodges that identify themselves as esoteric. The term suggests depth, hidden wisdom, and a path of transformation, yet in practice not every esoteric Lodge lives up to that promise. Some function as true laboratories of the soul; others, regrettably, serve as little more than theatres for arcane pageantry.

The Living and the Hollow Lodge: Light and Shadow

A true esoteric Lodge is a living organism, a space in which the symbols and rituals of the Craft become living forces in the transformation of the initiate. Walter Leslie Wilmshurst (1924b) repeatedly emphasised that the Lodge should be a place of regeneration, “where men may be remade”, a place where the individual is gradually transformed through contact with the eternal truths embodied in the ritual drama. When such a Lodge is at work, there is a palpable atmosphere of stillness and intensity. The candidate is received not merely into a fraternity, but into a field of energy shaped by the aspiration of the brethren.

The experience of such a Lodge is mirrored in the Zen monastery, where each bow, each movement, and each silence is performed with complete presence. In *Shōbōgenzō Genjōkōan*, Dōgen (1994–1999, Vol 1) writes that “to study the self is to forget the self, and to forget the self is to be actualised by the myriad things”. In a living Lodge, the initiate is given the opportunity to forget the self in precisely this way. The carefully structured ritual, far from being an end in itself, becomes a vehicle for self-forgetting and for awakening to the reality that transcends individual identity.

In the Tea Ceremony, the same principle applies. The form of the tea ceremony is strict, yet within its structure the practitioner finds a freedom unavailable in ordinary life. Host and guest meet in a shared moment of stillness, where every detail is offered as a gift. The utensils, the calligraphy, the flower arrangement, and the taste of the tea all become part of a single, unrepeatable moment. Sen no Rikyū, the founder of the Japanese Way of Tea, taught (Sen, 1998) that “tea is nothing but this: first you boil water, then you make the tea, and drink it, expressing the paradox of form and freedom: simplicity hiding boundless depth.

In contrast, the hollow Lodge is an outward imitation lacking the inward vitality. Wilmshurst (1911a) observed that many Lodges had declined into little more than social clubs, prioritising convivial gatherings over genuine initiation, and becoming satisfied with rote observance rather than the transformative work of the soul. In his essay on spurious ecstasy, Wilmshurst (1911b) also cautioned

against the lure of false emotional highs, which can create the illusion of spiritual attainment while concealing the absence of genuine inner transformation.

The hollow form preserves every surface element of ritual while losing the animating spirit. The floorcloth is unrolled, the words are recited, and the regalia is impressive, yet the atmosphere is devoid of the stillness that allows a candidate to touch the deeper reality behind the symbols. Symbolism becomes not a ladder to ascend but a painted backdrop before which the same performance is staged again and again.

As Dōgen (1994–1999, Vol. 1) warned in *Shōbōgenzō Bendōwa*, “do not mistake the pointing finger for the moon”. The gestures and forms of the Lodge, like those of Zen, are meant to direct the mind beyond themselves. When they are mistaken for the goal, the practice collapses into a form of idolatry, where the object of devotion is the ceremony itself rather than the transformation it should awaken.

The same danger exists in the Tea Ceremony, when the tea ritual is reduced to mere etiquette or cultural display. A gathering may feature impeccable utensils, perfect timing, and flawless bows, yet if there is no genuine meeting of hearts, the tea-room is no more than “a theatre of refinement” (Sen, 1998). Without the quiet mutual recognition of host and guest, the sacred atmosphere is replaced by polite emptiness.

Wilmshurst (1909) recognised that without the discipline of inner work, the Craft risks becoming nothing more than a refined form of entertainment, devoid of its intended transformative purpose. In such Lodges, advancement in rank may be valued over advancement in wisdom, and routine over the risk of self-confrontation. The Festive Board may sparkle with conversation, but the deeper fire of the soul remains unkindled.

The greatest tragedy of the hollow Lodge is that it may persist for years without recognising its condition. Because the outer forms remain intact, there is a sense of continuity, even of success. Yet the living presence that once animated those forms is gone. The Lodge may grow in numbers and in social influence while the inner Temple falls into ruin. Wilmshurst (1925) warned that the true work of the Craft is delicate, and can be extinguished by complacency as easily as by open neglect.

Form is not the enemy in either Lodge or tea-room. It is the lifeline that connects the practitioner to the tradition and to the generations who have walked the path before. Yet when the form is emptied of intention, it becomes a shell, a polished but lifeless container. The remedy lies not in discarding the form, but in reanimating it with the presence, discipline, and surrender that characterise the true esoteric Lodge. Without this, the symbols remain locked, the doors to the inner Temple stay closed, and the Craft offers only shadows where light should shine.

Conclusion: The Call to a Living Craft

When distilling the lessons from both the essence (as I see it) of the Lodge of Living Stones and the disciplines of Zen practice and the Tea Ceremony, a common truth emerges. A Lodge, like a temple or a tea hut, is not made sacred by its walls, its ornaments, or even its lineage. It is made sacred by the quality of consciousness that those within bring to it. Wilmshurst (1924b) insisted that, at its highest, Masonry serves as a training ground for the spirit, fostering inner transformation and enabling the human soul to awaken to the Divine Reality. In the *Shōbōgenzō*, particularly in the “*Genjōkōan*” fascicle, Dōgen (1994–1999, Vol. 1) teaches that the study of the self leads to forgetting the self, and that such forgetting opens the way to being enlightened by all things — what we might call the Cosmic Consciousness?

A Lodge that remembers this truth becomes a living organism. Its rituals are not mere recitations but living enactments of an inner process. Wilmshurst (1924b) cautioned that, without genuine inner work, Masonry risks becoming an empty form, retaining only the outward shell while losing its essential substance.

Its members are not an audience, but fellow workers in the quarry of the heart. Such a Lodge generates an atmosphere that refines character, deepens insight, and inspires service beyond its own walls. Without this living awareness, even the most elaborate ritual becomes an empty shell, and the Lodge drifts toward the fate of many once-vibrant esoteric bodies that now stand as relics of a forgotten vitality.

The task, therefore, is, I think, both simple and profound: to live the Craft as if each moment were the single decisive opportunity to advance in the Great Work. Dōgen's "Bendōwa" fascicle insists that practice and realisation are not two aspects, meaning that each action, however ordinary, is itself the Way. This requires courage to look within, humility to learn from others, and perseverance to hold fast to the inner light when outer circumstances are difficult. If these principles are applied, the Lodge will not simply endure fluctuations in membership but will stand as a beacon for future seekers, fulfilling what Wilmshurst (1924b) described as the true mission of Masonry, namely the transformation of the rough ashlar of the natural person into the perfect ashlar of the spiritual person.

I repeat, because I feel it so important: The difference between a living Lodge and a hollow one is not a matter of architecture, regalia, or the length of the ritual. It is a question of presence. It is the difference between a vessel filled with pure water and an empty cup left on the table. As Wilmshurst (1924b) explained, the Lodge is meant to function as a workshop of spiritual reconstruction, providing a space in which the initiate can encounter the deeper truths of life through the symbolic language of the Craft.

The true Lodge is an organism animated by the shared aspiration of its members. It breathes through their devotion, thinks through their reflection, and acts through their service to one another and to the world. When the brethren meet in such a Lodge, the air is charged with the same quality found in the Zen temple at dawn or in the tea-room before the guest enters: a stillness that is alive, attentive, and receptive to the eternal.

A hollow Lodge, by contrast, is like a mask whose face is painted but whose eyes are empty. It may be socially vibrant, yet spiritually dormant. The words are spoken without being heard, the signs given without being lived, the symbols displayed without being penetrated. In such an environment, there is no alchemy of transformation, only the repetition of a form whose meaning has been forgotten.

Dōgen's (1994–1999) teaching that "practice and enlightenment are one" applies here. The living Lodge does not treat ritual as preparation for some later attainment, but as the very place where light is embodied in the present moment. Each action in the ceremony is an act of presence. Each symbol is a window into the eternal. The work of the Lodge is to keep this living fire burning, not by clinging to novelty, but by returning again and again to the same form with deeper sincerity.

The Craft, like Zen or the Tea Ceremony, demands vigilance. The form is not the enemy, but the form must be continually re-infused with life. To let it grow cold is to betray the trust of the tradition and the generations who kept it alive before us. Wilmshurst (1925) regarded this as a moral responsibility, noting that if Masonry is not actively brought to life, it will inevitably decline.

The living Lodge is not a rare miracle. It is the natural result of sustained, conscious effort. It is built upon the commitment of its members to live the truths they profess, to see beyond the words to the

reality they signify, and to meet in a spirit of humility and shared awakening. Such a Lodge becomes a true temple, where the walls are the hearts of the brethren, the light is the light of the Spirit, and the work is the work of the soul.

Points for Making a Lodge a “Good” Esoteric Lodge

Purpose Beyond Fellowship

Ensure that social bonds are a result of the work, not its substitute.

Articulate clearly that the Lodge exists for the inner transformation of its members and the cultivation of the Craft’s deeper spiritual purpose.

Atmosphere of Stillness and Reverence

Maintain an environment where silence is valued and never hurried.

Begin and end meetings in a manner that cultivates depth, and presence, not haste.

Living Engagement with Symbolism

Encourage study circles or short talks on the deeper meanings of ritual elements.

Relate symbols to members’ personal spiritual practice, not just historical interest.

Quality of Ritual Work

Ensure that the officers understand not just the words, but the truths they point to and can convey these through their manner and presence.

Integration with Daily Life

Encourage members to apply Masonic virtues and insights outside the Lodge.

Share examples of how ritual insights shape conduct in professional life, family, and service to the wider community.

Guarding Against Spurious Ecstasy

Avoid the pursuit of novelty, spectacle, or emotional highs for their own sake.

Remind members that the aim is steady transformation, rooted in discipline, not fleeting impressions.

Mentorship and Guidance

Pair newer members with experienced brethren who can guide them beyond the surface.

Offer structured paths for deepening understanding and embodying the Craft’s values at each stage of progression.

Integration of Silence and Speech

Value periods of reflective silence in meetings as much as spoken ritual.

Allow the ritual to breathe, so its meaning can be deeply absorbed.

Connection to a Wider Tradition

Keep alive the sense of being part of a living stream of wisdom handed down.

Honour past Masters and thinkers, such as Wilmshurst, by engaging actively with their writings and integrating their insights into present practice.

Shared Aspiration and Accountability

Hold one another accountable for living up to the ideals of the Craft.

Foster a culture in which mutual encouragement and honest feedback strengthen the Lodge's spiritual life.

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Stay Safe Online-Prevailing Threats–June 2025

Bro Chris Eyre - St Oswald Lodge, Associate of Coronation Lodge

Amazon 300 million accounts at risk – A Holiday Season Warning:

Amazon issued an urgent alert to its estimated 300+ million active users warning them about a massive surge in impersonation scams and phishing attacks around the Black Friday and holiday shopping season.

Key Threats Amazon Warned Against:

Phishing Messages: Scammers send fake emails or texts impersonating Amazon, often claiming there is an issue with a delivery, an account needs verification, or an urgent payment is required.

Malicious Links: These messages contain links that direct users to spoofed (fake) websites that look exactly like the Amazon login page. When a user enters their credentials, the scammers harvest the data.

Fake Deals: Deceptive third-party advertisements on social media or elsewhere promote deals that are “too good to be true” and lead to fraudulent storefronts designed to steal payment information.

Unofficial Contact: Scammers contacting customers through unsolicited calls or messages demanding passwords or sensitive payment information.

How to Stay Safe: Amazon's Advice

Amazon and security experts emphasise vigilance to protect your account:

Use Official Channels Only: Always use the official Amazon mobile app or the Amazon website for all purchases, tracking, customer service, and account changes.

Enable Two-Factor Authentication (2FA): Turn on 2FA for your Amazon account to require a one-time code from your phone in addition to your password when logging in from a new device.

Check URLs: Before entering any login or payment information, manually verify the website address in your browser to ensure it is the genuine Amazon domain.

Be Sceptical: Amazon will never ask you to verify your account credentials, provide sensitive payment data (like gift cards or wire transfers), or share your password through an unsolicited email, text, or phone call.

AI Generated Donation Videos – Scam Alert!

Scammers are heavily using AI tools (known as "deepfakes") to generate highly convincing video and audio to manipulate people into donating money to fake causes, impersonate loved ones in crisis, or lure them into investment fraud.

The Danger of AI Donation Videos

AI has made it incredibly easy to produce fake but persuasive content at scale:

- **Deepfake Impersonation:** Scammers can clone the voice and face of a **celebrity, public figure, or even a close friend/family member** to create a video asking for urgent money transfers due to an emergency (like an accident or arrest).
- **Emotional Manipulation:** They use AI to generate highly emotional video scenarios or imagery of people in distress, appealing directly to your empathy to bypass your logic.
- **Fake Endorsements:** Videos might feature a deepfake of a famous personality promoting a **fake charity or a "too good to be true" investment scheme** (often disguised as a donation opportunity).

Meta (the parent company of Facebook and Instagram) is trying to combat this by adding labels to AI-generated content, but many scams still slip through.

How to Spot an AI Deepfake Scam Video

If a donation video on social media seems suspicious, look for these key red flags:

Red Flag	What to Look For
Visual Glitches	Unnatural facial movements (robotic blinking, stiff head), mismatched lip-syncing with the audio, inconsistent lighting/shadows, or blurry/overly smooth skin.
Audio Quality	The voice sounds flat, monotone, or too "perfect," lacking the natural inflections, pauses, and background noise you would expect.
High Urgency/Pressure	The video demands you act immediately ("Help is needed in the next 30 minutes!"), often using emotionally charged language to prevent you from taking time to verify.
Unusual Payment Method	The request is for money via cryptocurrency, wire transfer, gift cards, or payment apps (like CashApp or Venmo) to a personal account, rather than an official charity donation portal.
Unverified Source	The account posting the video is new, has very few followers, has a suspicious name, or has an inconsistent posting history.
Vague or Unverifiable Cause	The name of the charity is generic, and you cannot find an official website or a legitimate charity registration (https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/charity-search) through an independent search.

Your Safe Donation Strategy

Never click on a donation link directly from an unsolicited social media post or ad.

- **Stop and Don't Click:** Resist the emotional pressure and do not interact with the post's links or payment instructions.
- **Verify the Charity Independently:** Take the name of the charity mentioned in the video and search for it on Google (or on charity verification sites like the UK Charities Commission).
- **Use the Official Website:** If the charity is legitimate, go to their official, verified website (by typing the URL directly) to make your donation securely through their established system.

- Confirm Identity: If the video claims to be a friend or family member, call them on a verified phone number (do not call the number provided in the video) to confirm their identity and the situation.

Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) Group Cyber Attack

Timeline and Attackers

- When: The disruption began around August 31, 2025, with JLR publicly confirming the incident on September 2, 2025.
- Action Taken: JLR took immediate and drastic action by proactively shutting down its global IT and production systems to contain the attack.
- Attackers: The group “Scattered Lapsus\$ Hunters” claimed responsibility for the attack. It was a complex incident, and JLR had also faced a separate data breach in March 2025 linked to the HELLCAT ransomware group.

Major Impact

- Production Halted: The shutdown forced JLR to halt all vehicle production globally for multiple weeks at plants in the UK (Solihull, Halewood) and overseas (Slovakia, China, India, Brazil).
- Financial Cost: The attack severely disrupted the company, costing JLR £196 million in exceptional costs in the quarter ending September 30, 2025. This contributed to a reported loss for the period.
- Supply Chain Crisis: The production stop had a catastrophic ripple effect on JLR’s extensive supply chain, affecting thousands of jobs and suppliers who rely on JLR’s orders.
- Data Compromised: While JLR initially stated no customer data was stolen, they later confirmed in mid-September that some data was compromised and relevant authorities were notified.

The incident was widely reported as one of the most damaging cyberattacks in British history, highlighting the vulnerability of modern manufacturing and “just-in-time” supply chains to cyber threats.

British Library- Two Years Later:

The British Library cyber-attack actually took place in October 2023, but its effects have continued to be felt well into 2025 as the recovery effort is massive and complex.

The core of the incident was a double-extortion ransomware attack carried out by the Rhysida group.

Key Details of the Attack

- When it started: October 25, 2023.
- Attack Type : Double-extortion ransomware. The attackers encrypted systems and stole approximately 600 GB of data (including personal information of users and staff) before demanding a ransom.
- Ransom: A demand of 20 BTC (approximately £600k) was made, but the Library refused to pay.

- Data Leak: Following the refusal, the stolen data was leaked publicly on the dark web.
- Cause: The initial access was gained through a Terminal Services server installed in 2020 for remote access, which critically lacked multi-factor authentication (MFA). The Library's reliance on a patchwork of legacy systems and an under-resourced internal technology team also contributed to the severity of the damage.

Impact and Recovery in 2025

As of late 2025, the Library is still deep in the recovery process, which is expected to cost an estimated £6–7 million.

- Service Disruptions: Many services remain unavailable or severely limited, including:
- Access to e-books, archives, manuscripts catalogue, and online journal articles.
- Unique digital collections like EThOS (UK doctoral theses) and the UK Web Archive.
- The digital collection is still unavailable as the Library is rebuilding its entire technology infrastructure.
- Catalogue Restoration: The main catalogue was partially restored in January 2024 (in a read-only format), but full functionality is taking much longer.
- A major milestone in December 2025 is scheduled: a changeover to new Library Management System (LMS) software, with a new online catalogue interface expected to be available for requests on December 8, 2025.
- Staff and Users: The attack has led to increased manual workload for staff and frustration from users. Staff have also faced security concerns due to their personal details being leaked.
- Wider Lessons: The incident has been cited as a major warning for academic libraries and public sector institutions regarding the risks of legacy systems, under-resourced tech teams, and the absolute necessity of multi-factor authentication.

The disruption in 2025 is primarily the ongoing fallout and complex process of restoring and replacing the destroyed and compromised systems from the original 2023 attack.

Contributions to the Writing Challenge.

When establishing CQ the Editors announced a new **Quarterly Writing Challenge** for any member, or corresponding associate, of Coronation Lodge to develop their writing talents. Going on to say:

“As both Co-Editors are experienced university academics, they appreciate the benefits of anonymous marking and have long familiarity with applying it. And anonymity also has a glorious history in the practices that Bro Iolo Morganwg laid down for the prestigious Eisteddfod competitions of The Chair and The Crown. A topic is set in advance, and a deadline set. All submissions are put forward under a penname. Only after the work has been adjudicated, performed, and judged adequate for publication is the writer asked to stand up and reveal their identity. It won’t be possible to facilitate quite such a dramatic reveal as at the eisteddfod, but the principle can still be followed.”

Disappointingly Brother Secretary has received no submissions for this quarter’s **CQ Quarterly Writing Challenge**. This is extremely depressing from a lodge whose purpose is to study and share insight into the deeper aspects of Freemasonry. A possible reason for this as the last two questions have been factual and technical, rather than asking for opinion or wider speculation. To this end the editors asked our WM to set wider question for the next challenge to encourage more engagement from the brethren.

Here is the new CQ Quarterly Writing Challenge, with a deadline for the last day of March, which is now open with the topic being a new, more open ended, question from the Chair of Coronation Lodge, which is **“What would you deem the impactful symbolism or allegory with Freemasonry that would be considered Quintessential in Esoteric Freemasonry?”**

The Lodge Mentor has chosen not to respond to this question to avoid influencing the views of the brethren. That question is now in your hands brethren. We look forward to reading your ideas.

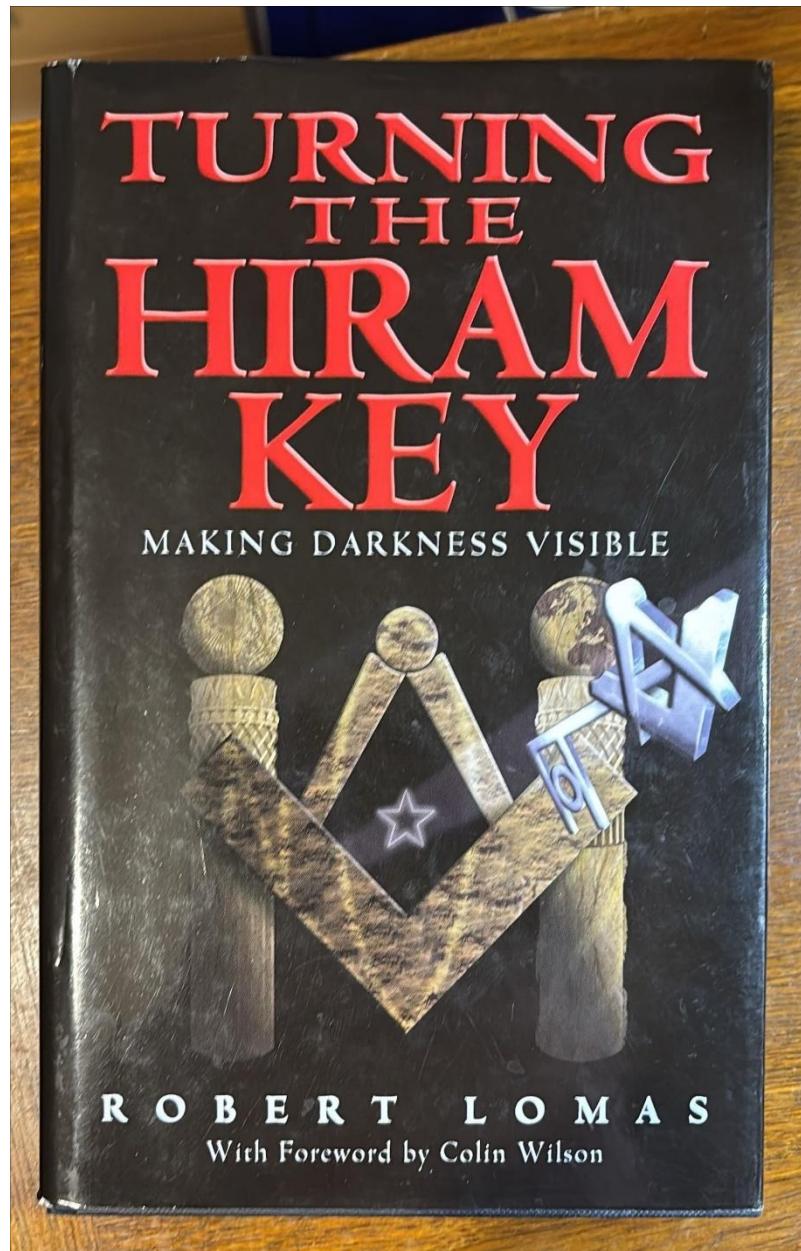
Book Reviews

Turning the Hiram Key by Robert Lomas

Review by the Late WBro Douglas Inglesent-

Librarian of the Lodge of Living Stones

Reviewed at the first publication



The late Reverend Professor Carsten Thiede was adamant that faith and scholarship should remain separated. **“Turning the Hiram Key”** by top-selling Masonic writer Dr R A Lomas follows this dictum, and should be viewed as an invitation to think, rather than a prescriptive statement. Not since the

books and Lodge Papers of the 1920s and 30s by W L Wilmshurst has there been such a positive and serious study of Freemasonry as a system of spiritual philosophy.

The work extends well beyond the narrow confines of Masonic ceremony covering a wide-ranging and timely scientific account of what is known about the effects of spirituality and sexual arousal on the mind and body. (Oxford University is currently in the process of setting up a Centre for The Science of the Mind.) In spite of the breadth of topic the subject matter is concise and surprisingly deep, and able to hold the interest of the non-scientist reader while giving an extensive list of learned references for those wishing to pursue matters further. There is a great need for scientists with the skills to communicate with the general public, rather than just each other.

Part 1 covers the emotional aspects by tracing the author's entry starting with the attendance at a female mason's social event, through joining the order himself, experiencing a near lightning strike, and progress through the Masonic stages along with his own reactions to events.

Part 2 is science based and presents much evidence for the interaction in the mind between sexual and spiritual matters. It was said by Gurdjieff that a strong sense of natural spirituality could suppress sexual desire, but there was danger inherent in making a conscious decision to do this. (Church leaders note carefully.) Critics of this area really need to produce their own scientific evidence.

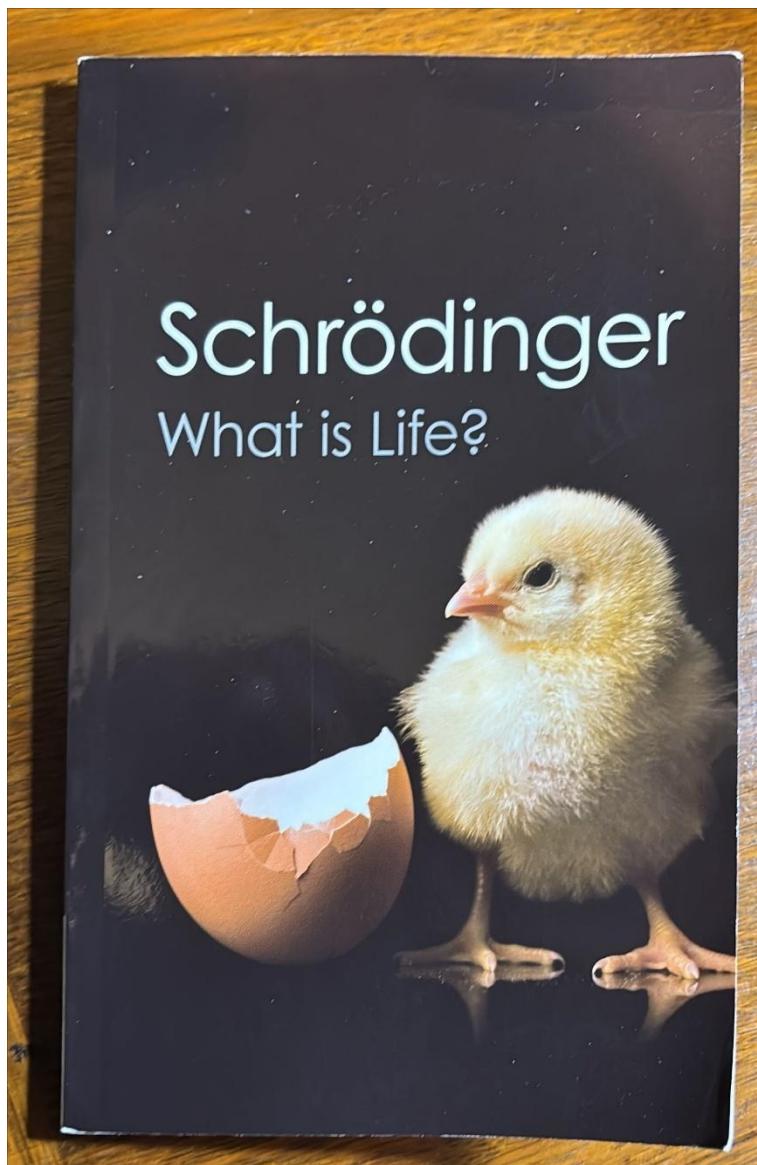
Part 3 begins with Wilmshurst's deep thought on Masonry, "not religious but super sectarian" continuing with his original drawing (never before published), of the masonic journey from the circumference to the centre. Here, the interested reader will be able to make cross- reference to the ceremonies in the first part. The path continues with empirical accounts of the sexual, spiritual link via St Theresa and Renaissance commissioned by the Vatican and including a conceptual model of this link. As the object of the book is to consider Freemasonry as a spiritual path, the author finds it necessary to abandon the politics and badges of rank (all chiefs, no Indians) of the English system and move north to the older and purer realms of Scotland. No Grand and Provincial Grand Officers doing their peacock strutting here, but where every member is (just) brother. The conclusion considers the future of Freemasonry, and here it may be noted that as Dr Lomas is constantly in touch with thinking young people. Some of the grandees of Great Queen Street would do well to reflect on what is written there.

[Turning the Hiram Key: Making Darkness Visible: Amazon.co.uk: Lomas, Robert: 9781495449321: Books](#)

What is Life?

By Erwin Schrödinger

Reviewed by Dr Robert Lomas



A few weeks ago, I spotted an interesting article in The American Institute of Physics Advances Journal. It was by Prof Maria Strømme and entitled “Universal consciousness as foundational field: A theoretical bridge between quantum physics and non-dual philosophy”.

Ref: AIP Advances 1 November 2025; 15 (11): 115319. <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0290984>

Prof Strømme puts forward the intriguing hypothesis that consciousness is not an emergent property of the brain but a fundamental field underlying reality itself. She bridges quantum physics and non-dual philosophy suggesting that space, time, and matter arise from this universal consciousness rather than the other way around. She has confronted the massive elephant that forages in the hinterlands

of every quantum physicist's moments of idle speculation. We know that self-aware consciousness creates a past for a previously unobserved particle when viewed with intent in the present. But most of us, me included, tend to suspect that consciousness arises from the evolution of self-awareness which in turn prompts observation which creates a past which allows our present to exist. {at this point I remind you the Neils Bohr once said "If you aren't confused by quantum mechanics then you don't' understand it.]

Strømme says in her Introduction "The pursuit of understanding consciousness has often been marked by a division between materialist science and metaphysical philosophy. Modern scientific approaches, rooted in materialism, tend to view consciousness as a by-product of neural processes. While this perspective has yielded incredible insights, it often overlooks the wisdom of metaphysical traditions that regard consciousness as the primary, universal foundation of existence." She goes on to say that various strands of mysticism share a common understanding that consciousness is universal, eternal, and foundational to the nature of reality.

This reminded of Schrödinger's wonderful little book, *What is Life?*. As I read on she noted, "Schrödinger argued that consciousness is singular and indivisible, proposing a profound connection between the observer and the observed. However, these perspectives have largely remained philosophical, leaving a gap in their integration with modern scientific methods."

When I finished reading Strømme's paper, which I greatly enjoyed and recommend for you also to read, I took down my copy of *What is Life?* and re-read it. I so enjoyed revisiting it that I decided to write a review for CQ, to encourage any seeker after the Truth of the Centre to read it.

Erwin Schrödinger's *What is Life?* was published in 1944, and was a groundbreaking exploration of how physics and chemistry interact with biology. He put forward one of the earliest theoretical frameworks for understanding genetic inheritance, and inspired later discoveries, especially the DNA double helix. In this book Schrödinger asks what seems to be a simple question. "*How can the events inside a living organism be explained by physics and chemistry?*"

Over six chapters he develops the idea that that hereditary information must be stored in an "aperiodic crystal," a structure stable enough to preserve information yet flexible enough to allow variation. This was a prescient description of DNA before its structure was known. This hypothetical crystal turned out to be DNA. He also suggested that life maintains order by feeding on "negative entropy," a concept that inspired later advances in thermodynamics and information theory.

Chapter 1 - discusses how living organisms can maintain order and complexity while the physical world tends toward disorder (entropy)? He introduces the paradox of life as "order from order," contrasting it with the statistical laws of physics that usually produce "order from disorder".

Chapter 2 - explores how traits are passed from one generation to the next. Schrödinger proposes that heredity must be encoded in a stable molecular structure, which he calls an "aperiodic crystal." This anticipates the discovery of DNA as the carrier of genetic information

Chapter 3 – explores the effects of mutations. He discusses how small changes in the hereditary material can lead to mutations. He emphasizes that these changes must be rare but stable, providing the raw material for evolution. This reasoning links quantum mechanics to biological variation.

Chapter 4 - he applies quantum theory to biology, and suggests that the stability of genetic material arises from quantum mechanics. He argues that the precision of heredity cannot be explained by classical physics alone, but requires quantum-level stability.

Chapter 5 – now he uses Max Delbrück's work in genetics, emphasising that genes are physical structures carrying information and not just chemical entities but information codes that direct biological processes.

Chapter 6 – this is where he develops the concept of negative entropy suggesting that organisms maintain order by importing energy and structure from their environment, resisting the natural drift toward disorder.

It is an inspirational read which weaves physics, chemistry, and biology into one audacious hypothesis that life is sustained by stable, information-rich molecules that defy entropy through quantum mechanics. This “aperiodic crystal” concept directly inspired Watson and Crick's discovery of DNA's double helix.

To make this easier to follow for a Mason, I will stray for a moment into Masonic symbolism. Schrödinger's aperiodic crystal recalls the perfect ashlar, the stone shaped by human hands to embody order, proportion, and permanence. Schrödinger's crystal is nature's ashlar, cut not by masons but by the laws of physics, yet serving the same function: to preserve form against chaos. His vision is architectural, a physics of heredity that builds the temple of life living stone by living stone, atom by atom.

Maria Strømme, by contrast, begins not with the stone but with the light. Her theory that consciousness precedes matter, space, and time is a reversal of Schrödinger's materialism. In her cosmology, the universe is not a temple built of stones but a field of awareness, a luminous presence from which stones, temples, and crystals emerge under the creative power of self-aware observation..

This resonates with our Masonic metaphor of initiation by the perception of light. Where Schrödinger's crystal is the ashlar, Strømme's consciousness is the blazing star, the source of illumination that makes the temple meaningful. For her, death is not the crumbling of the stone but the return of the spark to the universal flame.

Both of these inspirational studies of the hidden mysteries of nature and science offer different paths to the Centre.

In Schrödinger's Path: Order is carved into matter. Life resists entropy by feeding on negative entropy, maintaining its crystalline architecture.

In Strømme's Path: Order flows from consciousness. Matter itself is a manifestation of awareness, a temporary ripple in the eternal field.

Considered together these visions echo Boaz and Jachin the dual pillars of the temple. Schrödinger stands on the kingly pillar of Boaz, Strømme on the priestly spiritual pillar of Jachin. Between them lies the threshold of mystery: the question of whether life is a machine that produces mind, or a mind that produces the machine.

Schrödinger's *What is Life?* is an architect's blueprint of a crystalline ashlar to inspire molecular biology. Strømme's theory is one of initiatory light, a speculative but profound, and mathematically plausible, attempt to place consciousness at the foundation stone of reality.

Together, these two essays form a dialogue between stone and star, matter and mind, entropy and awareness. I suggest that any Fellowcraft Mason will benefit from reading both of them with an open mind.

Let me leave you with two thoughts.

One is from Schrödinger who argued that God cannot be sought in material things, because science's material picture deliberately omits values, consciousness, and the divine. He also said "Consciousness cannot be accounted for in physical terms. For consciousness is absolutely fundamental. It cannot be accounted for in terms of anything else."

And the other from Strømme, also concerns consciousness. She thinks that individual consciousness can be accounted for as a temporary excitation of a universal field. This aligns with spiritual teachings that describe death not as annihilation but as a return to unity. This non-dual perspective alleviates existential anxieties surrounding death and selfhood, encouraging a deeper sense of peace, purpose, and collective responsibility.

Brethren read and enjoy.

[What is Life? \(Canto Classics\): Wit Mind and Matter and Autobiographical Sketches: Amazon.co.uk: Schrodinger, Erwin: 8601419978748: Books](#)

Notes About Contributors

Bro Chris Eyre. Associate Member of Coronation Lodge

Chris was born 24th June – in the Feast of St John the Baptist and was ordained as Brother Christopher James Eyre on 11th July 2024, with themonastery.org

He studied at King's School Pontefract 1984-88, and Wakefield College, receiving a diploma in IT and also Electronic Engineering 1988-89. Shortly after he started work at ICL Wakefield, and has stayed in IT ever since, from support to sales, and also management, working in 'cyber security' before it even had a name. He's worked for big brand names like Insight, NCC, ECSC, and also for vendors such as SmoothWall, and Computer Associates (CA).

Bro. Chris is Senior Deacon at St. Oswald Lodge No. 910 in Pontefract, for which he joined in June 2014, being raised on the 21st of October 2015, and was further exalted on 11th December 2024. He is also a member of St. John 280 in Coldstream, and a Companion of Hirsel and Duns SGRAC Chapter No.466.

Chris is passionate about preserving British and Masonic history, and has started to preserve some of his Mother Lodge's history, using Large format scanners and 3D rendering, Here are some examples:

[Hughan Masonic Manuscript – By Bro. William Watson – Dedicated to T. W. Tew \(Our Founding Master\)](#)

[St. Oswald's Church, Heavenfield, Northumberland](#)

His pastimes are Scuba Diving, Computers, 3D Scanning, 3D Printing, Astronomy, Esoteric Freemasonry, Freemasonry history.

WBRO Dr David Harrison – Assistant Secretary of Coronation Lodge 2927

W. Bro. Dr David Harrison gained his initial degree in Welsh History and Archaeology at the University of Wales, Bangor, in 1997, and went on to gain an MA in 2000, and then a PhD in 2008, both at the University of Liverpool. Harrison also gained a Certificate of Education from the University of Manchester in 2000. He has worked as a history lecturer for the University of Liverpool, University of Hope, Liverpool and the University of Manchester, and as a project coordinator for various History groups around Liverpool and Merseyside.

Harrison has had 15 works published on the history of Freemasonry and Fraternalism and has had numerous academic papers and letters published on the subject in various journals. His works include The Genesis of Freemasonry (2009), which was Harrison's PhD thesis, The Lost Rites and Rituals of Freemasonry (2017), The Rite of Seven Degrees (2021) and his most recent work The Life and Death of John Yarker.

He became a Freemason in Cheshire in 1998 and is a Past Master of the Lodge of Lights no.148 in West Lancashire. He is also a member of Quatuor Coronati Lodge No2076

David is currently Assistant Secretary of Coronation Lodge and Co-Editor of the Quarterly Journal of Coronation Lodge, *Coronatio Quadrans* or *CQ* for short.

www.dr-david-harrison.com

WBro John Karran – Secretary of Coronation Lodge 2927

John was born in Liverpool, is an Oil and Gas Consultant and has been married to Sheila for over 40 years with three grown up children and three grandchildren.

He became a Freemason in 1985 and was initiated into Eureka Lodge No 3763 in Bootle. After some years living abroad, on his return he joined Starkie Lodge in the Southport Group in 2006 and became its Worshipful Master in 2013. He became acting Provincial Grand Steward in 2015, and Master of the Provincial Stewards Lodge, Quingenti Lodge No 8516, in 2017.

John was Acting Provincial Grand Senior Warden of the Province of West Lancashire in 2017 and was exalted into North Meols Chapter No 5828 in 2000, installed as First Principal in 2017 and became Acting Provincial Grand Steward in Royal Arch in 2021. He is also a member of Provincial Stewards Chapter.

He is Secretary of Mersey College in the SRIA and their Provincial Director of Studies. He is active in many other Masonic Orders, in the Ancient and Accepted Rite (Rose Croix) where he has attained the 30th degree and is a Acting Officer of Red Cross of Constatine. Has been in both KT & KTP Chairs and is a Mark PM and with acting rank in Red Cross of Constatine plus is in many others including Royal Order of Scotland. As is clear from his CV, John has a strong interest in the esoteric and mystical side to Freemasonry.

Bro Dr Robert Lomas – Mentor of Coronation Lodge 2927

Robert is a British author, physicist, and retired Fellow in Operations Management from the Bradford University School of Management. He holds a First-Class Honours degree in Electronic Engineering and a PhD for research into the quantum properties of solid-state physics and crystalline structures from the University of Salford. He has worked as a consultant on command-and-control systems for various weapons systems, and the emergency services. Before he retired, he lectured on Information Systems, Statistics, and Computer Security at Bradford.

He remains among the longest standing members of The Lodge of Living Stones, where he is organist, and has also benefited from that lodges' resources to study the work and philosophy of founder Walter Leslie Wilmshurst which he strongly promotes.

Robert is currently Mentor of Coronation Lodge and Co-Editor of the Quarterly Journal, *Coronatio Quadrans* or *CQ* for short.

www.robertlomas.com

www.WebofHiram.org

X: [@Dr_Robert_Lomas](https://twitter.com/Dr_Robert_Lomas)

WBro Peter Maguire- Coronation Lodge 2927

Pete is a fourth-generation Freemason who attended Christmas parties as a child at the Masonic Hall on Hunter Street, Chester. He joined Westminster Lodge No. 7532 in February 2005 and was installed as Master in 2013. Due to work, he relocated to Rochdale and joined Lodge of Hope No. 54 in October 2016, where he was installed as Master in 2023. He also became a joining member of Coronation Lodge No. 2927. Pete enjoys Freemasonry, particularly the understanding of the Ritual and the esoteric aspects of masonry. He is a member of the Holy Royal Arch and Mark Masonry. Pete can often be found meditating at St Edmund's Church.

WBro Wayne Owens PProvSGD. Associate Member of Coronation Lodge

Wayne is a polymath who was born at a very early age and, quite impressively, has not died yet-something he considers to be a notable achievement. He joined Llannerch Lodge in 2006 and has been deeply involved in Freemasonry ever since. Wayne is a member of Wrexhamian Lodge, the Maesgwyn Lodge of Installed Masters, and the Provincial Grand Stewards Lodge of North Wales.

In 2011, Wayne became the Master of Llannerch Lodge and has spent eleven of the ensuing thirteen years in one chair or another. He is the Secretary of the Maesgwyn Lodge of Installed Masters, and Bishop Wilkins College SRIA.

His commitment to Masonry in North Wales is extensive. He was a founding member of the Widows Sons North Wales chapter, served as the Provincial Webmaster for five years, and has been the Assistant Provincial Mentor since 2021. Additionally, Wayne is an active member of the North Wales Association of Masonic Study, gives talks across several provinces and has done since 2017.

Wayne is also a fervent supporter of the Blood Bikes Wales charity, dedicating his time and effort to this vital cause.

www.wayne-owens.uk

X: @Wayne_Pen_Owens