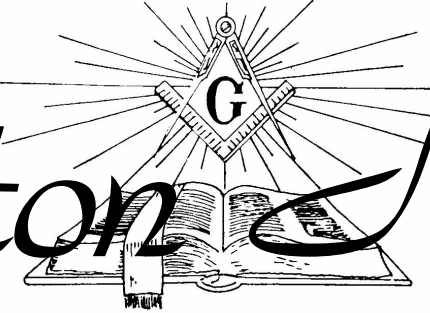


Ashton News



NEWSLETTER OF ASHTON LODGE No 218 OF THE UNITED GRAND LODGE OF QUEENSLAND

Vol 9 No 4

DECEMBER 2003

Meeting on the Level, Parting on the Square

The December meeting will see the closure of many years of Scottish Craft workings held at the South Brisbane Masonic Centre by Ashton Lodge.

The beginnings of Ashton Lodge arose from an application from a number of brethren of Lodge Stanley on Monday, 20th February 1912, recommending a petition for the formation of a Lodge at East Brisbane, which was duly signed in open Lodge by the Rt Wor Master and Wardens.

The first meeting of the Lodge was held on Monday, 11th March, 1912, in the Mowbraytown Presbyterian Hall, until the new Temple in Vulture Street South Brisbane was completed and consecrated on 30th August 1924.

The naming of the Lodge was a recognition of the esteem the brethren of Lodge Stanley had for one of their prominent members, Rt Wor Bro James W Ashton.

James Ashton was a Past District Grand Secretary (Scottish Constitution) Queensland, and Past Honorary Grand Deacon of the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

As well as being Patron of the Lodge, the Right Worshipful Brother was afforded the honour of occupying the Chair as Installation Master of

Ashton Lodge for many years, until ill-health prevented his attendance. Rt Wor Bro J W Ashton died in 1923.

When it became known that a Temple was to be built in Vulture Street South Brisbane, it was decided to make the move from Mobraytown and take out shares in the newly formed South Brisbane Hall Co-operative and conduct meetings on the first Monday of the month.

So the door closed on East Brisbane and opened in South Brisbane.

Now, after almost 80 years of tenancy at South Brisbane, another door is about to close and as we step up to another open door, what does the future hold for us?

At this time, it is unclear as to where we will find a permanent meeting-place.

But be assured that the present membership is determined that we will survive and will go on to greater and bigger things!

At our final meeting, a Third Degree is to be conferred on Bro David Bolingford.

This is an appropriate way to say good-bye to a Temple with so many memories of past ritual workings, given in a unique manner and not emulated by any other Lodge holden under the United Grand Lodge of Queensland. □

Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year



Amos and The Second Degree

*From an article published by the Monitor of the Lodge
of the Grand Lodge of Texas, A.F.&A.M.*

*Amos 7:7 Thus he shewed me:and, behold,
the Lord stood upon a wall made by a
plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand.*

*8 And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what
seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then
said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline
in the midst of my people Israel: I will not
again pass by them any more:*

This is perhaps the least most under- stood and misinterpreted passage of Scripture as it relates to the theme of the Fellowcraft Degree.

Amos was one of the lesser prophets of the Old Testament.

He was a herdsman and tender of fig trees who lived in the territory of Tekoa south of Bethlehem and was sent by God to call the people of Israel to repentance.

He foretold the judgements of God which were to fall on the Syrians, Philistines, Tyrians, Edomites, Moabites and Ammonites.

In this Chapter of Scripture Amos describes a vision shown to him by God.

In this vision God represents to Amos the judgements he is about to bring upon Israel for their many iniquities.

Verses 7 and 8 describe God's illustration to

Amos of His attitude regarding the sins and transgressions of the people of Israel.

The Lord standing upon a wall made by a plumb line signifies the laws and commandments He has communicated to the people of Israel to build them into a just and upright nation.

The plumb line in His hand symbolizes the strict justice He will visit upon them according to their iniquities.

The phrase "I will not again pass by them anymore." is an indication that God will no longer show them any mercy in His administration of justice.

The underlying theme of this Scripture as it applies to the Fellowcraft Degree is to admonish the candidate that he is now crossing the threshold from youth to manhood.

As a man and a loyal member of the Masonic fraternity he will be more strongly bound to the fraternity by strict moral guidelines.

Likewise, as an adult member of society, he will be expected to exemplify the highest standards of behaviour and uphold the civil laws.

As an Entered Apprentice, the candidate was introduced to the most basic moral principles, loyalty, trust and charity, which serve as the foundation upon which to build strong relationships.

His development as a Fellowcraft will expose him to greater responsibilities that require a stronger discipline. □

I recall the kind old grocer,
When the sugar he would pour,
How he'd tip the scale to balance,
Then he'd add - just a little bit more.

My, how his business prospered,
Folks were always at his store,
For he'd give an honest measure,
Then he'd add - just a little more.

The Grocer

* * *

So it is with life, my brother,
We would build a better score;
If, when we've done what is expected,
We'd add --- just a little more.

Religious fundamentalism alive in New South Wales

After the passing of a Resolution directing all Anglicans to cease their association with any Masonic activity, M Wor Bro Tony Lauer, of the United Grand Lodge of New South Wales and ACT immediately issued a Press Release condemning the document.

At the 46th Anglican Synod held on Sydney NSW, on the 20th October, 2003, a Resolution about Freemasonry was introduced by Rev Bill Winthrop of Lithgow, NSW and duly adopted by the Diocesan Synod.

Hereunder is the text of the Resolution:

RESOLUTION 25/03 -

FREEMASONRY

Synod, noting the 1988 Report to Synod entitled "Freemasonry Examined" and subsequent resolution 9/88 of that Synod -

(a) affirms that Freemasonry and Christianity are fundamentally and irreconcilably incompatible, and

(b) affirms that Freemasonry teaches and upholds a system of false religious and spiritual beliefs that are contrary to biblical Christianity.

Synod encourages ministers and other Christians to take every opportunity to reach out in love to all Freemasons and share with them the gospel of Christ.

Synod encourages all Christians who are members of a Masonic Lodge to demonstrate their commitment to Jesus Christ as the divine Son of God and as the sole way of salvation, by withdrawing from the Lodge.

Synod encourages ministers not to participate in, nor allow in their church buildings, any religious services or activities that uphold, condone, promote or encourage adherence to Freemasonry.

Synod requests the Councils of all Anglican Schools to consider any association that their school may have with any Masonic Lodge, and to withdraw from any such association.

Synod further requests that Anglican Schools

neither participate in any activity that may uphold, condone, promote or encourage adherence to Freemasonry, nor give publicity to any such activity, nor allow the name of the school to be used in association with any such activity.

Synod requests Standing Committee to undertake the preparation, production and distribution of a clear and unambiguous booklet suitable for wide distribution, examining the key rites, teachings and beliefs of Freemasonry and explaining why they differ from Biblical Christianity, and explaining why it is wrong for a Christian to belong to the Lodge.

Rev William Winthrop - 20.10.03.

MEDIA STATEMENT

Issued Tuesday 21 October, 2003 by M Wor Bro Tony Lauer, of the United Grand Lodge of New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory.

"THE SYDNEY SYNOD RESOLUTION THAT ANGLICAL FREEMASONS WITHDRAW FROM THE FREEMASONS -- OR FROM ATTENDING THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IS MISCONCEIVED, DISCRIMINATORY AND A BETRAYAL OF ITS FOLLOWERS.

"A resolution proposed by the Reverend William Winthrop of Lithgow that all Anglican Freemasons withdraw from their Lodges OR sever all connections with the Anglican Church, was passed last night by the Diocesan Synod in Sydney.

"The resolution is pure discrimination, smacks of bigotry and religious fundamentalism and is a betrayal of all Freemasons who practice the Anglican Faith, especially since a great percentage of Freemasons throughout the State are Anglicans.

"Furthermore, this a one man vendetta on the

part of Reverend Winthrop, over a local issue and very petty situation that received widespread publicity which occurred in Lithgow last year.

"This resulted in all local Freemasons being publicly not welcomed at the local Anglican Church.

"The stance taken is based on total ignorance and is a misrepresentation of what Freemasonry is all about.

"First and foremost, Freemasonry is tolerant and respectful of all religions and admits all men of good character who have a commitment to self improvement and to serve their community.

"Our one requirement is that they have a belief in God as the "supreme being".

"We do not question their other beliefs.

"We accept members of all faiths as Freemasons, as long as they have this belief.

"Hence many of our Lodge members work within their communities with men of many faiths including Jews, Sikhs, Hindus, Catholics and Muslims.

"I would like to point out to Reverend Winthrop and the Synod, that many high-ranking ministers of religion, including Anglicans, have been — and are — Freemasons.

"I ask Mr Winthrop and the Diocese, whether these men are now to be considered not to be Christians because they are Freemasons.

"Freemasonry teaches tolerance, equality, compassion and brotherly love.

"If Reverend Winthrop's and the Synod's interpretation of "Christianity" disagrees with these teachings, does this mean that the Sydney Anglican Church does not believe in the basic principles of compassion, brotherly love and above all — truth?

"Over the last 200 years Freemasons have played a significant role in shaping the fabric of Australian Society, and have been prominent in all areas of Australia's proud history including politics, commerce, sports, the armed services.

"In fact since Lachlan Macquarie became Governor of New South Wales in 1809, each State has had one or more Governors who were Freemasons.

"Three of Australia's Governors General have been Freemasons as have 10 out of 25 Prime Ministers, since Federation."

"Are these distinguished Australians now to be branded as "non-Christians" by the Anglican Church?

Mr Lauer added that "I would also like to point out that Freemasons in this state alone each year distribute more than \$1,000,000 to non-Masonic worthy causes, community initiatives and charitable organisations — irrespective of their connection to any Church Group.

"The world, as we have come to know it today, is undergoing very alarming, uncertain and chaotic times, fuelled mainly by religious fundamentalism.

"Surely, in this civilised society the church's role is to teach love, compassion, unity and tolerance of one's fellow man, and not to promote division, hatred, alienation and down right bigotry".

-- M Wor Bro Tony Lauer

--Downloaded from *Pietre-Stones Review of Freemasonry*

The significance of the number Seven

The number seven appears to have a special significance in religions throughout the world.

But it is particularly important in religions of Semitic origin – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – which reckons time in periods of seven days.

The seven deadly sins of Christianity were first compiled by Pope Gregory I around the year 600.

They are: Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Envy, Gluttony, Anger and Sloth.

Gregory also compiled a less well-known list of Seven Virtues: Faith, Hope, Charity, Justice, Prudence, Temperance and Fortitude.

The number's religious significance seems to stem from pre-Christian times when it was regarded as a "sacred" or mystical number.

In the 6th century BC, for instance, the followers of the Greek philosopher Pythagoras believed three and four to be lucky numbers – and thought that by adding them together they became even more potent.

QUICK CHANGES OF MIND

Alexander I, Czar of Russia from 1801 to 1825, banned the Craft in Russia in 1801.

He rescinded the order in 1803 and became a Freemason, probably for political reasons; but in 1822 he again banned Freemasonry in Russia.

Why is Christmas on December 25?

By RICHARD N. OSTLING AP Religion Writer

Did you ever wonder why Christmas falls on December 25? After all, the Bible provides no birth date for Jesus.

Or does it? There's a possible clue in Luke 2:8, which says that when Jesus was born shepherds were "out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night." Some figure a wintertime birth was unlikely because sheep would have been kept in a corral, not out in the countryside.

However, others report winter shepherding in open fields in the Holy Land, meaning we can't fix the season of the year, much less the date, from Scripture. Why, then, December 25?

The most popular explanation is probably wrong, Andrew McGowan, a historian at Episcopal Divinity School in Massachusetts, says in the December 2002 issue of Bible Review magazine.

That popular view notes that in A.D. 274, the Roman Emperor Aurelian established December 25 to celebrate the advent of Sol Invictus (the Unconquered Sun) near the point when days start getting longer. (The year's least sunny point, or winter solstice, comes around Dec. 21 by modern reckoning.)

Therefore, the theory goes, the Christians fixed their own great birthday observance to borrow from, and challenge, the pagan holiday.

Sounds plausible, but McGowan is convinced the choice actually stemmed from Judaism, not pagan competition.

For one thing, ancient writings give no support for the theory. Also, there's no evidence that early Christians celebrated Jesus' birthday at all. Some second-century Christian authors mocked the pagans for holding such birthday festivals.

Nor is there any proof that Christians were adapting pagan festivals in the century during which December 25 became established. Quite the contrary, McGowan says.

He finds the connection highly unlikely because up to the last violent attacks on Christianity under the Roman Emperor Diocletian (A.D. 303 and 312), "the persecuted Christian minority was greatly concerned with distancing itself from the larger, public pagan religious observances."

Adaptation of pagan dates and themes didn't begin until later in the fourth century, after

Christianity won toleration from the empire, he says. The high point came under Pope Gregory "the Great" (reigning A.D. 590-604).

The first claim we know about concerning Christians deliberately setting Christmas to coincide with the pagan date was written in the 12th century, in a marginal note to a Bible commentary. The paganism theory became fashionable among scholars in the 18th and 19th centuries when the new field of comparative religion arose, McGowan says.

The earliest surviving mention of December 25 for Christmas occurs in a Roman almanac that Bible chronology expert Jack Finegan dated at A.D. 354, with a probable earlier edition produced in A.D. 336.

In A.D. 386, a sermon by Syria's John Chrysostom said December 25 had been observed there for less than a decade but far longer among western Europeans.

Finegan said that Christians writing in earlier times listed all sorts of supposed dates for the Nativity, including (by modern calculation) Jan. 6 or 10, April 18 or 19, May 20 or 21, and November 18.

McGowan favors the Jewish explanation, developed by Thomas Talley in "Origins of the Liturgical Year" (1991).

The New Testament records that Jesus was crucified during the spring Jewish Passover. And Jewish tradition held that great things were expected to occur "again and again, at the same time of the year," McGowan writes.

By this sort of ancient thinking, if Jesus died in spring he must have been conceived in that same season, with the birth date coming nine months later.

Eventually, the traditional liturgical calendar marked the Annunciation (Gabriel's revelation to Mary of her holy pregnancy) on March 25, followed in nine months by Christmas on December 25 - or April 7 and January 6 in the calendar of the Armenian Church.

(Another calendar complication: Many tradition-minded Orthodox churches in eastern Europe reject the common Gregorian calendar set by the papacy and retain ancient Rome's Julian calendar; with the 13-day difference, their Christmas isn't December 25 but January 7.) □



COMMONWEALTH COAT OF ARMS

The shield is the central feature of a grant of arms. It contains certain distinguishing marks which have had a long and close association with heraldry.

The term 'coat of arms' refers to the custom in the 11th to 15th centuries of displaying the arms on a tunic or coat worn over armour.

The crest, placed originally on the helmet of a knight to identify him in battle, was attached beneath a wreath originally of twisted silk in two colours.

These colours have since been regarded as the livery colours of the arms. Both the crest and the supporters, which are on either side of the shield, are accessories to the arms.

It is proper that an authority performing the duties of government should bear the dignities and traditional rights of its office; including the right to bear symbols of its honour and authority.

The Commonwealth Coat of Arms was granted by the Sovereign and fulfils these traditional purposes. It is an emblem signifying the national unity of Australia and serves as a sign of identity and authority.

1908 Arms The first official Coat of Arms granted to the Commonwealth of Australia was made by King Edward VII in a Royal Warrant of 7 May 1908.

The Arms were composed of a simple shield of white and blue enclosing a cross of Saint George on which there were five six-pointed white stars, around the outside of which were six small escutcheons, i.e., small shields.

The shield was supported by a kangaroo and an emu standing on a grassy mound.

Above the shield was the crest containing the seven-pointed gold star of Federation on a wreath of white and blue.

The motto 'Advance Australia' was inscribed at the base.

1912 Arms The absence of specific references to the States in the shield in the 1908 Arms led to a number of alterations approved on the recommendation of the Commonwealth Government by King George V in a Royal Warrant of 19 September 1912.

The new design included a shield with six parts each containing a representation of the badge of

a State. The positions and attitudes of the supporters were also changed. The colours of the wreath of the crest were altered to gold and blue. These are the 'livery' colours of the Arms.

The new Arms were accompanied by small branches of wattle, ornamental rests for the supporters, and a scroll with the word 'Australia' - none of which are actually mentioned in the 1912 Royal Warrant.

The Arms must always be reproduced correctly and where possible in colour.

However, if colour is not appropriate the Arms may be reproduced in stylised form as a line drawing, e.g. in black and white, silver, gold or as a mould or bas-relief.

Use of the Arms The Coat of Arms is used by the Commonwealth to identify its authority and property.

The Arms belong to the Commonwealth and, in general, are for official use only.

Use of the Arms by private persons and organisations is seldom permitted since it is contrary to their essential meaning, may constitute a possible debasement of the Arms and may give rise to indiscriminate use.

The association of the Arms with a trade, business, calling or profession is not normally permitted.

Sporting and competitive representatives sponsored by their national controlling body may receive permission to wear the Coat of Arms on their uniforms, with the name and date of the event shown immediately beneath the Arms, when competing in officially recognised international events.

Private persons and organisations may display the Arms as a decorative feature on particular national occasions, e.g. Coronations, Royal Visits, and Jubilee celebrations, provided it is not a permanent feature.

Use of the Arms may be permitted on permanent souvenirs of a particular event, e.g. the Royal Visit of 1988.

Publishers of encyclopaedia and reference, educational and heraldry books may be granted permission in certain circumstances.

In no circumstances should the Coat of Arms be used by private persons and organisations without prior approval of the appropriate Commonwealth authorities.

Significance of the Coat of Arms The design of the 1912 Coat of Arms is of special significance, and each element, for example the colours, crest, wreath and border, has a special significance.

The Coat of Arms consists of a shield composed of 'quarters' representing the six States of the Commonwealth enclosed by an ermine border.

The quarters provide a place for each of the States on the shield.

Devices representing the six States are arranged in two rows on the shield.

From left to right in the top row are the devices of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland (Quarters 1, 2 and 3) and in the bottom row are the devices of South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania (Quarters 4, 5 and 6).

Extending the hand of friendship

When disaster struck in the form of a catastrophic volcanic eruption on the island of Rabaul in October, 1994, the Masonic community of this town found itself without a meeting place.

The ash that fell over the town was first reported to be 20-25 cm (8-10 inches) deep, and it later was as much as 75 cm deep (about two feet).

Heavy rains turned the ash into mud that finally dried to be nearly as hard as cement. The roofs of many buildings collapsed from the weight of the ash.

Since that fateful day, Rabaul Lodge has found new premises, but furnishing the lodge room became a big problem.

So when the call went out for assistance, the President of the Kedron Masonic Centre **John Stopford**, was quick to offer assistance by getting permission from his committee to donate furnishings from the array of duplicated items stored in the Kedron Centre.

The furnishings included Wardens' Chairs, Pillars, Pedestals, Columns and Tracing Boards.

In fact, just about all that is required to furnish a Lodge Room was found!

This October, arrangements were made for the furnishings to be placed into a shipping container and by now the brethren of Rabaul Lodge should be enjoying the "hand of friendship" from the brethren of the Kedron Masonic Centre. □

The ermine border signifies the federation of the States into the Commonwealth.

The Crest of the Arms is a seven-pointed gold star symbolic of national unity on a gold and blue wreath, which is a traditional element represented as a twisted ribbon or Torse of the two alternate colours gold and blue.

A star of six points was originally chosen to represent the six States but a seventh point was added to represent the territories of the Commonwealth before the design was finalised.

This seven-pointed star is also used on the Australian National Flag and is termed the Commonwealth Star.

The supporters, the kangaroo and the emu, are two typical Australian creatures which were also included in the 1908 Arms.

Both are indigenous to Australia and are regarded as suitable for heraldry, design and reproduction uses.

Although the Royal Warrant did not indicate a species of kangaroo, that depicted on the original painting is assumed to be the Red Kangaroo (*Megaleia rufa*) which is the widest distributed species on the continent.

The emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) and the kangaroo, as typical Australian fauna, further identify the Arms as being exclusively Australian.

Usually the Arms are depicted with branches of wattle tied with ribbon, emblematic of Australia, and with a scroll having the word 'Australia' at the base.

Welcome to new member

At the October meeting, Wor Bro Len Norman was afforded the pleasure of obligating Bro Zultan Patrick Swain as an Affiliate of the Lodge.

Zultan was initiated into Commonwealth of Australia Lodge No 633 in Canberra, ACT and took an active interest in his Lodge, as Inner Guard until his transfer to Queensland early this year.

In his reply to the Affiliate's toast proposed at the Festive Board, Zultan spoke of his quest to join a Brisbane Lodge by visiting the Grand Lodge Library expressing a wish to see a Scottish Lodge at work.

The Grand Librarian immediately made a call to the basement of the building where Len Norman just happened to be.

The rest is history!

Zultan visited several other Lodges but chose to join Ashton because he was impressed with the friendliness and camaraderie within the Lodge.

Church Information Bulletin Boards

When you're spreading God's word, it's important to pay attention to commas and spelling and proper phrasing.

If you don't, you may end up saying something other than what you really intended.

The following are excerpts from church bulletins nationwide.

Who needs professional comedians when everyday folks are just as humorous?

Preach it!

The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What Is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Suffer the little children

Our youth basketball team is back in action Wednesday at 8 p.m. in the recreation hall. Come out and watch us kill Christ the King.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's "Hamlet" in the church basement on Friday at 7 p.m. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

The Power of Prayer:

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community.

Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say "Hell" to someone who doesn't care much about you.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.

After the worship service.

This evening at 7 p.m. there will be a hymn sing in the park across from the church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa, will be speaking tonight at Calvary Methodist. Come hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.

A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

Announcement at a national Prayer and Fasting Conference:

"The cost for attending the Fasting and Prayer Conference includes meals."

The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict.

Ladies, Ladies:

The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands.

Choir Practice:

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

Miss Charlene Mason sang "I will not pass this way again," giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

The rector will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing "Break Forth Into Joy."

Which Door Do I Use?

The Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 p.m. Please use the back door.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

The Members of the Congregation:

Barbara remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of Pastor Jack's sermons.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24th in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

No Good Deed Will Go Unpunished

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

The associate minister unveiled the church's new tithing campaign slogan last Sunday: "I Upped My Pledge - Up Yours."

Who says church is boring?