

Ashton News

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

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Heritage listing lifted on Vulture St Temple

It was recently announced that the Heritage Listing placed on the Vulture Street Temple has been lifted by the Brisbane City Council, which will now clear the path for the demolition of the whole of the South Brisbane Masonic Centre.

Originally when the site was offered for sale by the South Brisbane Hall Co-operative Society, it was made known to any intending purchaser that the Co-Operative would object to any Heritage Listing being imposed on the buildings.

Accordingly, the Brisbane City Council, in line with their policy of retaining buildings of historic value within the suburbs of West End and Woolloongabba placed a Listing on the Lodge Room only, not the Festive Board.

This decision was made on the Council's decision to try and retain worthwhile buildings built before circa 1930.

The Festive Board was not constructed until the late 1950s.

The purchaser of our buildings asked that the Hall Committee maintain the objection so that they could continue to object to the listing by the Brisbane City Council, and upon an appeal, had the Heritage Listing lifted.

The City Council sponsor a walking trail which explores the former City of South Brisbane, (which was declared in 1903) and was the second city in Queensland's south east.

Among the sites featured are the imposing Town Hall, the Mater Hospital precinct, the former South Brisbane Library building, the imposing facade on what was once the Bank of New South Wales, the Princess Theatre and the Stanley Street retail heart.

All of these historic sites are in close proximity to the South Brisbane Masonic Centre.

The settlement date for the sale of the site cannot be finalised until the Constitution of the South Brisbane Hall Co-operative is changed.

One of the clauses states (in layman's language) that the Co-operative is to act on behalf of shareholder Lodges who meet at the South Brisbane Masonic Centre.

Because there will no longer be a Hall in which to meet, the Co-operative as it now operates, will become redundant.

An application has been lodged with the Office of Fair Trading for approval to manage the proceeds of the sale by the Hall Committee, to support in the future, existing Lodges presently tenants of South Brisbane, by changing the Constitution of the Co-operative to achieve that objective.

There is a lot of work now to be done to make this sale beneficial to all members and one way to help would be to offer your expertise by taking up a directorship of the Hall Committee.

These positions are open to all members of all Lodges meeting in Vulture Street □

When driving becomes a complicated matter

After getting all Pope John-Paul II's luggage in the limo (and His Holiness doesn't travel light), the driver notices that the Pope is still standing on the curb.

"Excuse me, Your Eminence," says the driver, "Would you please take your seat so we can leave?"

"Well, to tell you the truth," says the Pope, "They never let me drive at the Vatican, and I'd really like to drive today."

"I'm sorry but I cannot let you do that. I'd lose my job! And what if something should happen?" protests the driver, wishing he'd never gone to work that morning.

"There might be something extra in it for you," says the Pope.

Reluctantly, the driver gets in the back as the Pope climbs in behind the wheel. The driver quickly regrets his decision when, after exiting the airport, the Supreme Pontiff floors it, accelerating the limo to 180 kph.

"Please slow down, Your Holiness!" pleads the worried driver, but the Pope keeps the pedal to the metal until they hear sirens.

"Oh, wonderful. Now I'm really gonna lose my licence," moans the driver.

The Pope pulls over and rolls down the window as the patrolman approaches, but the cop takes one look at him, goes back to his motorcycle, and gets on the radio.

"I need to talk to the Chief," says the dispatcher.

The Chief goes on the radio and the cop tells him that he's stopped a limo going one hundred and eighty.

"So bust him," says the Chief.

"I don't think we want to do that – he's really important," says the cop.

"What'd ya got there, the Mayor?"

"Bigger."

"The Govenor?"

"Bigger."

"Well, " says the Chief, "Who is it?"

"I think it's God!"

"What makes you think it's God?"

"Well, He's got the Pope driving for Him."

June set to be our PMs' Night

This year, the month of June has been set aside for Past Masters of the Lodge to conduct a Second Degree ceremony within the Lodge Room.

Wor Bro Tom Blackwell has consented to occupy the Chair of Master, and has personally selected his team for the evening.

Bro David Bolingford is the candidate, and Tom has selected Len Norman as his Senior Warden and Peter Casper, Junior Warden.

Harry Crane, Director of Ceremonies and Ted Ross as Chaplain.

Senior and Junior Deacons are Alec Stevens and Keith Herbert, with Bert Phin as Inner Guard and Doug Kantor the Tyler.

Charges from the floor will be delivered by Alan Kingston, Ted Lowe, Bert Phin and Ossie Ehms.

Although throughout the year, past Masters are often called upon to give Charges and fill vacant Chairs, this particular night gives them the opportunity to once again engage fully in the night's proceedings. □

Welcome to two new members

There were 33 brethren (18 members and 15 visitors) in attendance at the April meeting to witness the Initiation of David Bolingford and Affiliation of Dion Dewar.

David was introduced into the Lodge by Ricky Beecroft, our Junior Deacon. They are both employed by the same company.

Dion, a fifth year medical student, is a member of the armed forces and at present is doing an internship at the Royal Brisbane Hospital.

Originally from North Queensland, Dion spent time in Victoria where he was initiated into St Clair No 43 UGLV, and upon being transferred to Brisbane, expressed an interest in joining a Scottish Lodge and made application to join Ashton.

Both Brothers are heartily welcomed by the members and we wish them a long and prosperous stay with us. □

Order of the Knights Templar suffered from French

On the evening of March 18th 1314, the Grand Master of the Knights Templar, Jacques de Molay, was cruelly burned to death on a small island in the Seine, in Paris.

Sharing his pain and death was the Templar Preceptor of Normandy, Geoffroy de Charney. It was the last brutal act in an enigmatic drama.

The dramatic events had begun seven years earlier when, at dawn on 13th October 1307, the king of France ordered all the Templars in his domains to be arrested on a series of charges drawn up by the Inquisition.

The knights were taken, locked up, charged and for the most part, tortured.

A number died as a result of this ill treatment and, over the next seven years, a hundred or so Templars were burned alive.

This sudden move against the wealthiest and most powerful military Order in the world had been carefully planned.

During the summer of 1307 the king of France, Philippe le Bel, had sent a letter to his regional seneschals ordering them to secretly investigate all holdings of the Knights Templar and prepare to move against them when the command should come.

A month or two passed.

The Grand Master, accompanied by a large entourage and much of his treasure, came to France from his headquarters in Cyprus and was resident in Paris.

The Templars' fame was at prodigious heights and its treasure vast -- just the holdings in Normandy had a greater income than that of the King of England.

Suddenly, the French king's men struck. They

wished to destroy the Order and confiscate their treasure and lands which could then be passed to a jealous and greedy French Crown.

Or so was the theory. In fact it was not quite like that.

A quick look at the Inquisition records reveal that no treasure was ever found. Where it went and who ultimately benefited from it, remains a mystery to this day.

One arrested Templar spoke mysteriously of a Brother leaving the Paris Temple, some days before the arrests, taking with him all the treasure held there.



Certainly no money was found in any of the preceptories or castles seized.

The lists of goods taken by the Inquisition are noteworthy for their tedium and lack of value.

The records reveal too that it was mostly the old and the young who were arrested.

Indeed, a survey of the manpower of the Templars before the arrests, and the numbers arrested, shows a shortfall of just over a thousand militarily active members.

The suspicion arises that the Templar leadership had advance warning of the cataclysm which was to befall them.

The military and financial strength of the Templars seemed to have simply melted away.

Much has been written on the fate of the Templars and the Treasure.

English records reveal that at least some English Templars fled to Scotland undoubtedly to join Robert Bruce.

Others may have joined these few for there was a sea route, safe from English ships, leading from France via the west of Ireland.

In France itself, Templars may have hidden in

the hills -- one document claims over a thousand in the south.

Others may have fled north to Germany or south to Spain, Portugal or Italy, or even over to Hungary where the Order held some castles.

No documents shed any light on this mysterious disappearance.

All those who were arrested -- in France, a total of 620 knights, sergeants, priests and clerks -- were imprisoned.

But they were nominally under the "protection" of the Pope and seemed to have believed, initially, that they were pawns in some political shake-up which they would have to ride through before being released.

However, disillusionment soon set in, especially once Templars began to be tortured; and began to die from those tortures.

Suddenly it seemed as though the Order had been abandoned by the very man they thought would save them, the Pope.

In prison the pressure began to tell: Templars confessed, then withdrew those confessions. Moves were made to seek some redress from the infamy of their incarceration.

In 1308 the Pope, a weak and ill man, dominated by the French king, found some personal courage and agreed to meet with a group of the Templar commanders who would present the case for their innocence.

In February, he suspended the Inquisition. In June, seventy-two Templars were transported to Poitiers by the king to testify before the Pope; between 29 June and 2 July they did so.

But under pressure they all confessed to the charges, horrifying the Pope. But none of the Templar leaders were amongst these men.

In August 1308 some sixty high Templar officials -- all mature men and leaders -- each of whom had spent a minimum of twenty-eight years in the Order, were taken from various prisons in France and brought to the castle of Chinon, on the Loire, not far from Poitiers.

They included the Grand Master himself, Jaques de Molay, the financial head of the Order, Hugues de Pairaud, and the preceptors of Cyprus, Normandy and Poitou and Aquitaine.

Finally, between 17 - 20 August 1308, they were interrogated by three Cardinals specially sent there by the Pope who was staying some miles away near Poitiers.

Unusually, these interrogations apparently were



Jacques de Molay

not recorded; there is no official transcript of the proceedings -- a curiosity at a time when all was meticulously noted down by scribes.

All we know about the hearings comes from a letter written by the Cardinals to the King of France.

Collectively the Templar leaders all pleaded guilty to the charges.

A misguided action which reveals a pathetic confidence in the power of the Pope to save them and the Order.

But at Chinon, having accepted the charges and the guilt, having abjured their heresy, they were reconciled with the Church. They must have hoped that this would be the end of their imprisonment and ill-treatment.

But they were tragically mistaken. They were later to regret their confessions and to proclaim their innocence.

All these Templar leaders were locked up in the prison tower in the castle of Chinon.

It is no surprise then to find that they covered some of the walls of the tower with graffiti, scratched into the stone by whatever hard implements they could obtain.

But this graffiti is enigmatic. No one has provided an explanation of it.

Neither do most of the images find a correspondence in the official symbolism of the Church of the time.

We can see such images as geometrical grids, a heart crucified on a calvary cross, a flower growing out of a heart, the Hermetic six-pointed star of two triangles (now the Star of David) and others.

In the end the Pope refused to exonerate the Templars or keep them out of the control of the French king.

They were returned to their prisons, some disillusioned, some still defiant.

In 1310 over five hundred Templars joined together to proclaim their innocence.

For a while they sensed that success could come. But on 12 May 1310, fifty-four were quickly taken and burned alive outside Paris. All died denying the charges made against them.

More were soon burned; resistance finally crumbled. The end was inevitable, the Order of the Temple had been abandoned by history.

It remained only to be destroyed.

On March 18th, 1314 De Molay was led out before the people to publicly confess his and the order's sins. He recanted his earlier confessions and said the only crime he was guilty of was lying about his Brethren to relieve his own tortures. He was then taken to an island on the Siene and burned along with Geoffrey de Charney the Preceptor of Normandy.

There are many accounts of De Molay's dying words, but the 19th century historian, Charles Addison; perhaps one of the foremost Templar scholars records them as follows:

"To say that which is untrue is a crime both in the sight of God and man.

Not one of us has betrayed his God or his country.

I do confess my guilt, which consists in having, to my shame and dishonour, suffered myself, through the pain of torture and the fear of death, to give utterance to falsehoods imputing scandalous sins and iniquities to an illustrious Order, which hath nobly served the cause of Christianity.

I disdain to seek a wretched and disgraceful existence by engrafting another lie upon the original falsehood."

But the legends and mysteries of the Templars have never faded.

For there seems to have been real fire beneath the great cloud of smoke which continued to billow down through the centuries however much some historians would like to wish it away. □

The Wild Scotsman

Submitted by V Wor Bro Ted Lowe

The 'Wild Colonial Boy' and the 'Wild Irishman' had a counterpart in colonial Queensland in the very early years of this State.

His name was **James McPherson**, and during his life he was known as the 'Wild Scotsman'.

James McPherson was a member of an early Queensland family, an exemplary youth, being apprenticed to John Petrie, a builder of Fortitude Valley.

The life story of Charles Lilley, MP, gives an account of Lilley being saved from lynching by a riotous mob on two occasions when he tried to bring in the most unpopular Militia Bill.

The person who saved his life was James McPherson.

McPherson went shearing with two men of dubious character and his first recorded brush with the law was the accidental shooting of H R Willis at the Cardington Hotel, near Bowen, in 1864.

He fled to New South Wales where he joined the notorious Frank Gardiner and other bushrangers.

He was caught and was to be extradited to Bowen, but escaped from custody and resumed his bushranging activities.

McPherson was next captured on Monduran Station, near Gin Gin on March 30, 1866 and was put on trial.

Interestingly, Charles Lilley was by that time the Queensland Attorney General.

He was sentenced to two terms of 25 years penal servitude and sent to the prison at St Hellena Island in Moreton Bay but was released after eight years following petitions from his father and prominent members of the community.

During his years on St Helena, McPherson wrote poetry in English, Latin and Chinese, which gives an amazing insight into his character, mind and education.

After his release he married and he and his wife had seven children, and it is reported that he belatedly lived a most respectable life until his death following a fall from a horse in Burketown in 1895.

The town of Gin Gin holds a "Wild Scotsman Captured Celebrations" each year in March.

This narrative gives an insight into the travel undertaken in colonial Queensland considering that Brisbane was not linked to Cairns by railway until 1921.

Steamer traffic along the Queensland coastal ports was considerable, but most inland travel had to be undertaken by coach or horseback and sometimes even by foot.

It is heartening that an otherwise exemplary youth who strayed from righteousness, with the support of his family and others redeemed himself in later life. □

Court by the Tongue

By "Net Nancy" and submitted by V Wor Bro Ted Ross

Lawyers are supposed to be among the best and brightest of the professional world. Then again Following are statements that both lawyers and witnesses have actually uttered in court, taken down word for word (apparently). It makes you wonder!

Q: What is your date of birth?

A: July fifteenth.

Q: What year?

A: Every year.

Q: *What gear were you in at the moment of the impact?*

A: *Gucci sweats and Reeboks.*

Q: This 'myasthemia gravis', does it affect your memory?

A: I forget.

Q: You forget? Can you give us an example of something that you've forgotten?

Q: *How old is your son, the one living with you?*

A: *Thirty-eight or thirty-five, I can't remember which.*

Q: *How long has he lived with you?*

A: *Forty-five years.*

Q: What was the first thing your husband said to you when he woke up that morning?

A: He said, "Where am I Cathy?"

Q: And why did that upset you?

A: My name is Susan.

Q: *Now doctor isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?*

Q: The oldest son, the twenty-year-old, how old is he?

Q: *Were you present when your picture was taken?*

Q: So the date of conception (of the baby) was August 8th?

A: Yes.

Q: And what were you doing at that time?

Q: *She had three children, right?*

A: *Yes.*

Q: *How many were boys?*

A: *None.*

Q: *Were there any girls?*

Q: How was your first marriage terminated?

A: By death.

Q: And by whose death was it terminated?

Q: *Can you describe the individual?*

A: *He was about medium height and had a beard.*

Q: *Was this a male or a female.*

Q: Is your appearance here this morning pursuant to a deposition notice which I sent to your attorney?

A: No, this is how I dress when I go to work.

Q: *Doctor, how many autopsies have you performed on dead people?*

A: *All my autopsies are performed on dead people.*

Q: All your responses must be oral, OK? What school did you go to?

A: Oral.

Q: *Do you recall the time that you examined the body?*

A: *The autopsy started around 8.30 pm*

Q: *And Mr Dennington was dead at the time?*

A: *No, he was sitting on the table wondering why I was doing the autopsy.*

Q: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?

A: No.

Q: Did you check for blood pressure?

A: No.

Q: Did you check for breathing?

A: No.

Q: So, is it possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?

A: No.

Q: How can you be so sure, Doctor?

A: *Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.*

Q: *But could the patient still be alive, nevertheless?*

A: *Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practising law somewhere.*

HOW NUMBERING BEGAN

The system of numeration employed throughout the greater part of the world today was probably developed in India, but because it was the Arabs who transmitted this system to the West the numerals it uses have come to be called Arabic.

After extending Islam throughout the Middle East, the Arabs began to assimilate the cultures of the peoples they had subdued. One of the great centres of learning was Baghdad, where Arab, Greek, Persian, Jewish, and other scholars pooled their cultural heritages and where in 771 an Indian scholar appeared, bringing with him a treatise on astronomy using the Indian numerical system.

Until that time the Egyptian, Greek, and other cultures used their own numerals in a manner similar to that of the Romans.

Thus the number 323 was expressed like this:

Egyptian: 999 nn III
 Greek: HHH ÆÆ III
 Roman: CCC XX III

The Egyptians actually wrote them from right to left, but they are set down above from left to right to call attention to the similarities of the systems.

The Indian contribution was to substitute a single sign (in this case meaning "3" and meaning "2") indicating the number of signs in each cluster of similar signs.

In this manner the Indians would render Roman CCC XX 111 as: 3 2 3.

This new way of writing numbers was economical but not flawless.

The Roman numeral CCC II, for instance, presented a problem.

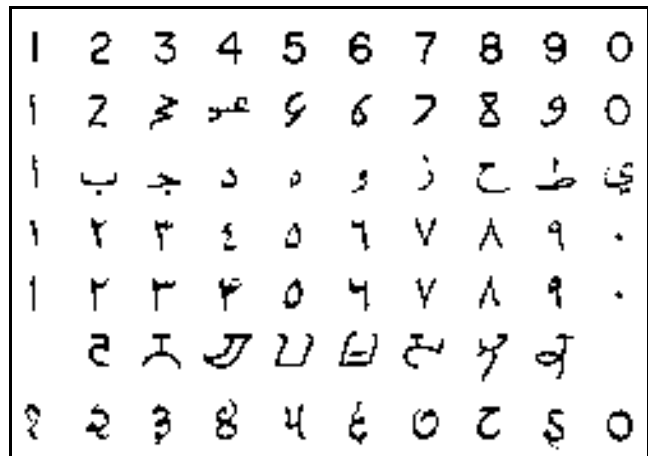
If a 3 and a 2 respectively were substituted for the Roman clusters CCC and II, the written result was 32.

Clearly, the number intended was not thirty-two but three hundred and two.

The Arab scholars perceived that a sign representing "nothing" or "nought" was required because the place of a sign gave as much information as its unitary value did.

The place had to be shown even if the sign which showed it indicated a unitary value of "nothing."

It is uncertain whether the Arabs or the Indians filled this need by inventing the zero, but in any case the problem was solved: now the new system could show neatly the difference between XXX II (32) and CCC II (302). □



From top: Modern Arabic (western);
 Early Arabic (western);
 Arabic Letters (used as numerals);
 Modern Arabic (eastern);
 Early Arabic (eastern);
 Early Devanagari (Indian);
 Later Devanagari

For those who love Cryptic Crosswords

Someone out there on the internet either loves cryptic crosswords or is deadly at Scrabble!!

GEORGE BUSH: When you rearrange the letters: *HE BUGS GORE*

DORMITORY: When you rearrange the letters: *DIRTY ROOM*

EVANGELIST: When you rearrange the letters: *EVIL'S AGENT*

PRESBYTERIAN: When you rearrange the letters: *BEST IN PRAYER*

DESPERATION: When you rearrange the letters: *A ROPE ENDS IT*

THE MORSE CODE: When you rearrange the letters: *HERE COME DOTS*

SLOT MACHINES: When you rearrange the letters: *CASH LOST IN ME*

ANIMOSITY: When you rearrange the letters: *IS NO AMITY*

SNOOZE ALARMS: When you rearrange the letters: *ALAS! NO MORE Z ' S*

A DECIMAL POINT: When you rearrange the letters: *I ' M A DOT IN PLACE*

ELEVEN PLUS TWO: When you rearrange the letters: *TWELVE PLUS ONE* □

HONOUR THE LAMBSKIN

Composed by Bro Edgar A. Guest (USA)

It is not ornamental, the cost is not
great,
There are other things far more useful,
yet truly I state,
Tho' of all my possessions, there's
none can compare,
With that white leather apron,
which all Masons wear.

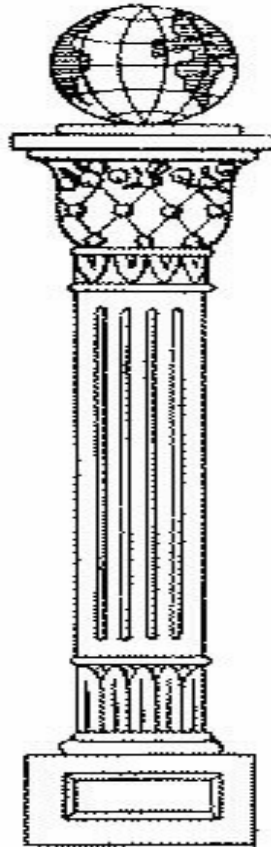
As a young lad I wondered just
what it all meant,
When Dad hustled around, and
so much time was spent
On shaving and dressing and
looking just right,
Until Mother would say: "It's the
Masons tonight."

And some winter nights she said:
"What makes you go,
Way up there tonight thru the
sleet and the snow,
You see the same things every
month of the year."
Then Dad would reply: "Yes, I
know it, my dear.

Forty years I have seen the same
things, it is true.
And though they are old, they
always seem new,
For the hands that I clasp, and
the friends that I greet,
Seem a little bit closer each time
that we meet."

Years later I stood at that very same
door,
With good men and true who had entered
the fore,

I knelt at the alter, and there I
was taught
That virtue and honour can
never be bought.



That the spotless white lambskin
all Masons revere,
If worthily worn grows more
precious each year,
That service to others brings
blessings untold,
That man may be poor tho'
surrounded by gold.

I learned that true brotherhood
flourishes there,
That enmities fade 'neath the
compass and square,
That wealth and position are
all thrust aside,
As there on the level men
meet and abide.

So, honour the lambskin, may
it always remain
Forever unblemished, and free
from all stain,
And when we are called to the
Great Father's love,
May we all take our place in
that Lodge up above.

Ashton's 92nd Installation Ceremony

Saturday, 5th July 2003. Lodge Tyled at 5.00pm

July signals the time for Ashton to again celebrate the ceremony of installing from amongst its members, "an expert Brother to preside over them" and this year, our incoming Master, **Wor Bro Jim Robertson** has accepted the office (how more "expert" can one get?) and we thank him for taking up the challenge.

Come July, Ashton will have performed 77 Installations since the Vulture Street Temple was concrated in 1926. This will be our last before finding another venue, so try to get there and witness this historic occasion.