

# Ashton News

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

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## Installation night is moved to September

**MAJOR changes have been made for this year's Annual Installation Ceremony, by changing the night, the month and the venue.**

At the request of the incoming Master, Bro Ricky Beecroft, permission was sought and granted by Grand Lodge to change the month from July to September, the night from the first Monday to the fourth Saturday an more importantly, the venue from the Ann Street Memorial Centre to the Stone's Corner Masonic Centre.

This adjustment has been made necessary partly because the Master-elect, Bro Beecroft, being obligated by his work commitments, will be out of the state during the month of July at the time when Ashton's customary installation is held.

Selecting the month of September was therefore thought to be an appropriate time, because this year, the first Saturday in July will see the Installation of RW Bro Gra-

ham Ewin DGM, to the exalted rank of Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of Queensland, and the various activities associated with this event would diminish in some ways the importance of our night.

So, by transferring our installation night to Saturday 22nd September, this should enable the brethren who attended the Grand Installation activities, an

opportunity to put Ashton's night on their visiting list.

One of the reasons for moving to the Stone's Corner Centre was motivated by a belief that its location is outside the confines of the Central Business Area's regulated parking restrictions.

These restrictions are sometimes felt by the brethren attending the Ann Street Memorial Centre

This move will hopefully prompt those brethren who were reluctant to attend previously, a reason to be there on the night. □

### Introducing the Master-elect

Ricky Beecroft was Initiated into Ashton Lodge in August 2000, and after passing through his Degrees, immediately made himself available as an Officer of the Lodge. Being an executive of multinational pharmaceutical and consumer goods companies, Ricky's progress through the various chairs has been governed by his work commitments. Having two children and three grandchildren, Ricky and wife Alison are enjoying their lifestyle and are looking forward to a fulfilling year of Masonic activities.



# Life's quirkiest moments

## **F**ire authorities in California found a corpse in a burned out section of forest while assessing the damage done by a forest fire.

The deceased male was dressed in a full wet suit, complete with scuba tanks on his back, flippers, and face mask.

A post-mortem revealed that the person died not from burns, but from massive internal injuries. Dental records provided a positive identification.

Investigators set about to determine how a fully clad diver ended up in the middle of a forest fire.

It was revealed that on the day of the fire, the person went for a diving trip off the coast some 20 miles from the forest.

The firefighters seeking to control the fire as quickly as possible, called in a fleet of helicopters with very large dip buckets.

Water was dipped from the ocean and then flown to the forest fire and emptied.

You guessed it.

One minute our diver was making like Flipper in the Pacific, the next he was doing the breast stroke in a fire dip bucket 300 feet in the air.

Apparently he extinguished exactly 5'10" of the fire. Some days it just doesn't pay to get out of bed - *This article was taken from the California Examiner, March 20, 1998*

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1. The average cost of rehabilitating a seal after the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska was \$80,000. At a special ceremony, two of the most expensively saved animals were released back into the wild amid cheers and applause from onlookers.

A minute later, in full view, a killer whale ate them both.

2. A woman came home to find her husband in the kitchen, shaking frantically with what looked like a wire running from his waist towards the electric kettle. Intending to jolt him

away from the deadly current she whacked him with a handy plank of wood by the back door, breaking his arm in two places. Until that moment he had been happily listening to his Walkman.

3. Two animal rights protesters were protesting at the cruelty of sending pigs to a slaughterhouse in Bonn Germany.

Suddenly the pigs, all two thousand of them, escaped through a broken fence and stampeded, trampling the two hapless protesters to death.

4. Iraqi terrorist, Khay Rahnajet, didn't pay enough postage on a letter bomb.

It came back with "return to sender" stamped on it. Forgetting it was the bomb he opened it and was blown to bits.

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A businessman walks into a bank in San Francisco and asks for the loan officer. He says he is going to Europe on business for two weeks and needs to borrow \$5,000. The bank officer says the bank will need some kind of security for such a loan.

So the businessman hands over the keys to a Rolls Royce parked on the street in front of the bank. Everything checks out, and the bank agrees to accept the car as collateral for the loan. An employee drives the Rolls into the bank's underground garage and parks it there.

Two weeks later, the businessman returns, repays the \$5,000 and the interest, which comes to \$15.41.

The loan officer says, "We are very happy to have had your business, and this transaction has worked out very nicely, but we are a little puzzled. While you were away, we checked you out and found that you are a multimillionaire. What puzzles us is why would you bother to borrow \$5,000?"

The businessman replied, "Where else in San Francisco can I park my car for two weeks for 15 bucks?" □

# Can Freemasonry Co-exist within our Modern Society?

By Wor Bro Ian Pieper, P.M. Ashton Lodge 218

**I** WOULD like to open some discussion and possible debate on the place of Freemasonry in modern society.

It is important to understand where we are as an organisation and as an individual Lodge, so that we may progress.

In order to solve the problem of declining membership, first we must understand what the problem is.

Scotland, Edinburgh in particular, was one of the gathering places for great thinkers during the Age of Reason, the 18th century.

This was an age of turmoil and academic rebellion; a time when what people thought they knew of the world was continually challenged and changed.

David Hume (1711-1776) was at the forefront of the Scottish Enlightenment that challenged traditional knowledge and authority.

Thinking, reason and logic were displacing long held beliefs in superstition, religion and irrational fear.

The idea was beginning to emerge that knowledge, grounded on accuracy, aided by labour and prompted by perseverance would finally overcome all difficulties, raise ignorance from its native darkness, and establish happiness in the paths of science.

To this day, Hume sits proudly (more often than not with a traffic cone on his head) on the Royal Mile, at the top of the Mound, as if to inspire those within the Courts to continue the search for THE Truth.

This was the cultural environment that inspired the creation of Grand Lodges.

They are more than just a product of their time, they are an embodiment of the belief in a single truth.



*Generally regarded as the most important philosopher ever to write in English, **David Hume** (1711-1776) -- the last of the great triumvirate of "British empiricists" -- was also noted as an historian and essayist.*

It is also during this time that much of our ritual was written.

The Enlightenment principles shine through Masonic ritual.

These principles tell us that the truth is out there, that it is knowable and that if we work hard enough, we will find it.

Since then, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) has declared that 'God is dead', Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) has built on the writings of Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) to throw the Great Architect a cable tow and

Albert Einstein (1875 –1955) and Stephen Hawking (1942-) debunked the concept of universal truth.

Contemporary society and current philosophical trends and thinking, run contrary to the heritage of Freemasonry.

Therefore a conflict exists between what a candidate knows of the world and the lessons that Freemasonry imparts. It is a natural human behaviour, that people will act to minimise conflict. If this conflict remains unresolved the candidate will have to take action to bring these two opposing view points into harmony.

Some of the behaviours that this process may lead to include:

- leaving the Lodge. It is so much easier than leaving society,
- disregarding the lessons within the ritual, and treating the Lodge as a social club,
- disbelieving the teachings of the ritual and continuing to search for hidden meanings in the ritual; joining other orders to search for the truth within Freemasonry that makes sense within what they know of the wider world,
- living with dual expectations,
- harkening to the teachings of Freemasonry and bemoaning the state of the world today.

We probably all know people who fit into each of these categories and this list is purely illustrative.

How shall we dispose of this dichotomy?

We probably all know people who fit into each of these categories and this list is purely illustrative.

How shall we dispose of this dichotomy?

If the brethren find this paper interesting or useful, I am happy to expand on it; to present the arguments in greater depth or to present some observations on what Freemasonry might do to remain valid in the modern world and the future.

*If you wish to continue this dialogue with Ian, his contact address is: [Ashton218@ausi.com](mailto:Ashton218@ausi.com)*



## Notice of Motion to move to Stones Corner Centre defeated

**A**T the April meeting of the Lodge, a Notice of Motion was put forward by V Wor Bro Ted Lowe.

The motion read that "The regular meeting of the Lodge be held in the Stones Corner Masonic Centre Cleveland Street, Stones Corner on the second Monday in each month excluding January, at 7 pm or at such hour as Master shall direct. The annual Installation of Master and Investiture of Officers shall take place at the regular meeting in July". This was duly seconded by V Wor Bro Ted Ross.

The By-Laws of the Lodge state that: Rule 23: under the heading of Alteration of Rules: "No New By-Law, and no alteration, repeal or suspension of an existing By-Law, shall be made except upon a vote of at least two-thirds of the Members present at a Regular Meeting of the Lodge, notice thereof having been stated in open Lodge at the preceeding Regular Meeting, and given thereat in writing to the Secretary, and inserted in the summons for the meeting at which it is to be considered."

The vote was taken, and on a show of hands, eleven voted for, one against and three abstained.

The brethren who abstained became part of the **No** vote, therefore even though there was **only one No** vote, they combined to make four against, and four into eleven does not quite make up the required three-quarters.

However, it has since been pointed out that the Notice of Motion voted on was out of order because Rule 149 (a) of the Book of Constitutions of the UGLQ states that "A notice of motion for the removal of the Lodge signed by not fewer than seven subscribing members, shall be given at a regular meeting of the Lodge, and shall be discussed and determined at its next regular meeting."

Arrangements are now being taken to resubmit another Notice of Motion. □

# THE MYSTIQUE OF SOLOMONS TEMPLE

**S**OLOMON'S Temple (also known as the First Temple) was, according to the Torah and the Bible, the first Jewish temple in Jerusalem and functioned as a religious focal point for worship and the sacrifices known as the *korbanot* in ancient Judaism. The temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE.

Before his death, King David had provided materials in great abundance for the building of the temple on the summit of Mount Moriah, where he had purchased a threshing floor from Araunah the Jebusite on which he offered sacrifice.

The Bible states that in the beginning of his reign, King Solomon of the united Kingdom of Israel, set about giving effect to the ideas of his father, and prepared additional materials for the building. From subterranean quarries at Jerusalem he obtained huge blocks of stone for the foundations and walls of the temple. These stones were prepared for their places in the building under the eye of Tyrian master-builders.

According to this account, Solomon also entered into a compact with Hiram I, king of Tyre, for the supply of whatever else was needed for the work, particularly timber from the forests of Lebanon, which was brought in great rafts by the sea to Joppa, whence it was dragged to Jerusalem.

These accounts in the Bible are also the basis for much of the legend and lore of Freemasonry, which uses the construction of the Temple as a backdrop and metaphor for moral instruction.

According to tradition, in all these preparatory undertakings a space of about three years was occupied; and now the process of the erection of the great building began, under the direction of skilled Phoenician builders and workmen, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign.

David provided Solomon with a large amount of gold and silver with which to build the temple. The Biblical account reports that this amounted to 100,000 talents (3,000 tons) of gold (an amount exceeding the current annual global production and 1,000,000 talents (30,000 tons) of silver.

According to biblical tradition, many thousands of labourers and skilled artisans were employed in the work. Stones prepared in the quarries underneath the city of huge dimension were gradually placed on the massive walls, and closely fitted together without any mortar between, till the whole structure was completed.

The building was 60 cubits (27m) long, 20 cubits



(9m) wide, and 30 cubits (14m) high.

At length, in the Autumn of the eleventh year of his reign, seven and a half years after it had been begun, the temple was completed. For thirteen years there it stood, on the summit of Moriah, silent and unused. The reasons for this strange delay in its consecration are unknown. At the close of these thirteen years, preparations for the dedication of the temple were made. The Temple remained empty for only eleven months, until the month of Tishri in the year following its completion. Thus the Temple was dedicated at the autumnal new-year festival.

According to biblical tradition, the Ark of the Covenant was solemnly brought from the tent in which David had deposited it to the place prepared for it in the temple. Then Solomon ascended a platform which had been erected for him, in the sight of all the people, and lifting up his hands to heaven poured out his heart to God in prayer.

Due to the extensive rebuilding of the Second Temple in later centuries, no remains of the First Temple are extant (however, certain remains from the First Temple have recently been discovered in the refuse from an extensive construction project performed on the Temple Mount by the Islamic Wakf in November of 1999); the detailed descriptions provided in the Tanakh and educated guesses based on the remains of other temples in the region are the sources for reconstructions of its appearance. Technical details are lacking, since the scribes who wrote down the books were not architects or engineers.

The description does not specify whether a wall separated it from the next chamber. In the porch stood the two pillars Jachin and Boaz, which were 18 cubits in height and surmounted by capitals of carved lilies, 5 cubits high.

The chambers, were built about the temple on the southern, western, and northern sides. These formed a part of the building and were used for storage. They were probably one story high at first; two more may have been added late.

According to biblical tradition, round about the building were:

The court of the priests, called the "inner court", which was separated from the space beyond by a wall of three courses of hewn stone, surmounted by cedar beams, with a great court which surrounded the whole temple. Here the people assembled to worship God.

The inner court of the priests contained the altar of burnt-offering, the brazen sea, and ten lavers.

From 2 Kings 16:14 it is learned that a brazen altar stood before the Temple; the brazen sea, 5 cubits wide and 10 deep, rested on the backs of twelve oxen. The Book of Kings gives its capacity as "two thousand baths"; and states that its purpose was to afford opportunity for the ablutions of the priests.

The lavers, each of which held "forty baths", rested on portable holders made of bronze, provided with wheels, and ornamented with figures of lions, cherubim, and palm-trees. These vessels especially excited the admiration of the Jews. The author of the books of the Kings describes their minute details with great interest.

Josephus reported that the vessels in the temple were composed of Orichalcum in the Antiquities of the Jews.

According to 1 Kings 7:48 there stood before the Holy of Holies a golden altar of incense and a table for showbread. This table was of gold, as were also the five candlesticks on each side of it.

The implements for the care of the candles - tongs, basins, snuffers, and fire-pans - were of gold; and so were the hinges of the doors.

The Temple was probably situated upon the more easterly of the two hills which form the site of the present-day Noble Sanctuary, in the centre of which area is the Dome of the Rock. Under the Jebusites the site was used as a threshing floor. Two slightly different sites for the Temple have been proposed: one places the bronze altar on the rock which is now beneath the gilded dome, with the rest of the temple to the west. The slope of the terrain in this area would require massive supporting structures for the Temple, what Easton's Bible Dictionary describes as "a

huge wall of solid masonry of great height, in some places more than 200 ft (60m) high. . . raised across the south of the hill, and a similar wall on the eastern side, and in the spaces between... many arches and pillars...."

The other places the Holy of Holies atop this rock, thus explaining its elevation. The traditions of this rock were sacred; probably the site was the same as that of the temple which Hadrian erected to Jupiter, which in turn was on the site of Herod's temple, which would naturally be on that of Solomon's (an example of the persistency of sacred sites in the East).

The Temple has recognisable similarities to other temples of its time and region. Syro-Phoenician, Egyptian, and Mesopotamian influences are visible. A plaza or courtyard surrounding the sacred residence of the god, marked with stones, is a feature common throughout ancient Semitic religions.

Earlier evidence of this practice among the Hebrews survives in the twelve stones that Joshua placed at Gilgal and the marking of Mount Sinai by Moses, and in the forbidden zone surrounding the tent which was the predecessor of the Temple. Even today the Muslims designate certain areas, especially that surrounding Mecca, as inviolate haram.

The Biblical text makes it clear that Solomon received aid from Hiram, King of Tyre, in the construction of his buildings. As the Hebrews were an agricultural people, this aid probably involved not only material (cedar-wood, etc.), but architectural direction and skilled craftsmen.

Its tripartite division is similar to that found in 13th century BCE temples at Alalakh in Syria and Hazor in the upper Galilee; a 9th century BCE temple at Tell Tayinat also follows this plan.

Phoenician temples varied somewhat in form, but were similarly surrounded by courts.

Among the details which were probably copied from Tyre were the two pillars Jachin and Boaz.

Herodotus (ii. 44) says that the temple at Tyre contained two such, one of emerald and the other of fine gold. In the same way the ornamentation of palm trees and cherubim were probably derived from Tyre, for Ezekiel (28:13, 14) represents the King of Tyre, who was high priest also, as being in the "garden of God."

Probably both at Tyre and at Jerusalem the cherubim and palm-tree ornaments were survivals of an earlier conception - that the abode of God was a "garden of Eden." The Tyrians, therefore, in their temple imitated to some extent the primitive garden, and Solomon borrowed these features.

Similarly, the bronze altar was a Phoenician innovation; and probably the same is true of the bronze implements which were ornamented with palm-trees and cherubim.

The Orthodox Israelitish altar was of earth or unhewn stone. The Decalogue of Ex. 20 (Elohists) prohibited the making of graven images, while that of Ex. 34 (Jahwist) prohibited the making of molten gods; and the Deuteronomic expansions prohibited the making of any likeness whatever.

All these are, to be sure, later than Solomon's time; but there is no reason to believe that before that time the Hebrews had either the skill or the wealth necessary to produce ornamentation of this kind.

The name Solomon (Shlomo) means "peaceful," or "complete", from the Hebrew Shelomoh (Arabic Sulaiman). The name given by God to Solomon in the Bible is Jedidiah, meaning "loved by God", and some scholars have conjectured that Solomon is a "king name" taken either when he assumed the throne or upon his death.

Solomon's case is one of the few in the Bible where the name given by God does not stay with the character. Solomon's birth is considered a grace from God, after the death of the previous child between David and Bathsheba.

Solomon is David's second son by Bathsheba. In the Hebrew Bible, the prophet Nathan informs David that God has willed that his firstborn son must die, as punishment for David's method of execution of Uriah the Hittite, and his relationship with Bathsheba, Uriah's wife, which was fornication (although whether or not it was adulterous is disputed).

After praying and fasting for a week, David heard the news that his son had died, and comforted the grieving Bathsheba, who became pregnant with Solomon.

Solomon's history is recorded in 1 Kings 1-11 and 2 Chronicles 1-9. His father chose him as his successor, passing over the claims of his elder sons, by women other than Bathsheba. His elevation to the throne took place before his father's death, and is hastened on mainly by Nathan and Bathsheba, in consequence of the rebellion of Adonijah.

During his long reign of 40 years the Hebrew monarchy gained its highest splendour. This period has well been called the "Augustan Age" of the Jewish annals. In a single year he collected tribute amounting to 666 talents of gold, according to 1 Kings 10:13.

The first half of his reign was, however, by far the brighter and more prosperous; the latter half was clouded by the idolatries into which he fell,

mainly, according to the scribes, from his intermarriages.

According to 1 Kings 11:3, he had 700 wives and 300 concubines. As soon as he had settled himself in his kingdom, and arranged the affairs of his extensive empire, he entered into an alliance with Egypt by a marriage with the daughter of the Pharaoh.

In 1 Kings 3:5-14 there is written an account of an encounter between the newly crowned Solomon and the God of the Kingdom of Israel in which he offers Solomon anything he pleases.

Solomon asks for "an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" Pleased with his non-materialistic wish God tells him that not only will he receive a foundation in epistemology greater than any other man, but also great wealth, power and prosperity.

The idea that Solomon's Wisdom is God-given is very important to various Judeo-Christian beliefs. The biblical Book of Proverbs, written by Solomon, is a dogmatic guideline for morality and manners in many Jewish and Christian denominations.



**Solomon receiving the Queen of Sheba**

Some believe that Solomon also wrote the biblical book of Ecclesiastes in which there is an established sense of absurdity of man's feeble accomplishments.

Here Solomon attacks the vanity of human actions and the importance of a relationship with God that many religions embrace.

He surrounded himself with all the luxuries and the external grandeur of an Eastern monarch, and his government prospered. He entered into an alliance with Hiram I, king of Tyre, who in many ways greatly assisted him in his numerous undertakings.

For some years before his death David was engaged in the active work of collecting materials

for building a temple in Jerusalem as a permanent abode for the Ark of the Covenant.

After the completion of the temple, Solomon erected many other buildings of importance in Jerusalem and in other parts of his kingdom. For the long space of thirteen years he was engaged in the erection of a royal palace on Ophel.

During his reign Israel enjoyed great commercial prosperity. Extensive traffic was carried on by land with Tyre and Egypt and Arabia, and by sea with Tarshish (Spain), Ophir and South India and the coasts of Africa.

The royal magnificence and splendour of Solomon's court are unrivaled. Solomon was known for his wisdom and proverbs. People came from far and near "to hear the wisdom of Solomon", including queen Makedah or Bilqis of Sheba, (identified with a country in Arabia Felix).

Their son Menelik I, according to Ethiopian tradition, would become the first emperor of Ethiopia. His thoughts are enshrined in storytelling, though probably, not all the clever thinking in the stories originates with the one man.

Blamed for his decline and fall from his high estate were his polygamy and his great wealth, causing him to become decadent and involved in various forms of idol worship which are contrary to the religious law. Because of this idol worship, a prophet visits Solomon and tells him that after his death his kingdom would be split in two (Israel and Judah) and that his son, Rehoboam, would suffer because of his sin.

He died, after a reign of forty years, and was buried in Jerusalem.

In 1 Kings 3:15-28 an account of Solomon's wisdom can be viewed as symbolic of the split in the Kingdom of Israel following the death of Solomon.

In the story there are two new mothers, one of which who had smothered her baby during sleep and claimed the other woman's baby as her own.

The problem is presented to King Solomon who proposes the baby be split in half, each woman receiving one half of the baby. The woman who was lying went along with the plan while the real mother immediately feels sympathy for her offspring and would rather see the other woman raise it than see it die.

Solomon instantly grants the real mother the baby realizing that a true mother would compromise to see her offspring survive. This act, though not truly biblically significant it is a metaphor for what was about to happen to the Israelites and their nation.

Solomon also appears in the Qur'an, where he is called Sulayman. The Qur'an refers to Solomon as the son of David, as a prophet and as a great ruler

imparted by God with tremendous wisdom, favor, and mystical powers. Solomon was said to have under his rule not only people, but also hosts of invisible beings (i.e., jinn). And like his father David, Solomon is said to have been able to understand the language of the birds, and to see some of the hidden glory in the world that was not accessible to common human beings.

Surah 27:15 "And, indeed, We granted [true] knowledge unto David and Solomon [as well]; and both were wont to say: 'All praise is due to God, who has [thus] favored us above many of His believing servants!' And [in this insight] Solomon was [truly] David's heir; and he would say: 'O you people! We have been taught the speech of the birds, and have been given [in abundance] of all [good] things: this, behold, is indeed a manifest favor [from God]!"

Surah 34:12 "And unto Solomon [We made subservient] the wind: its morning course [covered the distance of] a month's journey, and its evening course, a month's journey. And we caused a mountain of molten copper to flow at his behest; and [even] among the invisible beings there were some that had [been constrained] to labour for him by his Sustainer's leave - and whichever of them deviated from Our command, him would We let taste suffering through a blazing flame -: they made for him whatever he wished of sanctuaries, and statues, and basins as [large as] great watering-troughs, and cauldrons firmly anchored."

To Solomon are attributed by rabbinical tradition but not internally, the Biblical books of Book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon.

Then comes the Wisdom of Solomon, probably written in the 2nd century BC where Solomon is portrayed as an astronomer. The Jewish historian Eupolemus, who wrote about 157 BC, included copies of apocryphal letters exchanged between Solomon and the kings of Egypt and Tyre. Solomon's mastery of demons is a common element in later Jewish and Arab legends, and is often attributed to possession of a magic ring called the "Seal of Solomon".

The ancient Imperial legend of Ethiopia, as told in the Kebra Nagast maintains that the Queen of Sheba returned to her realm from her Biblical visit to Solomon, pregnant with his child, and giving birth to a son by the Mai Bella stream in the province of Hamasien, Eritrea.

This child would eventually inherit her throne with the new rank and title of Menelik I, Emperor of Abyssinia.

The dynasty he would establish would reign in Abyssinia (now Ethiopia) with few interruptions until the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974. □