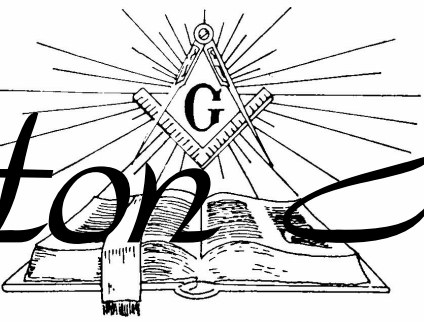


# Ashton News



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

Vol 10 No 1

MARCH 2004

## Making the transition to new meeting place

**A** new era began for Ashton Lodge when the February meeting night was held within the headquarters of Freemasonry in Queensland, at the Masonic Memorial Centre, 311 Ann Street Brisbane.

To better acquaint ourselves with the new surroundings, an emulation of the First Degree was enacted to allow the members to “ease” themselves into their new surroundings.

Of course there were problems to overcome, commencing with the weather.

There was heavy rain for most of the night (70mm) which must have had an influence on the number in attendance.

For the first time in many years, there were no brethren from other Lodges present.

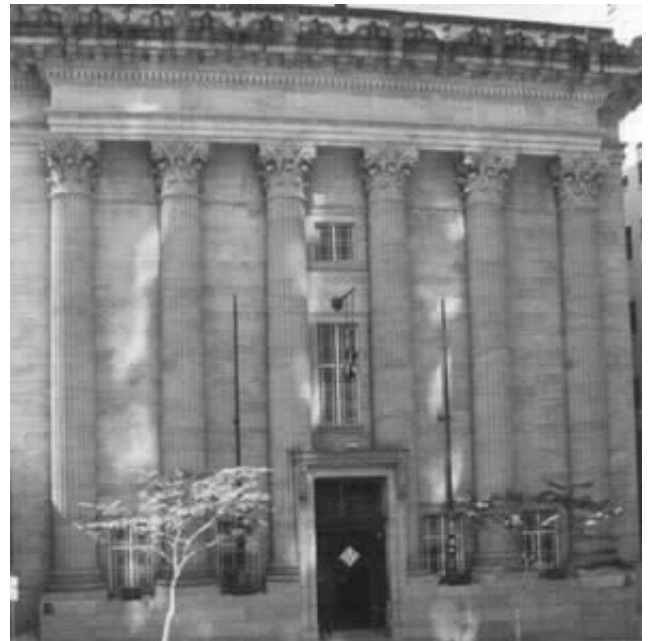
Our own membership was down, due no doubt to the uncertainty of finding suitable parking in the city in such inclement weather.

Problems occurred in laying out the Lodge for the night’s proceedings.

The Masonic Centre closes at 4.30 pm and re-opens at 6.30 pm, and as clearway restrictions remain until 7.00 pm, it was impossible to lay out the furniture for the Lodge room in order to start our proceedings on time.

This problem has now been rectified by members Len Norman and Ian Pieper who work in the city, giving up part of their day to lay out the Lodge.

There is also an agreement with the Centre as to when all activities have to be fin-



**Ann Street Masonic Memorial Centre**

ished, (normally at 11.00pm and 11.30pm on application for special occasions) so thought will have to be given to the work in our lodge room so that reasonable time for a festive board can be enjoyed all who attend.

It now becomes very important that proceedings begin at the appointed time and that all items of business be expediently dealt with.

This, our first meeting in unfamiliar surroundings, has left us with plenty of re-organising ahead to ensure that we do not lose any of our (unique) ritual ceremony and still be left with ample time to engage in Masonic camaraderie in the room upstairs. □

# EXPLAINING THE WORDS OF JOB

An explanation of a Scripture reading during the ceremony of the Third Degree.  
Excerpted from Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Old Testament Book of Job

1 ¶ *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*  
 2 *He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*  
 3 *And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?*  
 4 *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.*  
 5 *Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;*  
 6 *Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day.*

Job enlarges upon the condition of man, addressing himself also to God.

Every man of Adam's fallen race is short-lived. All his show of beauty, happiness, and splendour falls before the stroke of sickness or death, as the flower before the scythe; or passes away like the shadow.

How is it possible for a man's conduct to be sinless, when his heart is by nature unclean?

He seems to have intended it as a plea, why the Lord should not deal with him according to his own works, but according to His mercy and grace. It is determined, in the counsel and decree of God, how long we shall live. Our times are in his hands, the powers of nature act under him; in him we live and move. And it is very useful to reflect seriously on the shortness and uncertainty of human life, and the fading nature of all earthly enjoyments. But it is still more important to look at the cause, and remedy of these evils.

Until we are born of the Spirit, no spiritually good thing dwells in us, or can proceed from us.

Even the little good in the regenerate is defiled with sin.

We should therefore humble ourselves before God, and cast ourselves wholly on the mercy of God, through our Divine Surety.

7 ¶ *For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.*  
 8 *Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground;*  
 9 *Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.*  
 10 *But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?*  
 11 *As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up:*  
 12 *So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.*  
 13 *O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!*  
 14 *If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.*  
 15 *Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.*

Though a tree is cut down, yet, in a moist situation, shoots come forth, and grow up as a newly planted tree.

But when man is cut off by death, he is forever removed from his place in this world.

The life of man may fitly be compared to the waters of a land flood, which spread far, but soon dry up. All Job's expressions here show his belief in the great doctrine of the resurrection.

Job's friends proving miserable comforters, he pleases himself with the expectation of a change.

If our sins are forgiven, and our hearts renewed to holiness, heaven will be the rest of our souls, while our bodies are hidden in the grave from the malice of our enemies, feeling no more pain from our corruptions, or our corrections. □

# Nudge, nudge, wink - but please say more

**by Gerard Henderson Executive Director of the Sydney Institute\***  
*from an article appearing in the Sydney Morning Herald on September 3, 2002*

**A**n anachronism or a still influential society? It's time the Freemasons revealed all, writes Gerard Henderson.

It was a resignation speech of the look-back-in-wonder genre.

Last Tuesday, John Herron formally announced his intention to step down from the Senate.

The former Howard Government minister declared: "I pay tribute also to the wonderful democracy we have in Australia; we have no secrets."

Herron's wish to quit the Senate to take up a diplomatic posting came as no surprise - he is expected to become Australia's Ambassador to Ireland and the Vatican early next year.

However, despite the obvious bonhomie of the occasion, the Queensland Liberal's claim that Australian democracy has "no secrets" is anything but a truism.

What about the Masons?

In effect, the Masonic Lodge arrived in Australia about the time of the First Fleet.

The botanist Sir Joseph Banks and architect Francis Greenway were among the first Masons to visit, or settle in, Australia.

Freemasonry was a secret secular society which evolved in the Middle Ages and was opposed by most organised religions, especially the Catholic Church.

Its influence was spread by colonisation, particularly within the British Empire.

In this increasingly transparent age, there are few secrets.

Much is known about business, churches, the trade union movement, politics, the professions and more.

We know all but nothing about the Masons.

It is only in recent years that Freemasonry has released information about itself.

In Australia, this has been most evident in NSW due to media statements by the organisation and publications by the Masonic Historical Society of NSW.

Freemasonry is not the organisation it was in the '50s - when membership peaked at close to 400,000.

Yet, without doubt, the lodge was once very influential.

Grahame Cumming's *Freemasonry: Australia's Prime Ministers* (Masonic Historical Society, 1994) says that most of the nation's conservative prime ministers up to the early '70s were members of the Masonic Lodge; namely Edmund Barton, George Reid, Joseph Cook, Stanley Melbourne Bruce, Earle Page, Robert Menzies, Arthur Fadden, John McEwen, John Gorton and William McMahon.

For the most part, this lot was able and busy. So what were they doing in the Masonic Lodge, especially in view of the fact that Freemasonry membership involved participation in a number of unusual rituals?

The rolled-up trouser leg on initiation, the secret handshake whereby (apparently) the thumb of one Lodge member makes contact with the second knuckle of another, the wearing of ceremonial aprons at meetings and so on.

Presumably Barton, Reid, Bruce, Menzies and Gorton did not endure - at one time or another - such rituals for the fun of it.

It can only be assumed that they were active Freemasons, for a time at least, because they believed in the cause of the Lodge. Which was, precisely what?

Alas, we do not really know.

Sure, Freemasonry supports charitable causes, but so do such secular service groups as Rotary and Lions.

So there have been much more to Lodge membership than good works. But what?

In Australia, no former Freemason has written a "tell-all" of the once-a-communist or once-a-Catholic kind. What's more, there has been little written about the Lodge by outsiders.

The most notable exception is the Sydney-based mathematician/philosopher James Franklin. See, for example, his article "Catholics versus Masons" in *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*, 1999.

The late Allan Martin wrote a fine two-volume biography *Robert Menzies: A Life* (MUP).

It contains no reference to Menzies as a Mason. Sir Robert did not refer to the issues in his autobiographical *Afternoon Light* (Cassell, 1967).

Likewise Ian Hancock's recently released *John Gorton: He Did It His Way* (Hodder, 2002) does not mention that Sir John attended a Lodge meeting when prime minister.

There is a similar hole in most of the relevant chapters in Michelle Grattan's edited collection *Australian Prime Ministers* (New Holland, 2001).

In his obituary of the former NSW Liberal leader Eric Willis (1922-99), Peter Coleman mentioned that he was "an Anglican and a Mason" (*The Australian*, May 19, 1999).

Such references are few and far between.

Certainly, more is known about Freemasonry now than before.

In 1999, Prince Michael of Kent presided over a ceremony in Melbourne to mark the centenary of the Victorian Grand Lodge.

Last month former NSW police commissioner Tony Lauer got dressed in his full Masonic kit for a photo to mark his appointment as Grand Master of the NSW and ACT Freemasons.

It is also known, officially, that prominent Masons included aviator Charles Kingsford Smith, film producer Ken Hall, author Frank Clune, cyclist/politician Hubert Opperman and Test cricketers - Don Bradman, Wally Grout, Bill Oldfield and Bill Ponsford among others.

It is understood that Freemasonry was par-

ticularly strong in sections of the business and union communities as well as in the police and fire services, defence forces and the legal profession.

There are many conspiracy theories about Freemasonry, often promulgated by the lunar right. All should be discussed.

The Masons do not control the world and they are not responsible for communism, Nazism or whatever.

If the lodge had, or has, influence within democratic societies, it is as a place for making contacts, you know, where a chap helps out another chap whom he has met at the lodge, following a friendly Masonic handshake.

It is only in the past few years that women have joined the lodge.

In Britain some interest has been recently expressed about the role of the Freemasonry in the police and judicial system.

No skeletons have been unearthed.

But the matter was considered serious enough to warrant examination by the House of Commons home affairs committee.

Earlier this year the Brisbane *Courier Mail* attempted a similar inquiry - and met a wall of silence.

There seems little justification for this state of affairs.

Australians are entitled to know more about Freemasonry - past and present.

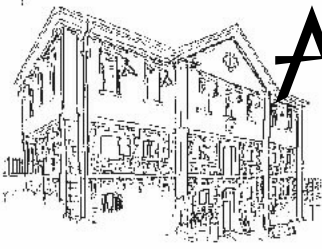
There are more secrets down under than Herron seems aware of. Perhaps the Irish will tell him. □

*\*The Sydney Institute is a privately funded current affairs forum which enjoys good relations with both sides of Australian politics.*

*The Institute holds weekly forums, an annual dinner and occasional international conferences.*

*All papers delivered to the Institute are published in The Sydney Papers which has a wide and influential circulation - including university, college and school libraries.*

*The Institute also publishes The Sydney Institute Quarterly incorporating Media Watch (which commenced publication in 1988 and was first into the field of media watching in Australia).*



# An historic building with a dark past

**The Commissariat Store in William Street is one of Brisbane's most significant buildings. Its first two floors were built by convicts in 1829, and then as Brisbane grew, so did the building.**

Brisbane's 175 year old Commissariat Store had a bloody start, but is now a storehouse of local history.

It was hard to find good help on the 1820 Brisbane.

Take John Brungar and William Parfett, for example, two leads in one of Brisbane history's most bloodthirsty episodes.

After the first penal settlement in what is now Queensland, was shifted from the unsuitable Redcliffe to the Brisbane River in 1825, it was decided a Commissariat Store (an army supply store) was required to act as a supply source for the settlement.

The building was to be a simple, two level, utilitarian structure designed to house all the supplies the penal settlement would require – uniform, guns, ammunition, money, tools, and practically anything else.

In July 1828, work began on the Commissariat Store, a building that still stands today in William Street, the City.

Working on the building's construction were a pair of convicts named John Brungar and William Parfett.

Legend has it that, at some point during the construction, Brungar struck his fellow convict Parfett in the head with a pickaxe.

The blow, the story goes, didn't kill Parfett instantly. He was taken to hospital where he died five days later.

Brungar's death, on the other hand, was somewhat speedier – by hanging.

The details of the story are sketchy, it taking place more than 175 years ago, but the best way to find out about it is to visit the Store itself where members of the Royal Historical

Society are arduously piecing fragments of Queensland history to inform and enlighten Brisbane people.

It appears that basically there was an argument between the convicts as to who was to get to use the light pick. This was the sort of thing convicts argued about back then.

There was a bit of a shoving match and John Brungar settled the issue by burying his pick axe in the head of William Parfett.

Parfett was taken away in a wheelbarrow toward the hospital then at North Quay.

Brungar was sent to Sydney, where his hanging took place.

There's plenty to see at the Commissariat Store. Visitors can see how it acted, at various times, as a land sales office, an immigration barracks, a police accommodation, the State Stores Headquarters – supplying the government with stationary and whatever else governing required – and finally, since 1981, the headquarters for the historical society.

Apart from the old store itself, the society has a number of displays tracing Brisbane's early development.

They have tried to interpret Brisbane as it was in the time of the settlement. In the displays of the settlement you can see modern Brisbane emerging.

The current town plan was set from a lot of the decisions they took back then in plotting the very first buildings.

The Store has been around for a long time, it's going to take a bit of work to keep it standing for another 175 years.

Even after major conservation work in 1999 and 2000, the building is slowly deteriorating due to structural problems.

A couple of builders may need to be called in.

Let's hope they come suitably equipped with two light pickaxes. □

# Past Grand Rank conferred on a dedicated active member

**A**t the December communication of the United Grand Lodge of Queensland, a big surprise was in store for one of our members who regularly attends its quarterly meetings.

As the Grand Lodge representative of Waroo Lodge No 397 (Sarat), **Wor Bro Len Norman** was more than surprised when he heard his name acknowledged by the Grand Master, conferring on him the rank of *Past Grand Standard Bearer*.

The awarding of this honour marks the culmination of a year of recognition by other branches of the Order.

Len received Past Grand Rank in the Royal Arch and the Grand Mark Lodge. Among his community commitments was the work done by Len and his wife Dianne, in raising money for the Leukaemia Foundation; as a volunteer bus driver for the Sandgate Home; assisting the Grand Librarian in putting the records held by the Library in some sort of order; an ardent Ashton supporter of the Sandgate Homes Beautification Scheme; a former Chairman of the South Brisbane Masonic Hall Co-operative Company Ltd and an active member of the Cleveland Returned Services League.

Since moving to Cleveland, Len had to forego the job of driving the "Homes" bus

because of the distance he had to travel, but not to be left with nothing to do, he now drives the Cleveland RSL's bus, transporting veterans and their dependants to and from the Greenslopes Hospital.

Both Len and Dianne have been excellent ambassadors for the good of the Craft and especially Ashton Lodge, and for that we thank them. □

## Good on yer mate!

**At an Australia Day ceremony held in the Brisbane City Hall in January, Wor Bro Alec Stevens took the Oath of Allegiance to become an Australian citizen.**

Originally from Hackney, London (in earshot of the Bow Bells) Alec was a seaman for five years and helped deliver the MV Marra to the port of Adelaide in 1954.

Here he met his partner Judy and they were married in 1956.

Alec obtained employment as a waterside worker, and after relocating to Melbourne, they had a holiday in Brisbane. They liked the climate so much decided to make the move in 1979.

Alec and Judy are avid greyhound trainers and breeders and in 1996 were awarded the Greyhound of the Year Award.

They have two children, Michelle and Belinda and three grandchildren.

So after all those years, and with his immediate family all being Aussies, it became apparent that he had to join the majority and become a "dinki di aussie" himself!

Alec admits that since arriving in Australia he wanted to take out citizenship and has proof of his intent by the three previous application forms yellowing in his drawer at home. He puts this oversight to the old Aussie adage of "she'll be right mate" attitude adopted by most Australians.

### DID YOU KNOW?

You grow about 8mm (0.3in) every night when you are asleep, but shrink to your former height the following day. During the day, the cartilage discs in the spine are squeezed like sponges by gravity while you stand or sit. But at night when you lie down to sleep, the pressure is relieved and the discs swell again. For the same reason astronauts can be temporarily 50mm (2in) taller after a long space flight.

# Monty Python's approach to Freemasonry

This is the text of a script written in October 1970 by the makers of the legendary television programme, "Monty Python's Flying Circus" and has the sub-title of "The Archetict's Sketch"

Scene: A large posh office. Two clients, well-dressed city gents, sit facing a large table at which stands Mr. Tid, the account manager of the architectural firm.

*(Original cast: Mr Tid, Graham Chapman; Mr Wiggin, John Cleese; City Gent One, Michael Palin; Client 2.; Terry Jones; Mr Wymer, Eric Idle)*

Mr. Tid: Well, gentlemen, we have two architectural designs for this new residential block of yours and I thought it best if the architects themselves explained the particular advantages of their designs.

*(There is a knock at the door.)*

Mr. Tid: Ah! That's probably the first architect now. Come in.

*(Mr. Wiggin enters.)*

Mr. Wiggin: Good morning, gentlemen.

Clients: Good morning.

Mr. Wiggin: This is a 12-story block combining classical neo-Georgian features with the efficiency of modern techniques.

The tenants arrive here and are carried along the corridor on a conveyor belt in extreme comfort, past murals depicting Mediterranean scenes, towards the rotating knives. The last twenty feet of the corridor are heavily sound-proofed. The blood pours down these chutes and the mangled flesh slurps into these...

Client 1: Excuse me.

Mr. Wiggin: Yes?

Client 1: Did you say 'knives'?

Mr. Wiggin: Rotating knives, yes.

Client 2: Do I take it that you are proposing to slaughter our tenants?

Mr. Wiggin: ...Does that not fit in with your plans?

Client 1: Not really. We asked for a simple

block of flats.

Mr. Wiggin: Oh. I hadn't fully divined your attitude towards the tenants. You see I mainly design slaughter houses.

Clients: Ah.

Mr. Wiggin: Pity.

Clients: Yes.

Mr. Wiggin: *(indicating points of the model)* Mind you, this is a real beaut. None of your blood caked on the walls and flesh flying out of the windows incommoding the passers-by with this one. *(confidentially)* My life has been leading up to this.

Client 2: Yes, and well done, but we wanted an apartment block.

Mr. Wiggin: May I ask you to reconsider.

Clients: Well...

Mr. Wiggin: You wouldn't regret this. Think of the tourist trade.

Client 1: I'm sorry. We want a block of flats, not an abattoir.

Mr. Wiggin: ...I see. Well, of course, this is just the sort blinkered philistine pig-ignorance I've come to expect from you non-creative garbage.... You sit there on your loathsome spotty behinds squeezing blackheads, not caring a tinker's cuss for the struggling artist. You excrement,... you whining hypocritical toadies with your colour TV sets and your Tony Jacklin golf clubs and your bleeding masonic secret handshakes. You wouldn't let me join, would you, you blackballing bastards. Well I wouldn't become a Freemason now if you went down on your lousy stinking knees and begged me.

Client 2: We're sorry you feel that way, but we did want a block of flats, nice though the abattoir is.

Mr. Wiggin: Oh sod the abattoir, that's not important. *(He dashes forward and kneels in front of them.)* But if any of you could put in

a word for me I'd love to be a mason. Masonry opens doors. I'd be very quiet, I was a bit on edge just now but if I were a mason I'd sit at the back and not get in anyone's way.

Client 1: (*politely*) Thank you.

Mr. Wiggin: ...I've got a second-hand apron.

Client 2: Thank you. (*Mr. Wiggin hurries to the door but stops...*)

Mr. Wiggin: I nearly got in at Hendon.

Client 1: Thank you.

(*Mr. Wiggin exits. Mr Tid rises.*)

Mr. Tid: I'm sorry about that. Now the second architect is Mr. Wymer of Wymer and Dibble. (*Mr. Wymer enters, carrying his model with great care. He places it on the table.*)

Mr. Wymer: Good morning gentlemen. This is a scale model of the block, 28 stories high, with 280 apartments. It has three main lifts and two service lifts. Access would be from Dibblingley Road. (*The model falls over. Mr Wymer quickly places it upright again.*) The structure is built on a central pillar system with... (*The model falls over again. Mr Wymer tries to make it stand up, but it won't, so he has to hold it upright.*) ...with cantilevered floors in pre-stressed steel and concrete. The dividing walls on each floor section are fixed

by recessed magnalium-flanged grooves. (*The bottom ten floors of the model give way and it partly collapses.*) By avoiding wood and timber derivatives and all other inflammables we have almost totally removed the risk of.... (*The model is smoking. The odd flame can be seen. Wymer looks at the city gents.*) Frankly, I think the central pillar may need strengthening.

Client 2: Is that going to put the cost up?

Mr. Wymer: I'm afraid so.

Client 2: I don't know we need to worry too much about strengthening that. After all, these are not meant to be luxury flats.

Client 1: Absolutely. If we make sure the tenants are of light build and relatively sedentary and if the weather's on our side, I think we have a winner here.

Mr. Wymer: Thank you. (*The model explodes.*)

Client 2: I quite agree.

Mr. Wymer: Well, thank you both very much. (*They all shake hands, giving the secret Mason's handshake.*)

*Cut to Mr. Wiggin watching at the window.*

Mr. Wiggin: (*turning to camera*) It opens doors, I'm telling you. □

If

Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head  
when  
all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it  
on you.

If you can trust yourself when  
all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their  
doubting too;

If you can wait and not be  
tired by waiting,

Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,

Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream - and not make dreams your mas-  
ter: If you can think - and not make thoughts  
your aim;

If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two imposters just the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,

Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breathe a word about your loss;  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue  
Or walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you.  
If all men count with you, but none too much;  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and all that's in it,  
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!