

BELMONT ALBION



July 2016

<http://thebelmontalbionlodge.co.nz>

FROM THE WORSHIPFUL MASTER

Wither Pointeth Your Compass My Brothers?
Some musings on returning from Lodge Arawa No 406
where the outside temperature was 11 degrees. Here it is
warmer, but I am sitting by a log fire.

Having just returned from presenting The Compass Charge to the new Master of Lodge Arawa No 406, I have been reflecting on this Charge: the construction of it and its symbolism.

It is a simple-enough charge and, unlike many in our ritual, is not allegorical. It is quite up front. It draws comparisons between the construction as well as purpose of a compass in navigating life's vicissitudes. The charge is of similar construction to any of the working tools in that the operative use of the tools is explained and then there is the usual section outlining the differing needs of the operative and the speculative artisan and the symbolic use of the tools.

Now I have been sailing since I was a babe in arms and, when I succeeded my father in skippering a boat, came to appreciate a compass quite a few times; even in the relative shelter of the Hauraki Gulf. When the skies go grey and it goes ominously quiet and all the surrounding boats disappear as if at dusk; it is time to take a sight on some distant object that has clear water between you and it. It is time to shorten sail, don a jacket and hunker down. 'Cos it's gonna blow!

So in life, if we are prudent, we set our course. We make our goals, we work hard at the outset (if we are smart) and, trying to avoid any distractions (easier said than done), aim for the ultimate goal. Now if the ultimate goal is to lie in a wooden box gazing at the lid and wondering where all the time went, so be it. It is the journey that may require several waypoints. However, we, outside certain times in the Lodge, do not seriously dwell on death unduly. It is not our way and we usually live constantly in its denial.



A compass has four Cardinal Points N E W S and they are reminiscent of the Cardinal Virtues, that our early writers of the Ritual cut and pasted from Catholicism; which took it from Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians* in the VSL: Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice These are not bad waypoints to set on the allegorical chart when setting the course of reaching the ultimate goal, which I think usually stops a bit short of lying in a pine box.

* I seem to be referring to my VSL and quoting it a lot these days. I was told by RW Bro Murray Morrissey in 1993 at my initiation that most of the answers would be in there. I think he was right. Mind you I am sure my grandmother told me that much earlier but I don't recall.

Yours Fraternally,
Russell Ward



Vision Statement: To prosper into the future

Mission Statement: The Belmont Albion Lodge No 45 shall practice the principles of freemasonry in all ways, to enhance education, knowledge and care for its members, attracting men of high quality, personal development and participation in our community

FROM THE EDITOR

The other morning I sat reading the online English language newspapers. Whichever country I looked at one of three types of headline was prevalent, reports of yet another horrific loss of life - world leaders, so lacking in any form of morality, massaging their egos - the shallow people the media project as celebrities parading. As I switched off my laptop the words of the historian Margaret Jacobs came to my mind 'the micro-society set up within Freemasons Lodges constitutes a normative model for society as a whole'. If you sit quietly watching a lodge working you will realise how true this is and how desperately this model needs to be inculcated into society as a whole. Then perhaps brotherly love, honesty, morality and the Golden Rule will no longer be viewed as archaic signs of weakness.

In order to attract prospective candidates from 'today's generation' we are continually reviewing how we communicate and present ourselves and yes we must keep abreast of the times but we must never lose the intangible ethos of 'being' a Freemason.

Editor: ba45.editor@gmail.com

A Past Master's View

At the age of sixteen I was called up and entered the Royal Navy in the rank of Artificer Apprentice. Five years later I was advanced to Engine Room Artificer Fifth Class in the rank of Leading Hand. Subsequent promotions, Fourth Class – Petty Officer, Third Class – Chief Petty Officer, then aged 23.

In Biblical times Tubal-Cain was referred to in Genesis 4, Ch 22 as an Artificer in metals. I still bear the scars of those hammer and chisel days. In Freemasonry we learn that Hyram, the widows son was responsible for many beautiful creations inspired by his father as depicted in 1Kings 7, Ch 14. Further information is contained in our 'craft's oldest documents where in the 'Ancient Charges' can be found.

I can well appreciate the skills devoted in creating King Solomon's Temple as we shall soon learn from some of our esteemed members in our Lodge at the September regular meeting. A must attend for all. In the eighteenth century first written reference to these events appeared in our Freemason's ritual.

In the next century the inventions in steam machinery, ship's mechanical propulsion, and steel ships resulted in 1868, Queen Victoria, by Order in Council, authorising the introduction of Artificers into the Royal Navy. This tradition of engineering excellence continued until ten years ago when all the previous respectability for trade skills lapsed. Even so we are taught that perseverance is necessary to establish perfection, and that nothing short of indefatigable exertion can induce the habit of virtue, enlighten the mind, and purify the soul.

Out Pipes
By Humphrey

Aitchison's Haven Lodge and the Schaw Statutes

The oldest records of a Lodge, which is still tylng, are those belonging to The Lodge of Edinburgh (Mary's Chapel) No.1 which meets on 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month. The first entry in the Minute Books of that Lodge is for 31 July 1599 but the oldest known minute book bears the date 1598. This minute book is titled 'the Buik of the Actis and Ordinans of the Nobile Maisteris and fellows of Craft of the Ludg of Aitchison's heavine' *. The meeting place of this lodge is no longer on the map but the town of Aitchison's Haven (also found spelt as Atcheson or Achison) was granted a charter from James the V which is dated 1526 and scholars believe that the Aitchison's Haven Lodge is dated from that period. It is probable that at a later date the lodge moved from the County of Mid Lothian and met at Musselburgh in nearby East Lothian. The Lodge developed as a result of a Cistercian Communities mining initiatives, the Cistercian's being the only Catholic order to maintain their own masons.



The lodge seems to have had a chequered history for in his 1873 'History of the Lodge of Edinburgh' D.M. Lyon records 'that there was 'trouble' at the May 1737 Grand Quarterly Communication respecting representatives from Aitchison's Haven Lodge. It was thus that at this Communication it was agreed 'that Atcheson's Haven be deleted out of the books of the Grand Lodge and no more called on the rolls of the Clerk's highest peril'. The Lodge was restored to the Grand Lodge roll in 1814 but becoming dormant it was finally cut off in 1866.

As with other old Scottish Trade Incorporations Atcheson's Haven Lodge was at first ruled and governed by a Warden and a Deacon with a Clerk to attend to the clerical work, an office for which it seems even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was difficult to find an occupant. Later the relative position of the two principal office-bearers was reversed, the senior office-bearer being the Deacon with the Warden as second in command. It is not until 1825 that the senior office-bearer is designated as 'Master'. By the later part of the eighteenth century the list of officers has grown to include Managers, Key-keepers and others including the Keeper of the Mort-cloth.

In the early days of the seventeenth century it was unusual, in many country places, to bury the dead in coffins and the corpse was transported to the grave covered with a pall of black velvet, or other material, which belonged usually to the Kirk Session of the Parish, he was responsible for the practical aspects of church life. A few societies also possessed their own cloth which was hired out for the use of the parishioners or members of the societies who had no mort-cloth, also known as a morcloth, of their own. This was a source of considerable income to the owners of the cloth, the hire charge varying according to whether the deceased was a member of the craft or a stranger.

The Lodge minutes record how Aitchison's Haven acted in accord with the Schaw Statutes of 1598-9. Article 8 of the Statutes establishing that all lodge meetings must be minuted, articles 10 and 11 show specific initiation fees for apprentices and fellow crafts this including money for the provision of a shared meal upon being initiated or accepted to the higher degree. Fines were also laid out for non compliance with articles of the Statute. The minutes record that 'Thomas Schiell the younger was fined £10 and discharged for failing to possess the requisite conceptual and practical knowledge associated with his status in the Lodge and for taking on employment while an apprentice'. The minute further states that 'such penalties will be in effect until he binds himself to Thomas Schiell the elder'.(it is not recorded whether this was Thomas's Father or an elder Brother).

In his 'Freemason's Guide and Compendium' B.E. Jones states that 'As far back as the Reformation certain Scots lodges welcomed aristocratic neighbours as honorary members' and again in the minutes there is evidence of such individuals being admitted. In 1693 Master Robert Cubie, a theology student, was made an entered apprentice and fellow craft also in 1672 Alexander Seaton, the brother of the 5th Earl of Winton, a leader of the Jacobite Rebellion, was admitted.

The minutes of the Lodge of Aitchison's Haven no only show how Scottish lodges were organised under the auspices of the Schaw Statutes but also how the Craft started to be transformed from a trade orientated Operative to a Speculative order.

* It is generally accepted that Lodge Mother Kilwinning No.0, on the roll of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, is the oldest lodge in Scotland and possibly the world, dating back to the building of Kilwinning Abbey circa 1140. But there are no written records of this as the Lodge minute book(s) etc. were lost in a series of fires and other disasters.

source:- Wallace-James/Hughan/Lentini/Alexander/Masonic Encyclopedia/et.al. JNG

100 Years Ago

From the minute book of Albion Lodge No. 45, Meeting in the Masonic Hall Devonport, 13th July 1916.
The Lodge was opened in Due & Ancient Form with Solemn Prayer & Praise at 7:30 pm

Correspondence:-

From the Rev. Geo. Budd stating that the Lodge was not to have the honour of laying the Foundation Stone of the new Presbyterian Church.

Notice of Motion:-

Bro. J.L. Hammond S.D. gave the following notice of motion to be considered at the next meeting in August. To add to Bye-law 13 'Every member of the Lodge shall also contribute the sum of 2 shillings per year payable quarterly and the amount thus collected together with any other monies subscribed shall be administered by the Hall Committee for the purpose of renewing the Regalia and Furniture of the Lodge.'

Candidates Proposed for Initiation:-

Mr. Alfred Jetter, aged 39, Commercial Traveller, married of Devonport. Proposed by W.Bro. C.E.G. Blandford seconded by Bro. M.G. King and -

Mr. Everard Taylor, aged 33, Envelope Machinist, married of 3 Anglesea Street Ponsonby. Proposed by Bro. G. Bourne and seconded by Bro. J.A. White.

Greetings Received:-

Greetings and good wishes were received from the following lodges, St Andrew No 8, Waitemata 689 E.C, (name crossed out ed.) 249 I.C.

The business of the evening being ended the Lodge was closed in Peace & Harmony with Solemn Praise at 9:30 pm.

Report from the Refectory by the D.C.

I report with satisfaction an excellent Table Lodge for B.A. on Tuesday 21 June. This culminated a long held desire from our Worshipful Master and he reports satisfaction with the result.

28 Brethren were present which included a number of visitors including our presumptive District Grand Master Elect V/W Brother Dennis Waller who accepted our invitation to deliver the 'key note' speech. This he did and the response was excellent. Dennis has clear views, aims and objectives for his term as the District Grant Master – should he be elected and his comments were well received by the Brethren. Every Lodge in the District was represented.

Our Worshipful Master set the tone for the evening by smashing and breaking his glass with the first toast. (by accident he assures us) This followed a number of well delivered toasts with much hilarity. The toast to our esteemed Brother Secretary was particularly poignant and sobering. David has been the 'glue' that has kept Belmont Albion together, focussed and informed for many years. Long may it continue.

Paul Copper gave a very good explanation about the origins of Table Lodges. Floyd Apoderado gave an outstanding toast to the visitors. The Grand Caterer with assistance from David Little, Sean Neeley and Chris Bilham did an excellent job in keeping things moving.

It was great to have Stu Mill present. He travelled from his new place of residence in Taupo especially for the meeting. Jack Wolf was also another well received visitor.

In summary, our Worshipful Master thanked those involved in "making the evening happen" and with time and circumstances permitting, we could re visit the Table Lodge format in the future.

Well done Worshipful Master.





[Photographs courtesy of Sean Neely]

New Members:

Brethren, isn't it refreshing to see our two new Brothers in Isaac Newcombe and Chris Bestwick join our ranks? These two look like a couple of 'keepers' and with the Educational and Mentoring systems Paul Copper has in place we must extend the hand of friendship and work hard to include them in Lodge affairs. The point I make here, is it is the responsibility of ALL of us to contribute. Isaac gave his first 'charge' with enthusiasm, collected the Refectory donations and ran the raffle at our last working. Well done Isaac.

Last Working:

Our First Degree working for Chris Bestwick was conducted without a hitch. Well done Brethren.

Our Strategic Plan states - 'we strive for perfection – simply the best'. We must never let our standards drop.

Our next working is another First, for Ali, on the earlier date of 6th September. Keep this in mind Brethren. VWBrother Geoff Foote will take the D.C's Baton as I will be overseas on a very important mission.

A special Rehearsal Night: 26 July

This rehearsal night should be an interesting one. Our Worshipful Master has an interesting agenda. It is guaranteed to keep you both reverted and entertained.

Our Master is constantly thinking of ways to energise the Lodge. So far he is ticking the boxes but remember Brethren, we are not a 'one man band' every member has a role to play in making our Lodge function to its true potential. Furthermore our Plan states we are innovative, focussed and visionary underpinned by clear goals, aims and objectives.

'BUILDING ON OUR PAST – RUNNING TOWARDS OUR FUTURE'

Murray Morrissey

Thoughts from the Secretary

This week I received this note from Ed Cameron. Ed was a member of Belmont Lodge No 335. He relocated across the Ditch and joined a Scottie Lodge.



Ed Writes:-

'I love getting the B.A.45 newsletter. The brethren I forward it to be amazed at its quality. They recognise the amount of effort it reflects. You all are all to be congratulated.'

I keep hoping I'll hop across the ditch someday, but I've had life get in the way on numerous occasions. Currently it appears I'm probably, and very hopefully, recovering from a rough trot with bowel cancer (which we caught reasonably early). I'm being monitored closely and the doctors are very happy with my progress. (I'm finished chemo and radiology.) So, it's for now a wait and see thing. I'm very positive, and feeling pretty good.

One very large ray of light during this journey though was becoming a grandfather to a bonny bouncing boy, Harry, the first born of my son and bro. James. I'm now a certifiable doting nutter.'

Best wishes to all.

Ed

Also received from Noel Whiley:-

'Always good to keep in touch with BA45 and read your HMV. You are obviously having a good year with good support. I will be attending L Arawa 406 Installation next Saturday so look forward to catching up with you down there. I was at L Te Papa 316 Installation here in Tauranga last week and saw the Compass presentation so look forward to your rendition! Convey my Greetings and Best Wishes to BA45.

*Fraternally
Noel Whiley*

At each Installation the Master is given the 'Charter' Charge, in it he is instructed to "ensure that the Brethren may not plead ignorance to the laws by which we are Governed" So each Month, as a reminder, we will publish one Belmont Albion by Law.

Bye Law No2:- Regular Meetings:

The Lodge shall assemble at the North Shore Masonic Center, Albany, on the Second Tuesday in each Month except January and February, The Lodge shall be tyled at 7.30 p.m. or such other time as the Master may decide.

Dave

Pseuds Corner

Is our Ritual Book a Memeplex?

In his book 'The Selfish Gene' Richard Dawkins expanded on the theory behind what he termed 'a meme'. He did not invent the 'meme' any more than Isaac Newton invented gravity he, like Newton, just spotted something that has always been there and gave it a name. Although in 1976 Dawkins proposed the word meme in 1904 Richard Wolfgang Semon had used the term Mneme to describe mental imitation in his book 'The Mneme'.



The root of the word is in the Greek 'mimeme' meaning something that can be imitated, a 'meme' is described as a 'self-propagating unit of cultural evolution'(Dawkins wanted a monosyllabic sound like gene so abbreviated mimeme). The on-line dictionary 'Ninjawords' expands the definition of a meme as 'any unit of cultural information, such as a practice or idea, that is transmitted verbally or by repeated action from one mind to another'.

We are all bombarded by potential memes, the media and a multitude of electronic devices tell us what to wear, what to cook and eat and what to think, this in the form of words, single images or video clips. Memes can also be passed on by word of mouth, as the masonic Charges originally were.

In 'The Selfish Gene' Dawkins argues that evolution occurs on the metal level as well as the physical level. Cultures survive because certain cultural ideas are passed on and embellished from person to person and hence generation to generation. A meme has to be able to be conveyed with relative ease from one person to another so I would suggest that our 'little blue book' is a collection of memes and so becomes a memplex. The contents, in which the Charges are made up from compilations of ancient recommendations on how to pursue 'purity of life', are the memes. Masonic Initiation solidifies the bond between Freemasons whilst simultaneously loosening the connection with persons outside the Craft. The passing on of specific memes is part of this initiation ceremony.

To identify Confucius as a 'memetic engineer' may seem bizarre but for myself his Golden Rule, 'Do not impose on others what you do not wish for yourself' is the most outstanding example of a meme that has been passed via mouth to ear then the printed word and now electronically for a period of over 2,500 years. It is passed on, learned from the written word and then spoken to the ear of the initiate, during the final Charge of our Entered Apprentice Degree and is just one example of why I suggest that our 'blue book' is a memplex – a collection of memes.

Source:/Gunters/Brown & as in text

The Triple Tau

Woven into the carpet, laid in the Blue Lodge, at the North Shore Masonic Centre, in Albany are repeated triple tau crosses' woven within the Star or Shield of David. The triple tau is literally what appear to be 3 tau's joined at their bases, tau being the 19th letter of the greek alphabet and similar to our letter T. Originally the monogram reproduced in the carpet was a 'T' over an 'H' with a space between the 2 letters. Historians suggest that this duality is an abbreviation for Templum Hierosolym the latin term for the Temple of Jerusalem or the mystical union of the Father and Son. 'H' signifying Jehovah and 'T' the Son or perhaps a modification of the Hebrew letter shin, ψ, which was one of the Jewish abbreviations of the sacred name.



the Lodge Room carpet

This same form, 'T' with the 'H' being separate appeared on the Jewels of the Royal Arch until about 1810 with the last example of a jewel bearing the 'T' over 'H' dated 1821. What happened was that the letters gradually lost their serifs, the small line at the end of the stroke of a letter. So the 'H' became 'H' and the 'T' became 'T' with the tail of the 'T' dropping on to the crossbar of the 'H' thus forming what looked like three capital T's or Tau crosses, the lower part of each tail meeting at a central point.

The origins of the Tau cross or the Cross of St. Antony go back to the ancient Egyptian cross called an Ankh which is a simple cross mounted with an oval at the top called the Ru. In considering Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs it is noticeable that the Ankh appears many times a strange coincidence if one considers that the letter 'T' is the most used consonant in our language. It is thought that this symbol originated from the spread of the horns of a bull or a ram and the vertical lines on the animals face. In its long history, the Tau cross was also the symbol of the Roman God Mithras and the Greek God Attis. In Norse mythology the hammer of Thor is seen as a Tau cross. The Bull as the Astrological sign of Taurus gets its name from the Tau and Ru. Even the Druids used the Tau when venerating trees by scrawling the symbol into the bark of their sacred oaks. In the Bible the Tau Cross was first alluded to in the Old Testament book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel 9:4, "Go through the city of Jerusalem and put a Tau on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament..."

As Christianity gained followers and pagan symbols were converted into Christian ones the Tau was used as the first cross of the followers of Christ with many believing that the cross of the Crucifixion was actually T-shaped and so many early Christians adopted the Tau as the symbol of their religious belief. St. Anthony Abbott (251-356), an Egyptian monk and one of the first Christian monastics, used a crutch in the shape of a Tau. When he visited another

monk, he would place the crutch outside of the dwelling making it a symbol of communion with God.

In 1095 the Antonines were founded by a French nobleman after his son was cured of a disease following a vision of St. Anthony instructing him to plant a Tau as an instrument of healing. As a result Tau Crosses were used in amulets as a protection against disease in the Middle Ages. The most common reference of the Tau in Christianity is with the Franciscan Order of Saint Francis of Assisi who adopted it as his personal symbol of faith and used it as his signature.

Tory Island, which is known simply as Toraigh, is the most northwest point of the continent of Europe, it is treeless, bleak and remote and has been populated since the age of the neolithic farmers 4000 years ago. Legend has it that during the Bronze Age it was occupied by a race of pirates whose god-chief was Balor the evil eye.



In the 6th century St. Columcille founded a monastery on Toraigh erecting a round tower and a 1.9 meter high stone Tau cross carved from a single slab of mica slate. Island legends say that a Cromwellian soldier named Aindreas na gCros hated crosses and tried to break Toraigh's Tau with his sword, the cross did not break but the marks of his sword can still be seen today. Because of this local fishermen believe it has powers of protection and pray to it before venturing into the North Atlantic to ply their trade. (Due to its self-sufficiency Toraigh has no need of the standard clock and on arrival on the island visitors are warned that 'time has no relevance on this island').

There are many links to Masonic Initiation and the Initiation ceremony of the Mysteries, one of these being the Tau Cross for the cross we use as an emblem in its triple form was marked, in baptism, on the foreheads of those initiated into the Mysteries. But can I argue that the link is purely semantic not allegorical as the Masonic Triple Tau was formed, as commented above, by the conjoining of the letters 'T' and 'H' not by combining 3 Tau Crosses.

Source: Jones/Harte/Mendoza/Irish Heritage Partnership

JNG

MASONIC
BIRTHDAYS

13/07/93	M.R.	Ward
19/07/12	B.	Salosagcol

North Shore Royal Arch Chapter No. 52



Joshua's breastplate and the 'Shamir' - part 2

In his 1957 book 'The Freemasons Book of the Royal Arch' Bernard E. Jones writes about the very curious myth that grew up that the stones of Joshua's breastplate were shaped with the aid of a worm called a Shamir. He goes on to say, 'A masonic ritual of the eighteenth century embodied questions and answers relating to the wonderful properties of that noble insect which cut and shaped Solomon's sacred utensils and holy vessels.'

Jones suggests that, 'Probably shamir or schamir is a corrupted form of the Greek word smiris, meaning emery'. The word has been spelled in many ways thumare, thamir, shamur, et.al. The superstition was that the worm, shamir, was placed on the stone where the cut was to be made and as if by magic the stone parted exactly as required. In the course of time the same legend was adopted to explain the engraving or cutting of the inscriptions on the breastplate stones, the method of engraving the hard gems being a mystery to the common people. Out of the myth arises by implication the idea that Solomon's masons may have used emery in working and surfacing their stones and that the ancient gem workers were also acquainted with its abrasive properties. In support it must be remembered that from time immemorial emery was exported from Cape Emery, in the island of Naxos, in the Aegean Sea, a short sailing distance from Palestine".

Immanuel Velikovsky, the author of many controversial books reinterpreting the events of ancient history proposed that, given the conditions under which the Shamir was stored when not in use (from part 1 '... always wrapped in wool and stored in a container made of lead...'), the Shamir's true nature was radioactive. Velikovsky hypothesized that the Shamir was a small sample of a naturally occurring radioactive isotope, possibly radium.

But to return to the stones themselves, for centuries there has been uncertainty regarding the correct order of the stones. It states in the VSL that the stones were in four rows of three. Each stone being of a different mineral with the name of the Tribe engraved on it.

The Jewish Encyclopedia has them in the following order based on Exodus ch. 28 v. 17-20: in the first row, "a sardius (ruby), a topaz, and a carbuncle (emerald), in the second row, an emerald (carbuncle), a sapphire, and a diamond (sardonyx'), in the third row, a jacinth* (amber), an agate, and an amethyst and in the fourth row, a beryl (chalcedony) an onyx (beryl) and a jasper."

* In the Masonic edition of the King James Bible this stone is described as a 'ligure'. There is now no mineral bearing this name.

Source:-Jewish encyclopedia/Gadol/Shamir/Jones/Johnson

JNG

"Everyone thinks of changing the word but no one thinks of changing him or herself"
Leo Tolstoy



Next Issue

Deadline: 15 August 2016 **Email:** ba45.editor@gmail.com