

# BELMONT ALBION



June 2016

<http://thebelmontalbionlodge.co.nz>

## FROM THE WORSHIPFUL MASTER

Some Thoughts on Becoming a Freemason

Initiation never did, nor ever can, make a man a true Mason; It gives the key but, mere possession of the key, does not constitute ownership of the treasure; it sows the seed, but, unless the soil be good and carefully cultivated, fruit will not be produced; it opens the portal, but unless the road be traversed, the goal cannot be attained. It lays the foundation, but, without labour, the construction cannot be raised.<sup>1</sup>

The candidate is exposed to the enigmatic nature of Masonic Ritual within moments of entering the Lodge room on his first giant step into the unknown. Progressively, after further Lodge visits, coaching from his mentor and from the Belmont Albion's marvellous education program, he learns something of its drift and its meaning.

Familiarity from exposure to the ceremonies in his mother Lodge and from visits to other Lodges, results in the progressive understanding/demystification of the apparent strangeness of it all.

The initiate is the heir to a rich tradition that cannot be fully understood from first principles. There are so many books published, so much on the internet, that one can be easily bewildered -or worse- seriously misled. For even some of the writings of the erudite and revered founders of Masonry can be shown to be fanciful; indeed quite wrong. So it is with some caution, that the newly made Mason should be let adrift without guidance into the extensive library that exists. This is where a good Lodge must give guidance. Indeed most Brethren are happy to help if asked.

Our new brother hears, practically on an on-going basis, of the antiquity of it all so much that he must wonder about the relevance to his life and times. It all is at risk of appearing too profound, too complex to comprehend. Irrelevant it is not even after all these centuries. Masonry has never had to make war on its past. It is the only organization in this world to transcend all religions, political persuasions, colour and creeds.

What is Freemasonry? What is it trying to do? How did it come to be? What are its central teachings? It is to answer these questions, and they are questions that all of us have or have had at some stage;



that the philosophy of the Craft exists. The sad truth is that there appears to be no authorised interpretation of Freemasonry: There is no ready-made Masonic creed or explanation of the ritual and the Mason must, in part, think it out for himself which is no easy task. This is why we exhort all brothers to make a daily advancement in their knowledge as assiduously as they attend to their other personal affairs.

But to put it all in the proverbial too hard basket is a shame. Far better to read some good Masonic histories and texts. Many are available on Kindle via Amazon. To learn what Masonry has achieved in the world is to gain an insight into its purposes and principles, for like any other organisation, it has revealed its spirit through its actions. It truly has never questioned its origins.

1 Haywood H L (1921) The Great Teachings of Masonry. New York: George H Doran Company.

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

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## FROM THE EDITOR

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At school my English tutor, a long mourned Johnny Way, told me “never start with an apology” but I find this month I have no option. The 'Masonic Birthdays' were missing from the May edition of the Newsletter. I blame the demons of Microsoft but as Benjamin Franklin said “never ruin an apology with an excuse” so I will not elucidate. The offended Brethren were contacted and were most generous in their forgiveness. Their names are included this month.

The staff of the BA 45 Newsletter attempt to pick up any 'howlers' but in looking at what is in front of us we missed what was not there.

I have noticed recently that when visiting lodges there has been a distinct lack of fellow visitors, in more than one case I found myself the only guest. I have pondered on this with no real conclusions, travel from the top of the Shore is becoming ever more difficult, last week it took me over 2 hours to complete a journey that the AA on line map told me should be completed in under 30 minutes and indeed 1 week earlier the same journey was completed in that time. I notice that many of the younger Brethren's working days seem to grow longer making arriving in time for the visitors' entrance difficult if not impossible.

I recall being told as a young man that with the advent of computerisation and automation leisure time would expand and with the introduction of public transport systems such as 'Maglev' commuting would be 'easy'. I am not sure what went wrong but those comments were somewhat optimistic. These concerns all add to the complex reasons as to the difficulty in attracting and retaining new members to the Craft. Thoughts on the resolution of this issue will be well received and included in forthcoming issues of the Newsletter.

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## A Past Master's View

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At a recent Masonic meeting it was commented that when many men joined together in wartime they formed a brotherhood that boosted numbers in the craft when they later entered civilian life. The person suggested the unmentionable idea that a professional advertising campaign would bring forward many suitable candidates who could otherwise remain in darkness.

The established method of introduction has failed to attract the numbers that would sustain our recovery. A first step is vital to establish the base from which the future which each Lodge must prosper. If the Lodge does not improve their membership in the age bracket required an inevitable decline will continue. What is being done to attract bright young men of ambitious bent who would form the elite corps of leaders presently sadly in short supply?. During those halcyon days of expansion it was vital if one wished to climb the ladder towards higher rank to study ritual, attend regularly, and strive to better one's self.

To remain a steward for ten years, before leaping ahead, was not unheard of in the fifties. A few young men who become our candidates these days are not happy to patiently mark time and frequently become disillusioned. Senior Lodge members back then were quite strict and sometimes thought of as 'the Eagles in the East'. Thankfully we now have tremendous help and support from that direction. With the advent of 'social media' both advertising out in the community and support across the membership within the Lodge it must be possible to overcome the former need to keep from those aspiring to advance in the dark unnecessarily.

The drop in numbers in the 'blue' has serious effects on 'side' and 'other orders'. It seems to have escaped the notice of some in Central Freemasonry Administration that the many of us who wish to discover the incredible additional stories available beyond the first three degrees are the main messengers bringing in new Freemasons. While it is necessary to start at the bottom, that is where we must all begin our journey. Unlike every other activity open to young men this wonderful Order has the whole of our lives to develop. Time is there to study as slowly or as intensely as the candidate wishes. To start the journey soon after the student has reached his tertiary plateau, completed his widening experience level and is in need of further impetus, a barrage of ideas, suggestions, and information must be provided to him by us in a manner he will respond to.

Long after I retired someone invented a new way of communicating. Our propaganda still arrives in the letter box for those who so desire. Already our mail person only visits three times a week. Soon all communication will be coming along a fibre cable or even worse by the dreaded mobile device. I dread the day we meet in the tele-conference lodge and refectory is in the kitchen.

Out Pipes  
By Humphrey

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## Alchemical links to the First Degree Ritual

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The word alchemy has its roots in the Greek word al-khemeia meaning 'the art of transmuting metals' but alchemy is also a philosophical tradition. The art was first practiced in Ancient Egypt, India and China and later in medieval Europe. The popular conception is that it is an attempt by the adept to transmute base metals into gold and in both Medieval Europe and Ancient China charlatans who claimed to have achieved this were put to death. Fredrick of Würzburg even had a set of gallows gilded just for hanging these



pseudo-chemists. Throughout history respected thinkers have practiced alchemy, Thomas Aquinas, Paracelsus, Roger Bacon, Isaac Newton and Elias Ashmole being a few. It is believed that during the 4 stages of transmutation practitioners find and develop the inner self. In 1944 C.G. Jung published 'Psychology and Alchemy' in which he stated that alchemical symbols were deep in the alchemists psyche and linked to what Jung termed the collective unconsciousness. It is this development of the inner man that I wish to compare to the Entered Apprentice Degree.

'It makes good men better' is one answer to the age old question 'what does Freemasonry do'? In 1966 Stanton Linden wrote 'Darke Hieroglyphicks' and in it he suggests that alchemy is the art of liberating parts of the Cosmos from temporal existence and achieving perfection which, for metals is gold and for man redemption or some form of inner revelation and enlightenment. Is this not 'making good men better' a transformation achieved in the lodge room. The alchemist worked in his laboratory and the Latin root of the word laboratory is 'labor et ora' in English, 'labour and pray.' In his laboratory the adept worked on his process and contemplated on purifying and focusing the mind at his Oratorium, a small altar. What does the Freemason do in his lodge, he works on his ritual and offers prayers to a deity. Both lodge and laboratory being sealed against the prying eyes of the intruder.

I also found similarities between alchemy and freemasonry in the wording of our ritual. In E.J. Holmyard's book 'Alchemy' he quotes the following dialogue, between a 15 century alchemist and his son. "Son upon condition I shall thee teach, so that thou wilt on the Sacrament swear, that thou shalt never write it in scripture, nor teach it to no man except thou be sure, that he is a perfect man to God and also full of charity. Doing always good deeds and that he be full of humility, and that you know him not in loud words but always soft and still and also prove whether his life be good or ill and all this shall thou swear and also make a vow. If thou wilt have this knowledge of me now and the same oath on book they make to thee, ere thou them let any part of this science know or see". The words of the Entered Apprentice's obligation spring to mind

As you look around the lodge room you are reminded of the process of changing rude matter into due form or the transformation of man from darkness to enlightenment. The newly admitted freemason moving from the north and darkness toward the rising star in the east.

In the alchemist's laboratory he similarly works on transmuting rude or base metal into the philosopher's stone, due form, via a process that changes the prima materia from nigredo, blackening to rubedo redness and perfection. Many philosophers believe that whilst he is working on his Magnum opus, his Great work, the alchemist is experiencing his own soul achieving purification.

The words 'veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols' further link alchemy and freemasonry for they are used to describe the craft and George Starkey, Isaac Newton's alchemical mentor wrote when commenting on the manner of alchemical writing '...and this we do to deceive...'. .

For me one final component in my hypothesis is the suggestion in a charge from the First Degree that the signs and symbols of Masonic ceremonies correspond in a great degree with the mysteries of Ancient Egypt. Western alchemy is also traced to Ancient Egypt where the city of Alexandria was a centre of alchemical knowledge in 330 BCE.

Source:- Kohanke/Holmyard/Jung/Linden/Starkey/et.al.  
JNG

## 100 Years Ago

From the minute book of Albion Lodge No. 45, Meeting in the Masonic Hall Devonport, 8th June 1916. This being the Installation Meeting. The Lodge was opened in Due & Ancient Form with Solemn Prayer & Praise at 7:00 pm

Correspondence:-

From the Rev. Geo. Budd on behalf of the Managers of the Devonport Presbyterian Church inviting the Lodge to be present and to take part in the Ceremony of Laying the Foundation Stone of the new Church at an early date.

Invitation Accepted:-

On the motion of V.W. Bro. Goudie seconded by Bro. M.G. King it was resolved that the Lodge accept the invitation to be present on that occasion and Grand Lodge to be consulted if they wish to take part. The incoming Master & Wardens with V.W. Bro. Rolfe, W.Bro. Crosher & Bro. J.M. Barr were appointed as a committee to act in conjunction with the authorities of the Presbyterian Church.

W.M. Obligation & Installation:-

Bro. Valdean Rode Anderson Master Elect was then admitted and after solemn prayer took the obligation of an I.M. & was invested with the Badge, Collar and Jewel of his office, placed in the Chair of King Solomon according to ancient custom and saluted by the W. Brethren present.

Candidate Proposed:-

Mr. William John Walker of Devonport aged 41 years by occupation an accountant married was proposed for membership by Bro. H.A. Harris seconded by Bro. P.W. McCallum

The business of the evening being ended the Lodge was closed in Peace & Harmony with Solemn Praise at 10 pm.

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## Circumambulation

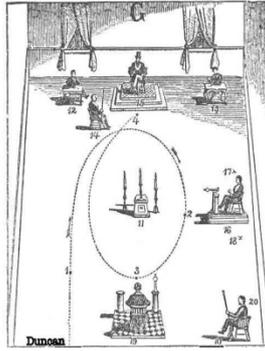
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To circumambulate means to walk round about which is derived from the Latin words 'circum' meaning around and 'ambulare' meaning to walk. In its original sense it referred to that portion of the religious rites in the ancient ceremonies of initiation wherein the candidate was conducted, in a formal procession, around the altar or some other holy and consecrated object. Circumambulation would have followed the course of the sun from east to west by the way of the south. This in the northern hemisphere.

In ancient Greece, when the priests were engaged in the rites of sacrifice they and the people always walked three times around the altar while chanting a sacred hymn or ode. Sometimes, while the people stood around the altar, the rite of circumambulation was performed by the priest alone, who, turning towards the right hand went around the altar and sprinkled it with holy water. In making this circumambulation it was considered absolutely necessary that the right side should always be next to the altar and that the procession should move from the east to the south, then to the west, next to the north, and afterwards to the east again.

The Druid's 'mystical dance' around the cairn or sacred stones is similar to the rite of circumambulation. On these occasions the priest always made three circuits, from east to west, by the right hand, around the altar or cairn, accompanied by all the worshippers. In the 'Critical History of the Celtic Religion' Toland writes that in the Scottish Isles, once a principal seat of the Druidical religion, 'the worshippers never come to the ancient sacrificing and fire-hallowing cairns but they walk three times around them, from east to west, according to the course of the sun.' This sanctified tour or 'Round by the South' was called the 'Deiseal', derived from 'deas' the right hand and 'soil' an ancient name for the sun.

Originally circumambulation was only performed in the lodge in relationship to the specific preparation and examination of the candidate prior to his obligation. This to ensure that he was properly prepared and a fit and proper person to participate in the following ceremony. This procedure reflected the combined symbolisms of the circle and the circle of existence, which was intended to remind the candidate that his upward course of purification was beginning. All other movements in the lodge were made by the most direct and convenient route, which clearly distinguished the rite of circumambulation from routine movements and emphasised the importance of the rite. This visible distinction is still maintained in those lodges of speculative freemasons that follow either the Emulation working or some of the old Scottish workings. Nowadays the word circumambulation has almost disappeared from use in craft freemasonry and perambulation is usually used to describe all movements on the floor of the lodge. To 'perambulate', in which the Latin word 'circum' is replaced by the Latin word 'per' which means through, originally meant to walk through, up and down or over for the purpose of surveying the land or patrolling a beat.



*Print from Duncan's Masonic Ritual 1886, showing circumambulation of the lodge*

By the second half of the nineteenth century 'circumambulation' was no longer regarded as a purely religious or mystical practice, having acquired a new and more general usage, simply meaning to walk around or about. During the same period 'perambulation' had also lost its specific meaning because it was being used more and more frequently when circumambulation previously would have been used to describe the movement more accurately. Military minded ritualists then introduced the squaring of the lodge room for all movements on the floor so that the original purpose and symbolism of circumambulation was lost or at best not understood.

source: Falconer/Toland/Colebrook/Gronovius/Mackay/ et.al.

JNG

## MASONIC BIRTHDAYS

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09/05/78	G.L.	Foot
09/05/85	S.G.	Mill
21/05/85	C.A.	Thompson
14/05/86	A.J.	Pengelly
12/05/87	G.J.	Haxell

## MASONIC BIRTHDAYS

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18/06/79	M.F.	Cadman
09/06/81	D.W.	Barr
12/06/01	D.B.	Wrigley
10/06/03	W.	Jones
14/06/04	R.J.	Lumsden
09/06/09	S.	Pablo

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## Thoughts from the Secretary

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Well we are off to a Great Start this new Masonic Year. First with an excellent Camaraderie Night in May, now a Third Degree for Bro David Little. The new team has been putting in the hard yards and we look forward to a top ceremony. Again looking forward to our 'Table Lodge' when it will be great to catch up with Stu Mill who is coming up from Taupo to join us on 21 June.



Wayne Jones and Allen Thompson are back in town after their overseas trips and Suki made contact, he is "planning on being back sometime in July, so will be good to go from August onwards".

Dave

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## Refectory News from the D.C.

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Following the 3rd Degree worked on June 14 Chris Bilham was awarded the Rapley Trophy for 'Excellence in Presenting a Charge'. Congratulations Chris.

The candidate of the evening, David Little, gave an entertaining 'This is Your Life' talk and the meal served by our resident 'Grand Caterer' was first class.

Murray

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## North Shore Royal Arch Chapter No. 52

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### Joshua's breastplate and the 'Shamir' - part 1

Last month Urim and Thummim were looked at, now another legend of the breastplate is considered. The stones mounted in the breastplate worn by Joshua, the 3rd Principal, represent the 12 Tribes of Israel each name being fully engraved on one of the stones. No chisel was to touch the stones, nor was it permitted to mark the names of the twelve patriarchs on the stones by means of paint. Given this restriction one ponders on how did the names get engraved on the stones? According to legend, the engraving was done by means of the Shamir, which was placed on the stone and had the marvellous power of cutting it along the lines of the letters of the names, which were first traced with ink.

The Shamir has been described as a worm or a substance that had the power to cut through stone, iron and diamond. The Shamir was reputed to have existed in the time of Moses. King Solomon, aware of the existence of the Shamir, but lacking any sample himself, commissioned a search that turned up a 'grain of Shamir the size of a barley-corn'. In the Babylonian Talmud it is written that 'Our Rabbis taught that the shamir was one of ten things created in the twilight of the sixth day, before the first Sabbath' and no hard substance can withstand it'.

Solomon's artisans reputedly used the Shamir in the construction of the Temple. The material to be worked, whether stone, wood or metal, was affected by being shown to the Shamir. Logic would suggest that if something is shown to something it must have an organ to see with and early Rabbinical scholars described the Shamir almost as a living being but other early sources describe it as a green stone. For storage, the Shamir was always wrapped in wool and stored in a container made of lead, any other vessel would burst and disintegrate under the Shamir's gaze, again the suggested of a being with sight.

The Shamir was either lost or had lost its potency by the time of the destruction of the First Temple at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.

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

JNG

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"To see a world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wild flower, hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in a house"

William Blake

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**Next Issue**

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