

BELMONT ALBION



May 2016

<http://thebelmontalbionlodge.co.nz>

FROM THE WORSHIPFUL MASTER

.....the Book of Life is made
A superstitious instrument, on which
We gabble o'er the oaths we mean to break;
For all must swear –all and in every place.¹

Coleridge says that we gabble over our oaths and obligations whenever we make them thus belittling their intended purpose. Maybe we even intend not to keep them. He (probably having a Masonic reflection) uses the expression “Spirit who sweeps the wild Harp of time”² to refer to the deity that we make our obligations to. The intention is similar, however. Our Masonic oaths are quite long winded and, although there are similarities in parts of the three oaths we take at our stages of becoming a Freemason, they are fundamentally different in purpose. The obligations for the Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft degrees are similar intent and exhort us to keep the secrets and mysteries of the degrees to ourselves. This is fair enough given the historical context in which our early Operative brothers were admitted to a craft that made imposing marks on the landscape in very early times.

This is all right and proper and intended to maintain some sort of quality in the product. Our modern day tradespeople would not readily let any untrained person in to work beyond his knowledge level nor would the Masons lest there be some catastrophic failure in a building resulting in injury or death.

However when we move on to the Third Degree there is the usual undertaking to keep mum³ and not blow the gaff on the usual secrets. It is short and there is a long section containing a very strict code of conduct to be observed in one's dealings with fellow Freemasons and their possessions and relatives.

Our Masonic ritual is replete with charges and obligations that we should revisit from time to time as memory fades. We aim to make a daily advancement in our Masonic knowledge –(I do –do you?) and in so doing, we slowly leave behind the very basic stuff of our youthful years. Now, as a Entered



Apprentice, you are youthful. A tyro –callow, momentarily-lost and metaphorically a timid and inquiring lad. Remember when you left school in order to take on your first job, chosen trade or profession? You were taught right quick where you fitted into the scheme of things and how to behave by your wise co-workers. Then you put up the hours (and it is reckoned that it takes 10,000 hours, at whatever you do, to master it thoroughly –be it doing brain surgery, dentistry or computer programming) and rise through the ranks in all probability forgetting unimportant lessons; as fast as the new ones are learnt. Alas the ways of the shop floor are so different from the centres of tertiary education that today's youth aspire to. Sad really.

So what is the point? There are several recent instances around us where brethren seem to have forgotten the solemn obligations that they made once. There are brethren who have forgotten the - simple enough- Apron Charge in the First Degree; there are others who certainly are not coexisting as well as the writers of our Ritual intended and could well revisit the Third Degree Obligation.

I commend you to refresh your memory of the last obligation you took. It is a worthwhile revision.

Yours Fraternaly,
Russell Ward

References

1. Fears in Solitude. S T Coleridge April 1789
2. Ode to the Departing Year. Supra
3. Keep mum: Middle English saying meaning shut up. Probably derived from the pantomime actors –Mummers- who were silent pantomime actors who did not speak.



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

During last week I listened to a discussion between 2 Brothers concerning the origin of the tassels at each corner of the chequered pavement. The debate ranged between the rather fanciful and the totally practical but as with so many Masonic issues could not be positively concluded. As I listened I was thinking just how many words are written and spoken about the outward and extrinsic form of our Craft and how few there are regarding Masonic philosophy. The outward nature of Freemasonry varies from constitution to constitution and indeed between lodges of the same constitution but the substance of Freemasonry remains constant. The ceremony and form of the lodge room is not the substance it is the clothing of that substance.

Masonry's aim is to 'make good men better' and to support this our ritual tells us that 'Freemasonry is a science of morality, developed and taught by the ancient method of symbolism' but do we explore this science or could I suggest that our focus is on the origin of the accoutrements of the Craft and the perfection of the delivery of its ritual. This activity may polish the outward nature of a Brother but without an appreciation of the unity of the Deity and man and the immortality of the soul I suggest the attempt to make a 'good man better' will be left wanting.

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The Immediate Past Masters Jewel

The Immediate Past Masters jewel presented to W.Bro. Sean Neely in April 2016 is a Lodge Albion No. 45 jewel and was originally presented to W.Bro. Norman Worton Chiswell on the 14th June 1962.

W.Bro Chiswell was born 7 September 1911, living at 1A Northumberland Road, Takapuna at the time of his death, in June 1995 aged 84. He was proposed for membership of Albion Lodge No.45 by Bro. E.O. Crawford and seconded by Rev. Bro. B.P. Brierley who was vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Devonport. As Mr. Chiswell he was initiated 10 May 1945 with W.Bro H. Douglas in the Chair of Solomon. He was Passed on 12 July 1945 and Raised 25 October 1945 at an emergency meeting with W.Bro. E. Trayes in the Chair. It was Bro. Trayes who built the marble alter for that Lodge.

His progress on the 'Ladder' was Assistant Steward 1953, Inner Guard 1955, Junior Deacon 1956, Senior Deacon 1957, Junior Warden 1958/9, Senior Warden 1960 finally become Worshipful Master 1961.

These offices then followed, IPM 1962, Director of Ceremonies 1963, Chaplin 1964, Deputy Master to W.Bro M. Johnson 1965, in 1966 he became Junior Warden again, then Treasurer 1967/8 and Chaplin again in 1972 and 1982. W,Bro. Chiswell was also a Trustee of the Lodge.

Bro. Norman became a member of Tawera Rose Croix Chapter 361 becoming Most Wise Sovereign in 1962 and achieving 30° in 1977, he enjoyed sailing with the Royal Akarana Yacht Club, based on Tamaki Drive Okahu Bay, was involved with the Scouting Movement and worked for David J Reed (NZ) Ltd, an importing and distribution company.



With thanks to Frank Arnott

The Ancient Landmarks – A Personal View

In 1856 Albert Mackey wrote, 'The first great duty, not only of every lodge but of every Freemason is to see that the landmarks of the order shall never be impaired' and we in turn, during the ceremony of each degree, confirm an obligation to preserve sacred and inviolate the ancient landmarks of the craft. But when we take this solemn affirmation, having been charged with some dreadful retribution if we fail, do we understand what we are guarding against debasement?

The Oxford Dictionary tells us that a landmark is an object or structure on land that is easy to see. There are many ancient references to landmarks 'Remove not the ancient landmarks which thy fathers have set' Proverbs 22:28 and '... I' the midst an altar as the landmark stood' book 11 of Milton's epic Paradise Lost. Both these references refer to tangible objects but I suggest for our purposes we must consider the word in its adjective form as ethereal or abstract.

Masonically the first use of the term appears in Payne's General Regulation published with Anderson's Constitutions of 1718 where there is vague reference to the Landmarks with a paragraph on Grand Lodge powers ending '...provided that the old Landmarks be carefully preserved'. The 'Ahimon Rezon' written by Laurence Dermott for the 'Antient Grand Lodge of England' makes a similar statement but neither define what the Landmarks are or even the nature of them.

Augustus Frederick, the Duke of Sussex, whilst Grand Master of England, was definitive and described Landmarks as the authorised ritual. The ever present Albert Mackey suggests 24 or 25 dependent upon which issue of his 'Encyclopedia of Freemasonry' one reads. Brother A.S. MacBride, whom some suggest is the greatest figure in Scottish Freemasonry, states that there are 40 and the confusion continues with Rosco Pound, the Dean of Harvard Law School, commenting there are but 7. Several American Grand Lodges have come up with their lists, these range from West Virginia, again with 7, to Kentucky who suggest 54. The 'North American Conference of Grand Masters' suggest but 3, a total which agrees with R.W. Chetwolde Crawley who suggests the Landmarks are 'The triple Dogma of the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, and the Life to come.

Albert Pike commented, regarding the landmarks, "there is no common agreement" a rather obvious but accurate assessment. McBride and others argue that there is a parallel between the usage of landmarks in Freemasonic governance and the English principles of Common Law or the uncodified British Constitution. This thinking is supported by Chrimes, in his 'English Constitutional History'. He states 'for the law of the land knows not the word or the idea'. From this I would propose that our Landmarks are an implication derived from the words and suggest 'for the law of Freemasonry knows not the word'. This then makes it beholden on each Brother to form his own list of boundaries beyond which he will not venture.

Within our ritual is outlined the moral and dogma by which we obligate to regulate our lives. I suggest that if we add the words of Shakespeare's Polonius 'to thine own self be true' to '...by adhering to the ancient Landmarks of the order' we will ensure our personal Landmarks, which are the touchstone for all our actions will never be violated.

A Past Master pass on some thoughts

Greetings Brethren. When I moved from the North Shore and developed 'old age syndrome' I joined a Daylight Lodge just 15 minutes from my retirement abode. I nominated my new Lodge – Henderson Meridian No 463 - for payment of my capitation, but alas our Charter was handed in last week, so now I will have to re-nominate Belmont Albion and continue driving to Albany.

Long long ago, during the blitz, I was attending Yeovil School, in South Somerset, which was a boy's grammar school. Many of my fellow pupils paraded with the Army Cadet Corps. Thus began a lifelong Brotherhood association which continued during a 33 year Naval career. So it was when approached with a view to initiation in Freemasonry the importance in my life of Brotherhood was renewed and has continued to grow.

Brotherhood, on reflection, was missing in my childhood (I had one older sister) the reason given was the hardship of the depression during which my Father's glove making business struggled. My parents had both been in uniform in WW1, one brother being killed at Passendale, and other uncles fought in WW2 so the Army and brotherly love was something I became aware of in my youth.

Emergence of feminism and the equality of the sexes has, in my view, deprived men of their previously accepted role as protectors of their sisters and diminished the opportunity to regard brotherhood as an important factor in the community. I frequently talk to men who do not seem to have that privilege in their lives so I believe there exists an emerging need in many young men for a renewal of Brotherhood.

Freemasonry is about the only organization which allows and requires that companionship in relaxed surroundings for the long haul. A sanctuary from the strictures of life in the fast lane. A haven from which the greater good in society can be developed for the betterment of man.

Out Pipes, Humphrey

100 Years Ago

From the minute book of Albion Lodge No. 45, Meeting in the Masonic Hall Devonport, 18th May 1916.

The Lodge was opened in Due & Ancient Form with Solemn Prayer & Praise at 7:40 pm

Accounts passed:-

The following a/c's were passed for payment, Tyler & refreshment 2/10/-, Printing 19/6, Carting 2/-, Cupboard 1/2/-, Craftsman 1/1/-, Wreath 15/-, Hall License 4/19/6, McMillan & Co. 4/9/2. Total £15.17.2

Jewel to retiring W.M.:-

It was proposed by Bro. P.W. Callum & seconded by Bro. H.A. Harris I.G. "That a jewel be presented to W.Bro. W.G. Allen and paid for out of the funds of the Lodge". This was carried & the W.M. resumed control of the Lodge.

New Bylaw:-

Notice of Motion by the W.M. as follows New Bylaw. "The following fees shall be paid by Brethren on their accepting nomination to the following offices, W.M. 1/1/-, S.W. 10/6, J.W. 10/6, S.D. 5/-, J.D. 5/-, I.G. 5/-, Stewards 2/6 each. In the event of more than one candidate being nominated for a particular office the fees paid by the unsuccessful Bro. or Bros. shall be refunded. The amounts thus collected together with any other amounts subscribed shall be administered by the Hall Committee for the purpose of renewing regalia & furniture of the Lodge".

The Lodge was closed in Peace Love & Harmony with a Solemn Prayer at 10:00pm

Pythagoras's 'venerable' number

In 1922 Sir Herbert Austin's company launched the 'Austin 7', thirty five years later Colin Chapman's company launched the 'Lotus 7'. We have been able to visit the cinema to see the 'Seven Samurai', the 'Magnificent Seven' or even 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' and considerably earlier, in 1835, an enterprising regalia manufacturer decided to attach two groups of 7 tassels to the Master Mason's apron.

The use of the number 7 in the above instances was to enhance a product and so increase sales or unknowingly did the developer find the significance of the number 7 in what C.G. Jung termed our 'collective unconsciousness' which links us all? We will never know, but to the esoteric freemason 7, the number Pythagoras called 'venerable', has a talismanic significance.

For the Freemason seven brethren are required to open or work a lodge and in his 'Ritual and Monitor of Freemasonry' Duncan writes of the Seven Steps 'They allude to the seven Sabbatical years, seven years of famine, seven years in building the Temple, seven golden candlesticks, Seven Wonders of the World, seven wise men of the east, seven planets; but more especially, the seven liberal arts and sciences, which are, Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, the trivium and Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy, the quadrivium'.

The ladder of Freemasonry, depicted as Jacobs ladder on the 1st Degree Tracing Board also has 7 steps, namely Temperance, the lowest, Fortitude, Prudence, Justice, Faith, Hope and Charity. Charity is the highest step and equates to the symbol of the sun in the ancient mysteries. The most prominent instrument in the Creators benevolence representing the reciprocal love between the Creator and his creation. In 1873 Dr. Albert Mackey wrote, in his 'Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry', 'the symbolic Seven is to be found diffused in a hundred ways over the whole Masonic system'.

Our ritual tells us that 'Freemasonry derived its origin directly from those Mysteries of Ancient Egypt'. This takes us back to 3500 BCE which was when the early settlers made their home in the Nile Valley. From that time and before the number 7 has occurred again and again. Hermes Trismegistus described 7 planets, the Ancient Chinese believed that after death it took 7 days for the soul to depart the body and after 7x7 days the dead person passes to the next world.

Chinese culture also refers to the 'Seven Treasurers' of Buddhist Scripture these being gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, agate, red pearl and carnelian these representing the 7 powers. 7 also represents the combination of Yin, Yang and the Five Elements, Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth. This combination being considered as 'harmony' in the ideology of Confucianism.

In the Mysteries of Mithras, in Persia, there were 7 degrees of initiation and in the cave used as a temple a high ladder was erected having 7 steps or gates and the writer Apuleius informs us 'the candidate was washed 7 times in the consecrated water of ablution during his initiation'. The lowest step or gate Saturn was represented by the metal lead then followed Venus by tin, Jupiter by brass, Mercury by iron, Mars by mixed metal, the Moon by silver and the Sun by gold. In a similar manner in the Mysteries of Brahma we find seven steps but with different names but still with the allusion to the symbol of the universe. Earth was the lowest step followed by the World of Reëxistence then came the world of Heaven, the Middle World, the World of Births, the Mansion of the Blessed and at the topmost step the Sphere of Truth. There are many more references in the ancient world to the septenary division, to the Hebrews it was their perfect number and it continually reoccurs in their sacred rites. The creation was accomplished in 7 days, 7 priests with 7 trumpets encompassed the walls of Jericho for 7 days. Noah received 7 days notice of the deluge with the Ark finally resting on Mount Ararat on during the 7th month and Solomon was 7 years building the Temple.

In Kemet, the name by which Ancient Egypt was known, there were also 7 cardinal principles or virtues of the Goddess Ma'at, these needed to achieve human perfectibility. These principles are Truth, Justice, Balance, Order, Compassion, Harmony, and Reciprocity. Also in that land the number 7 represented completion. Creation took place in seven time periods and in Sumerian legend the goddess Inanna passed through 7 doors to arrive before the 7 judges of the lower world.

The number 7 is much more prevalent in nature than most of us realize. There are 7 colours in the rainbow, 7 notes in a musical scale and it goes on, for there are 7 oceans, 7 continents, 7 vertebrae in the neck, 7 layers of skin, ocean waves roll in 7's. The Jewish Menorah has 7 candles, the earth was created in 7 days (including a day of rest), a cube has 7 dimensions (including the inside) and the number 7 occurs 735 times in the Bible. Financial experts now tell us that it is becoming clear that there is a 7 year cycle in world economics.



As I searched for a Masonic ending to this piece I realised beside my lap top was a porcelain model of a ship called Takarabune. This ship carries the '7 Lucky Gods of Japan', Hotei, Jurojin, Fukurokuju, Bishamonten, Benzaiten, Daikokuten and Ebisu so I concluded that 7 has a significance for Freemasonry but as with so many Masonic allegories it has a deep meaning for all aspects of our lives even to sitting on my living room table.

Source; Degraaf/Mackey/Duncan/Julien/Laffont/et.al.

JNG

Out and About with the Secretary

Wayne and Bev Jones are taking a well-earned break in Australia, as are Alan and Linda Thompson. Carlo de Guzman is also taking a break back to the Philippines where he hopes to be able to do some Masonic visiting.



What a great night the Camaraderie evening was. A full house – great speaker – and to top it off Floyd arranged two top singers along with music and dancing, I am told, from a reliable source, that a couple of our esteemed were seen dancing with their wives

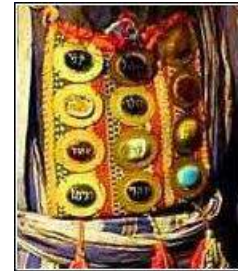
Dave

North Shore Royal Arch Chapter No. 52



Urim and Thummim

The mysterious Urim and Thummim are contained within the breastplate worn by Joshua the 3rd Principal in a Holy Royal Arch Chapter. The jewels of the breastplate represent the twelve tribes of Israel. According to the Jewish Historian Josephus these mysterious items answered 'yes' and 'no' by the way they shone and in the Bible they are used to establish the will of God. The placement of the breastplate jewels is described in Exodus 28:16-20 as:-



'Four-square it shall be and double: a span shall be the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof. And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, four rows of stones: a row of carnelian, topaz, and smaragd (green gemstone - ed.) shall be the first row; and the second row a carbuncle, a sapphire, and an emerald; and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper; they shall be enclosed in gold in their settings.'

There are various translations of Urim and Thummim, 'light and truth' or 'curse and blessing' being two. Scholars suggest that the priests could use Urim and Thummin to determine God's will in some miraculous way and they used them for making important priestly decisions. The last biblical mention of the two 'stones' is in Ezra 2:63 when he uses them to determine the ancestry of the priests who returned from exile. They occur again in modern literature when, in Paulo Coelho's book 'The Alchemist' Santiago the Andalusian shepherd is give two stones, one black, one white, by a magical old man who claims he is the King of Salem. He is called Melchizedek and he tells Santiago the stones are Urim and Thummim and he should use them in times of uncertainty on his journey to find his Personal Legend.

Source:-Neville/Walker/Coelho

JNG

"A man who say it cannot be done should not interrupt the man doing it" - Confucius



Deadline for next issue June 10 2016