

The Ailsa Craig

HMV

(His Master's Voice)

(RWM. Bro. Malcolm Davis will continue with his message to the Lodge when he can find a bit more time - hopefully in the near future)

Fixtures and Fittings

(Lodge Activities)

The second in a series of 2nd Degrees was smoothly executed last month with Bro Kieth Lewis being raised with the following Bros carried out the relevant duties in the usual good form:

Investiture - Bro. Bruce Barnes

SE Corner - Bro. Stu Davis

Pavement - Bro. Antony Lee

Tressleboard - Bro Bruce Barnes

Charge - Bro. Joe Fernandez

• Notice is given that the coming month's duties will be undertaken by the Past Masters and they have been notified by a separate circular, following the General Committee meeting. They will be working a 2nd Degree but Opening and Closing will be carried out by the usual Office Holders

• Please notify the DOC or Secretary immediately, should you expect not be able to fulfil the above duties.

• The next Practice meeting will be held on the 15th September (Wednesday) 1999 at the small temple at Coleman Street.

All MM's should attend!

• We have booked the small temple for the following practice evenings:

15th September (Wednesday)

21st October (Thursday)

18th November (Thursday)

15th December (Wednesday)

Please note the dates in your diary

Home and Away Games

(Visiting Brethren, Visits and Invitations)

• There was a large delegation of visitors from our sister lodge St Andrews (including the Master and his officers) to the Lodge last month, as well as the following Bros:

Bro. Benjamin Houghton - Humber 57 EC

Bro. Charles Kelso - Harvard Lodge Boston

Bro. Alasdair Campbel - Lodge Aedile

• Further planned visits for September '99 include:

St. Michael

Sir Stamford Raffles

Tinkers Corner

(The latest gossip)

• Ailsa Ladies Night

135 tickets were issued for the fun filled night (outstanding cheques to the WJW or treasurer asap please). The "Girls" certainly set the pace with their very professional numbers (supplemented by some not so professional members from the floor) followed by the Ailsa Awards and topped off with the Lucky Draw and Raffle (more than \$3,000 was raised for charity) Once again thanks for all the Brethren who contributed to making this an excellent night

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- **Ailsa Burn's Night**

- 15th Jan 2000 at the Tanglin Club.

Now that the Ladies Night is over it's onto the next big evening to be organised by the Lodge - more details as the planning for the evening takes form,

- **Millennium Party (6000A.L.)**

Overheard at a recent Harmony that St Pats have booked the Masonic Club for the 31st December 1999. As they always have a good "do" there will be more about this as information is gleaned.....

- **Grand Master's Installation in Edinburgh**

Payment for admission and the Harmony has to be made soon by those intending to attend. The RWM will be collecting monies (approx RM250) from the individuals who have expressed interest. Some will be making their own way there as the deadline for joining the group from Malaysia has passed.

- **St Andrews 50th Anniversary and District Annual Communication**

This will be held on the 29th and 30th October 1999 at Coleman Street. The brief agenda is:

29/10 - Charity Golf Tournament
Installation Ceremony St Andrews
50th Anniversary Dinner

30/10 - Masonic Seminar
Dist Grnd Chptr Communication
District Annual Communication
Dist Ann Com Festive Board

- Glad to report that Bro Alex Lyle is recovering nicely from his recent operation and will be returning to Scotland for a bit of R&R. We wish him well and hope that when he is strong enough to return to Singapore he will

join us "upstairs" again.

The Classifieds

(Awaits your Ad)

- The Lodge Ailsa Membership Pocket Directory is available. Make sure you get your copy from the WJW! If your details are incorrect or not complete, please give an updated copy to the WJW so that next year's print will be accurate. The price of \$10 per copy will be donated to the regalia fund.

- There has been discussions as to the setting up of a Lodge Library. Most Brethren have a few books that they have finished with. A list of books available from the individual Brethren will be added to this newsletter so that Brethren wish to borrow the books may approach the owner directly This would build up a reference source for the newer Brethren and broaden all our knowledge base. All this should be done in the spirit of Masonic Education and assisting Brethren of the Lodge to understand Masonry in the general sense and the Lodge and Regional activities specifically. To start with Bro Rinaldo Romani has given me his list and it is circulated as a separate attachment.

- Also Bro Rinaldo has embroidered the Lodge logo and the Square and Compass onto Polo shirts. The aim of this is to give you value for money on a quality fashion article that you can wear with pride, while contributing to charity through a small purchase. Please place your orders soon, before the other Lodges want them too!

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Post Script

(The Last Word in Masonry)

Due to some of the Brethren making the trip to Scotland and hopefully will meet in the Lodge Leven St John 170 SC where MacBride was initiated in 1866, I thought that this article may be appropriate as a background.

It is condensed from the original and the chapters concerning His Logic will be published in following issues of the Ailsa Craig.

A FASCINATING IDEAL

by BROTHER ANGUS N. MACINNES
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P.M., Lodge Saint Patrick (Dunbartonshire),
No. 1309
Master, Lodge Century, No. 1492

(CONTINUED FROM LAST MONTH.....)

THE MASON

The custom of Lodge Leven St John, when Brother MacBride was initiated in 1866, was to appoint two Instructors, or Intenders as they were called, to every newly initiated member. Brother MacBride had the good fortune to have as his instructors two of the oldest Masons in the Lodge, and it is to the instruction he received that he attributes the enthusiastic interest he had in studying the history and symbolism of the Craft for over fifty years.

There has always been much difference of opinion amongst the best authorities as to the question of degrees in the old Operative Lodges, and that those now known as Fellow Craft and Master Mason had no existence prior to the revival of 1717. But from a very remote period there were three distinct grades of Masons, not necessarily degrees as we know them today. viz. Apprentice. Craftsman and

Master. In various records of the old Lodges there is evidence that a Mason was fined if within a year after taking an Apprentice he failed to enter him and give him his charge. Also found were charges preserved for Masters and Fellows.

It was acknowledged by all that the reading of these charges formed a part - perhaps the principal part - of a ceremony associated with these old Lodges. When an Apprentice finished his term of service he usually "travelled". He was a Journeyman. It is not likely he carried lines or papers to show he had served an apprenticeship. The simple and natural method would be that he had certain signs, words, tokens or grips, and these would necessarily require to be quite distinct from those of an apprentice. He also had to undergo a severe practical trial and examination.

It is interesting to note that the earliest record of a Third Degree in the world is in the minute book of Lodge Dumbarton Kilwinning, No. 18, when Thomas Porter received his Third Degree in March 1726.

Four months after being initiated, Brother MacBride was made secretary of his Lodge. The Brethren were quick to recognise his ability. Twelve months after his initiation it was moved in the Lodge that the Chair Degree be conferred on a Brother. This Degree was from an old Ritual and, contrary to Grand Lodge Law, Brother MacBride moved an amendment that as no authority had been given to the Lodge by its Charter to give that Degree, it must not be conferred. The motion being carried, MacBride left the meeting, protesting at the breaking of Grand Lodge Law. The Brethren recognised his upholding of the Law and his principles, for they elected him Master two weeks later. He served seven years until 1874, was re-elected in 1879, holding office until 1884, elected again in 1887, serving until 1896 - a total of twenty-one years.

What was his secret? What quality did he have to make men select him as their leader? In any petty or personal disputes which are unavoidable when people assemble, MacBride did not interfere but wrote down the cause of

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the dispute, and when the participants were later shown the cause of their disagreement set down in cold black and white, they saw how ridiculous their wrangling was and stopped.

The custom at the refreshment table in that era was for everyone to help themselves from the bottle on the table, which meant that some got more than their share. MacBride proposed that the limit should be two refreshments, and when he convinced the members that they must apply the square to the refreshment table as well as to the work, his suggestion was carried. It was this simple straightforward approach coupled with his tact and charm, which made him popular.

An occurrence at his ceremony of Installation as Master enabled him to refute a statement made by the great Masonic historians, Gould and Murray Lyon. They maintained that a certain practice was not observed in any Lodge because they could find no written evidence to prove it. But MacBride discovered during his Installation that the practice was certainly observed in Lodge Leven St John and had been observed since its creation as a Lodge in 1788. But it had never been written down, thus the documents consulted by these two Masonic historians were inadequate for their purpose and, as MacBride knew, people familiar with the old Celtic traditions required more than written documents for an accurate history.

When the Lodge decided they needed new premises, A. S. MacBride inaugurated a scheme whereby members took out shares to be paid in twelve instalments. Making use of the skills he acquired during his study of building construction, he drew out the plans and specifications for the building and superintended the construction, thereby saving the cost of an architect and a master of works; was responsible for the interior decoration, and during the building operations carried out by the members in their spare time, MacBride marched round playing the bagpipes to give them encouragement. The hall was consecrated in 1893, enlarged in 1915, and the result of all their labours can be seen in the beautiful and useful premises still in use today.

In 1900 he was elected Master of Lodge Progress, No. 873, Glasgow, the year his son Andrew was initiated. In the Province of Dunbartonshire he had served as Provincial Grand Secretary, Junior Provincial Grand Warden, Senior Provincial Grand Warden and Depute Provincial Grand Master.

MacBride summed up Masonry in his own words - "It presents a most fascinating ideal of humanity adapted to meet the conditions of all classes and of all peoples and its fundamental principles are those of peace and brotherhood throughout the earth." His outlook can be summed up in his own words - "A man who says he knows all about Masonry proclaims his own ignorance."

THE RITUAL

How did this man come to write or revise and amend a Ritual that had probably been in use for a century before?

No man could have carried out these tasks successfully without first having some educational background, some preliminary training in thought and expression. Above all, it required the ability to absorb it in thought, so that his mind did not become rigid and inflexible in attitude by the consistent repetition of ritual as happens so often, and remain flexible in expression, so that he could present his thoughts in clear concise English. He was a Master not only of his Craft but the spoken word, gifted in Victorian language.

The Ritual that was used in his Lodge was based, as far as we know, on Preston's illustration of Freemasonry, published about the middle of the eighteenth century. It was handwritten and passed from one generation to another. MacBride probably inherited it when he became Master. In it he found much to criticise. Coarse and vulgar methods had crept in due to the previous users not having studied the symbolism deeply enough and their having but a small conception of its real meaning and beauty.

The work often hurried through to get to the refreshment table and, as MacBride said, "The beauty and truths of Masonry were drowned in

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a Bacchanalian flood." His criticisms brought him into conflict with many of his fellow members, but by his tact and patience he was able to modify and influence those views adverse to his conception and so gain the respect and admiration of those who initially opposed him.

Before making his Ritual, MacBride had a clear knowledge of our Craft by studying its early origins. The old Charges, as they were called, dated from the fourteenth century, and were read by the Lodges to the Candidate as part of his initiation. These are the origins of the Charges we give the Candidate today. It is said he studied Ashe's Manual. He spent many hours devising a ritual that would enhance what it was meant to teach without ever departing from the spirit and truth of Masonry.

From his study and interpretation he did not believe, as many do today, that Lodges were only operative in those times but that they were also speculative. His judgement was based on the circumstantial evidence and on the Regulations contained in the Charges of the old Lodge. They all differed but the basic principles were universal in the way they related to the conduct of Masons.

"They are of a Moral and Religious character and are therefore more speculative than operative in their purpose."

In every case the Mason is first of all charged to be true to God, the King and to his fellows. Stealing and vice are explicitly named to be avoided. Falsehood and deceit are condemned. This element in them, apart from and above the operative work that refers to conduct and morals more than anything else, shows their relationship with modern Masonry. After all, what is the purpose of our Speculative System but to shape life and conduct to noble ends.

MacBride, in his book Speculative Masonry, explains the Mission of Masonry and endeavours to give us a clear conception of the meaning of the words "Mission" and "Masonry". Mission comes from the Latin word "Missu" - I send, I throw. As MacBride says in his first Degree Charge when he is explaining to the Candidate the laws he is to observe, the

absolute or fixed laws called the Landmarks in Masonry - that it is his duty to obey all lawful signs and summonses, especially sent, handed or thrown to him from the body of a duly constituted Lodge - Thrown to him; his mission to respect and obey.

Landmarks is a much used and misused word. Boundary lines between different countries between the territories of different tribes and the possession of individuals are called Landmarks, and their preservation was of importance. Severe penalties were attached to their illegal removal or alteration.

A Landmark is not something put up; it had also to be recognised as such. This recognition formed the essence of its authority and the longer it remained the more sacred it became.

In the course of time a change in the boundary line between the possession of two individuals or of two nations becoming mutually desirable, the old Landmarks were removed and new Landmarks were created.

In Speculative Masonry Landmarks have certain established usages and customs, occupying the position which usage and custom do in a community. Politically these are termed "Common Law". Masonically they are termed "Landmarks". As in common law no usage or custom can overrule the fundamental principle of the square. Common Law in a community has all the force of Statute Law and the Landmarks in Masonry have all the force of Grand Lodge Law.

While a Landmark must be an established usage or custom, it does not follow that an established usage or custom is a Landmark.

As far as I know MacBride was the first man to give us a list of Realistic Masonic Landmarks. He grouped them into four main divisions, each of which contain three sections, as follows:

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1ST DIVISION

(Usages that mark the Masonic from the Outer World):

Section A:

A mode of recognition by its members

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Section B:

The Tyling of its Lodge Meetings.

Section C:

The qualifications of its candidates.

2ND DIVISION

(Usages that mark the Degrees of Masonry):

Section A:

A mode of recognising the members of one Degree from those of another.

Section B:

The Tyling of the Meetings of each Degree separately.

Section C:

The conditions of advancement from one Degree to another.

3RD DIVISION

(Usages that mark the various ceremonies):

Section A:

The principal points in opening and closing a Lodge.

Section B:

The principal points in Entering, Passing and Raising.

Section C:

The principal points in Consecration, Installation, Foundation and Funeral Ceremonies.

4TH DIVISION

(Usages that mark Official Powers and Duties and Private Rights and Duties):

Section A:

The Powers and Duties of the Grand Master, Grand Officers and of Grand Lodge.

Section B:

The Powers and Duties of the Master and Officers of the Lodge.

Section C:

The Rights and Duties of Private Members.

Colleges of Instruction under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, and the Rev. Fort Newton, Litt.D., of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, in his foreword to the 1924 American Edition said, "It was one of the best Masonic books of our generation. Its style is the native speech of Masonry - simple, lucid, aglow with moral passion and poetic beauty, in which Masonry is shown to be a wise clear-seeing practical Moral Idealism - a classic of the Craft."

Landmarks are not unalterable. They have been altered in the past and no doubt will be altered in the future.

The essence of real life as MacBride says is "To act that each tomorrow finds us further than today."

.....next month -
His Logic

It is not possible here to deal with the Landmarks in all their details; for those interested I would recommend reading A. S. MacBride's book Speculative Masonry, where all the Sections are discussed in detail. This book was selected as a textbook for the