

# The Ailsa Craig

## HMV

*(His Master's Voice)*

Brethren

My apologies for my noticeable absence during the last few weeks, I am unfortunately having to spend most of my time in Malaysia. One or two of the brethren have made the comment: 'Good, you can stay there!'

Last meeting was our first 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree together. It went well and the Harmony was excellent in spite of one or two brethren falling under the alcoholic spell of Brother Romani's potent Italian liqueur.

This month will be another Second Degree working which I am sure will be an even better event and September will see our long-awaited Past Master's Evening, when we can all relax and see how it should be done!

Yours Fraternally

W. Bro. Malcolm

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## Fixtures and Fittings

*(Lodge Activities)*

After many 1st Degree workings we have now moved on to the next series of 2nd Degrees and last month's working saw Bros Unni Menon and Kieth Parnell being raised with the following Bros carried out the relevant duties in good form:

Investiture - Bro. Bruce Barnes

SE Corner - Bro. Chang Pinang

Tressleboard - Bro. Alphonse Ruitter

Charge - Bro. UP Salvi

• Notice is given of the coming month's duties following the General Committee meeting.

For the 2nd Degree Working for the month of

August '99 these are as follows:

Investiture - **Bro. Chris Frazer**

Standby - Bro. Julian Brown

SE Corner - **Bro. Chang Pinang**

Standby - Bro. Joe Fernandez

Tressleboard - **Bro. Bruce Barnes**

Standby - Bro. Rinaldo Romani

Charge - **Bro. Kam Chy Heng**

Standby - Bro. UP Salvi

• 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 19th August (Thursday) 1999 at the small temple at Coleman Street.

All MM's should attend!

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

19th August (Thursday)

15th September (Wednesday)

21st October (Thursday)

18th November (Thursday)

15th December (Wednesday)

Please note the dates in your diary

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## Home and Away Games

*(Visiting Brethren, Visits and Invitations)*

• There were 3 visitors to the Lodge last month:  
Bro. Peter Birch - Eureka Lodge 5557 EC Rio de Janeiro

Bro. Charles Kelso - Harvard Lodge Boston

Bro. John Clark - Lodge Craiginnan 850 SC

• We welcomed returning Bro. Bob White with some of Rinaldo's Lemon Kick at an Italian Festive Board

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- Further planned visits for September '99 include:

St. Michael

Sir Stamford Raffles

- There are no planned visits for August.

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## Tinkers Corner

*(The latest gossip)*

- **Ailsa Ladies Night**

- 28th Aug 1999 at the Hyatt Hotel.

All is progressing smoothly for the big night. The agenda will include the Haggis, Addresses by the Master and his Lady, Ailsa Awards, Entertainment, and some pretty good prizes for the Draw. So far about 75 tickets have been issued (cheques to the WJW or treasurer asap please). As we still need to double the numbers, please remember that this is a good chance to invite potential new Brethren in an informal setting.

- **Ailsa Burn's Night**

- 15th Jan 2000 at the Tanglin Club.

- **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**

Time is short for confirmation of attendance and booking for the planned trip to the Grand Master's Installation in Edinburgh.

Please confirm your attendance to the Junior Warden asap.

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## 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 in the Basement. Most Brethren have a few books that they have finished with. Donations of these books would build up a reference source for the newer Brethren. 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.
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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 The Mason, His Ritual and His Logic will be published in following issues of the Ailsa Craig.*

# The Ailsa Craig

A FASCINATING IDEAL

by BROTHER ANGUS N. MACINNES

P.P.G.M. Dunbartonshire

P.M., Lodge Saint Patrick (Dunbartonshire),

No. 1309

Master, Lodge Century, No. 1492

The genius of A. S. MacBride was limited by those who could not see the value of his work or who would not accept change; fortunately there were others who did, mostly those who knew him well.

It is interesting that the Ad Hoc Committee, set up by Grand Lodge recently, suggested among others the thought that "More effective Masonic education should be encouraged."

This Committee is approximately one hundred years behind MacBride who, before 1899, instituted an Instruction Class and even went as far as having an examination to attain the degree of Most Excellent Master for those who had shown a satisfactory knowledge of the Craft. When MacBride instituted his Lodge of Instruction he was clearly influenced by his membership of An Comunn Gaidhealach and the training he absorbed to be a Bard. A Bard in ancient Celtic society was a trained man.

It took seven years memorising old Celtic tradition laws and history, for these were never written, and it would be his knowledge of their ancient method of preserving and handing down tradition which would give him the idea and the experience to use in the interests of his Lodge and the Craft.

As recorded in the History of the Province of Dunbartonshire 1739-1989, Grand Lodge complained about this irregularity and it was discontinued. MacBride then published his Masonic Instructor which was highly commended by Grand Secretary, Brother D. Murray Lyon, and by the Secretary of Quatuor Coronati who said it was superior to those in use in England.

The Lodges who follow the MacBride tradition still have to tutor all new entered Brethren in an exact knowledge of the principal parts and

points of the ceremonies before being advanced and still work the Instructors or Intenders for the Candidates.

If you wish to judge the lectures to the Lodges of Instruction by A. S. MacBride, read his book Speculative Masonry where they were revised, condensed and printed in 1913.

I therefore thought it was time the Masonic World learned just a little about this man who wrote such a fine but seldom used Ritual, who was ahead of his time but timeless in his thinking, who put true meaning into dedication in that oft misused phrase 'Dedicated Freemason', who is so little known in the lists of greats and who is better known and appreciated in America than in his own land; proving the saying about the Prophets.

When he became Master of Lodge Progress, No. 873, in 1900 he instituted a Committee of Enquiry whose function was to enquire into all applications for Initiation and Affiliation, to examine and interview all candidates with their sponsors as to their qualifications and report their findings thereon before the Ballot, as they did in Lodge Leven St John Renton, No. 170, and Past Master of Lodge Progress, No. 873, Glasgow compiler of the MacBride Ritual and author of Speculative Masonry. Initiated into Freemasonry in Lodge Leven St John Renton, No. 170, in the Province Of Dunbartonshire on 13th July 1866 at the meeting held in the Black Bull Inn

What kind of man was he? A man who by some was termed as the greatest figure in Scottish Freemasonry. This unique and remarkable man; what made him write the Ritual associated with his name, what made him devote so much time to the Craft; a man who some said was one of the best loved and most famous Freemasons of his generation A Craftsman to whom the world was a temple; a poet to whom the world was a song.

I do not know if we can give full answers to these questions, but we can reflect on some of the problems and how he came to write such a fine Ritual.

# The Ailsa Craig

He thought the Lodge ought to be as a school in which men learn the way of right living and high thinking. So let us consider-

The Man  
The Mason  
His Ritual  
His Logic

## THE MAN

A. S. MacBride was born in December 1843 in Stirling Street, Renton. His father, John MacBride, who was a cooper in Dalquhum Works, Renton, died during the cholera epidemic of 1846, when his son was only three years of age.

It was therefore his mother, Catherine Douglas, a native of Bonawe, Argyllshire, and a Gaelic speaker, who had to bring him up alone and who undoubtedly had great influence on the boy's mind and instilled in him a love of the Highland tradition and folklore, the learning and use of words.

Like all Highlanders in these days she was a veritable mine of information on Highland tradition and folklore. The effect of this can be seen in much of his work.

His only schooling, as far as can be ascertained, was at the old school in Dalmonach Hall, Renton. He was not content with merely being able to read and write words. In search of learning he amassed a library, among which was the works of Butler, Milton, Shakespeare, Dryden, De Quincy, Carlyle, Burns and others. Being deeply interested in Scottish history and Gaelic tradition, he did not just read these works; he studied them. It was not mere literacy he was aiming at, it was literary culture. Though not a great scholar he was a man of rich learning, more practical than academic. He had been a clerk with the North British Railway Company and a bricklayer, but was not content with learning only the practical side; he studied building construction and drawing.

He was employed from the age of eighteen in the dyeing and bleaching industry at Dalquhum, and at a young age was given the important position of salesman for cloth at William Stirling & Sons, succeeding the sole

partner, thus leaving him free to travel overseas. This indicates the faith his employer had in his ability, as the prosperity of the industry and the district depended upon him and there were no training colleges or business courses to assist.

He was president of the Vale of Leven Liberal Association. He was a poet, a translator from the Gaelic, a Justice of the Peace, second President of the Scottish Football Association and President of An Comunn Gaidhealach, and he even found time to be a very active sportsman.

If you want to form your own opinion of the man, examine what he wrote, for as has been said "As a man thinketh, so is he."

.....next month -

The Mason  
His Ritual  
His Logic