

# Masonic Research . . . that profit and pleasure may be the result

by Bro Yasha Beresiner

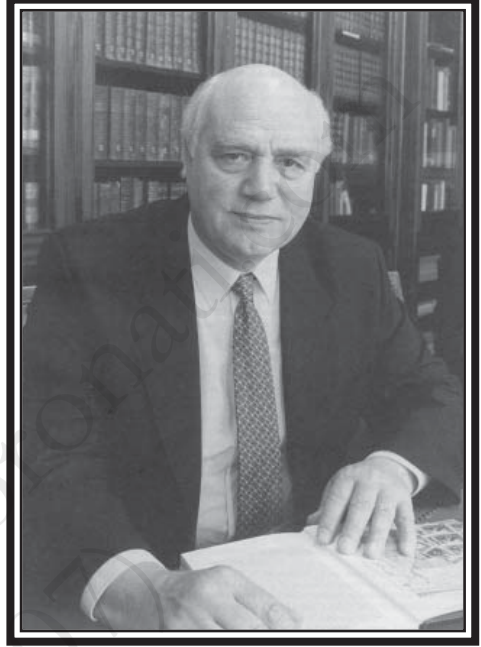
Southend-on-Sea, Thursday 28 June 2007

Synopsis: In simplistic terms masonic research can be accomplished in one of two ways: a new theory or discovery or a new approach to an established fact. The author has had the good fortune to be involved in both these aspects of research, namely, the discovery of the previously unknown exposure in the December 1723 edition of *The Post Boy* and new theories on the Antients 4th degree and the Charter of Compact dating. He illustrates his comments with published articles by prominent scholars and directs the reader through the maze of available literature whilst guiding, from personal experience, the neophyte and more qualified brethren in the paths and pitfalls of masonic research.

W Bro Yasha Beresiner was initiated in England in 1975. He was invited to join the *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge in 1990 and served as Master in 1997/1998. In 2003 he received the Rank of PGStB in the UGLE and in 2006 that of PAGDC in the SGCE. He has also been honoured with Grand Rank under both the jurisdictions of the Grand Lodge of the State of Israel (HonGSW 2004) and the Regular Grand Lodge of Italy (PGSW 2002). In 2000 Supreme Grand Chapter appointed him as the official Batham Lecturer. He is active in many additional orders and Lodges world wide.

His interests beyond freemasonry revolve around the City of London. He is a Past Master of the Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards (2000/2001) one of the City's Ancient Livery Companies, a qualified City Guide and editor of the Association's Magazine.

His most recent book is *The City of London - A Masonic Guide*. Bro Yasha qualified as a lawyer from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is married (to his former IDF sergeant) has two children and six amazing grandchildren.



## Introduction



feel it a great privilege to be invited to address the Lodge on this very special occasion when our meeting is held outside of London. These occasional meetings in the Provinces follow on a long-standing tradition of Summer Outings which began in 1888, very soon after the Lodge's formation. The lively and animated reports in the *Transactions* show the non-masonic events to have been highly popular and enjoyable. The day's outing included guided tours, visiting local sites and listening to talks in a different county each year. In *AQC* 50 in 1937 Bro F.W. Golby chose the events as the subject for his Inaugural Address. Although our more recent 'outings' have been less regular and based on a formal lodge meeting, the Province of Essex has only once before featured in our records. We are, therefore, all the more grateful to be your guests and pleased to be here with you this afternoon.

This paper, by the very nature of its content, is somewhat biographical. That may not be surprising. Research is, after all, a personal almost private experience and every researcher will have his own style and method of exploring new venues, suffering frustration and enjoying triumph. I see myself as an example of a non-academic student interested in research and glad to communicate with my fellow freemasons.

The paper is divided into three sections. The second and third are dedicated to the two sole venues open to a researcher: Part II looks into the discovery of a previously unknown theme or item whilst Part III examines a new and fresh approach to a theme already established by another author. Part I, which follows, considers factors common to both instances.

## Part One

### Search and Research

Before the Consecration of *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge on 12 January 1886, masonic research and the subsequent resulting flow of literature – apart from a number of groups of historians interested in what was referred to as ‘Masonic Archaeology’ – was seen as a free for all. Bro: Lionel Vibert referred to it as ‘... the wide field of Masonic Research ... (with) many black areas, some of which earlier draughtsmen have filled with fabulous monsters.’<sup>1</sup> Some masonic authors appear to have felt that by virtue of having become a freemason alone, knowledge and wisdom was also bestowed upon them at the same time as their aprons – a phenomenon that sadly persists to this day. Established masonic scholars of the past as well, however, chose at times to pay no attention to facts, particularly when such facts interfered with their theories.

### Biblical history

An outstanding example is Bro Dr George Oliver (1782-1867), an Anglican clergyman, whose theological angle on every masonic concept and symbol, confused myth and legendary lore with the facts of history. Thus his prolific writings remain blatantly unreliable as a source of reference. His articles and books did, without doubt, raise the standard of masonic behaviour and ambiance beyond that which had been prevalent until he came on the scene. His earliest masonic contribution of consequence, however, *The Antiquities of Freemasonry* (1823), can hardly have been considered a reliable historical source on the theme suggested by the title. His very many subsequent works fared no better. The same may be said of some of the writings of William Preston (1742-1818), whose several books were still in print in the years following the Union of the two Grand Lodges in 1813. Here too, fanciful attributions to the antiquity of Freemasonry were presented as factual findings. In fairness to these and other eminent and prolific authors we need to remember that at the time our own *Constitutions* promulgated the mythical history of Freemasonry, set out by James Anderson in 1723. The proposed new two-part *Constitutions* following the Union of 1813 appeared in 1815, complete in the regulations by which lodges and members were to be governed but omitting the promised revised ‘History of the Craft’. Thus we were left with just Anderson’s history and no options – a history, it will be remembered, that traced Freemasonry to Adam and confirmed Moses as a Grand Master of the Order. In their right context, however, these writings are comparable to the Bible itself as an historical record, which appear never to have been challenged until the publication of Charles Darwin’s<sup>2</sup> *Origin of Species* (1858).

### The ‘Authentic’ School

With the formation of the *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge in 1889 an express effort was made to establish a scientific or authentic school of masonic research and history. The founding members who signed the petition were all recognized masonic scholars and from the start, the Lodge was able to contribute toward reliable and factual masonic research. *Quatuor Coronati* was the first of the research lodges founded explicitly for masonic study. Today, many research lodges and societies meet regularly throughout the Country, indeed throughout the masonic world. The functions of a lodge of research extend beyond the service it renders to its members and the

masonic fraternity as a whole. It is manifest in new papers, theories and discoveries and often the analysis and scrutiny of other published works.

### **Academic scholars**

Until relatively recently there was an element of masonic nepotism in the papers presented in the Lodge *Transactions*. For reasons of convenience, Freemasonry was isolated rather than analyzed as part of the larger social structure of civilization. Bro Brent Morris, in personal correspondence, compared it to carefully studying an insect in a glass jar without observing its natural environment. This trend has changed dramatically in recent years, manifestly *inter alia* in the creation of the Centre for Research into Freemasonry at Sheffield University, which until March 2007 was run by its Director, Prof. Andrew Prescott<sup>3</sup> and the most recent International Conference on the History of Freemasonry. This highly successful event held in Edinburgh 25-27 May, this year, was a non-Masonic conference with key speakers, the majority of whom were not freemasons. Andrew Prescott is among a handful of non-masons whose literary contributions to the history of the Craft have been valued. Several such scholars have addressed masonic gatherings, including fully-fledged Lodge meetings of the *Quatuor Coronati*. The first to do so was David Stevenson, Emeritus Professor of History at St Andrews University, in a paper titled 'Confessions of a Cowan' in May 1994. This was followed by Prof Jay Macpherson from Canada on 'Masonic Landscape Design' in May 1997. In February 2002 Dr Marsha K. Schuchard (from the United States of America) spoke to the Lodge on *Emanuel Swedenborg* and Prof Prescott and Emeritus Prof James Stevens Curl (from Ireland) addressed us in February and June 2003 respectively. Indeed, in our own Library and Museum of Freemasonry in London, at the time of writing, neither the Director, Diane Clements, the curator, Mark Dennis, nor the librarian, Martin Cherry, are members of the Craft. Their contribution to the study of Freemasonry, however, is by no means diminished. On the contrary, some of them validly argue that not belonging to the fraternity allows them an objective insight otherwise unavailable and lost.

### **Transactions**

The transactions of research lodges reflect the development not only of masonic research but also of Freemasonry as a whole. The three most prominent in England are: *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* (*AQC*), the *Transactions* of the *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge 2076 in London, universally accepted as the premier Lodge of Masonic research worldwide and those of the research lodges in Leicester (Lodge No. 2429) and Manchester (Lodge No. 5502 and the Association of the same name which predated it) (*MAMR*). *AQC* predominates because the papers presented in open lodge are published with written comments. This secondary source ensures that errors are rectified and it often adds information or a new perspective to the body of the paper presented. Indexes, unfortunately, are not always available to the various transactions and many long-running magazines and journals. This has been recently compensated by the production of complete sets of masonic publications on DVD. Here digital searching becomes easy. Some organizations choose to publish their material on the worldwide web sites accessible through the Internet. Several will require registration before access is allowed. No matter how predominantly masonic a theme may be, a newcomer into research must not be trapped by the limited confines of a masonic framework. Freemasonry has not existed or survived in an historic vacuum. It is very much part of a social and political environment, developing and prospering over a period of several centuries.

## Sources

In written papers, cited sources by other authors, no matter how well known, need to be checked and confirmed. The number of inaccurate quotations due to simple error is quite surprising. We are fortunate in England to have available to us the resources of the Library and Museum of Freemasonry in Great Queen Street, London. There are some 55,000 books on the subject of Freemasonry. The Library and Museum catalogue is now available free of charge on line at [www.freemasonry.london.museum](http://www.freemasonry.london.museum). It includes all the Library collection. The only exception is the ritual collection, which will be added to the catalogue by the end of 2008. This facility, incidentally, is not the norm for many other research libraries. It allows even remote users to find out whether the library has a book or not. All books are available to researchers coming in to the Library and Museum on demand, subject only to two conditions: (a) that the researcher is a registered reader – a procedure which can be carried out on the first visit and (b) the completion of a book request form. An increasing amount of archival material is also available, including all pre-1813 Returns and correspondence.

## Access to registers

A word of caution, however, is necessary here because access to original sources is not as available as one may presume. As far as books and a considerable amount of archival material is concerned, there are no problems whatsoever. Where a problem does arise is when a researcher wants direct access to the Grand Lodge Registers. Some years ago, when researching a paper on Sir Winston Churchill,<sup>4</sup> I found that an unfortunate communication in 1955 by the then Librarian of our Grand Lodge led to the erroneous reports that Churchill was raised in Rosemary Lodge No. 2851. This error was perpetrated in several publications and I felt that by examining the original source I would be able to explain how the error occurred. Unfortunately, although I was provided with a photograph of the Register entry, I was not allowed to view the original document. In subsequent correspondence<sup>5</sup>, which the Director Mrs Clements has confirmed to be accurate at the time of submission of this paper in May 2007, the following view still stands as the official policy of the Library and Museum of Freemasonry:

- a) The age of a document is not necessarily relevant to the issue of access except where the Data Protection Act applies (with regard to maintaining the privacy of information about people who may still be alive) or where a similar sort of rule (e.g. 70 or 100 years) is applied by a particular repository (including the Public Record Office) for reasons of sensitivity.
- b) The other principal factor which needs to be taken into account when considering access is the physical condition of the document. Where a document is fragile or torn or otherwise damaged, use will inflict further damage and potentially lead to destruction unless the document is first conserved. As an alternative form of access 'surrogate' copies of documents can be made available e.g. microfilm, facsimile or, increasingly, digital form.
- c) Regarding 'Lodge Registers' or the register within a series for any specified period which records the members of a lodge, each register exists only in the single working copy compiled by Grand Lodge at the time. They were used as current documents by Grand Lodge staff in earlier years but are now used primarily by Library and Museum staff to respond to requests for genealogical and other information. The level of use of the registers both historically and today has meant that they are fragile and a higher incidence of handling could destroy the material completely, it is therefore not possible to allow greater access at this time.

d) The issue of access is one of which the Director and all the Library and Museum staff are conscious and one they are all working to address.

The error, incidentally, with regard to Churchill, occurred because the Register of the Studholme Lodge has the name Geoffrey C. Glyn above and Charles Clive Bigham below that of Winston Churchill. Further along the same line against both these names, i.e. of Glyn and of Bingham, is the entry 'Raised in No 2851 11<sup>th</sup> Nov 1901'. This entry referring to Glyn and Bingham alone had previously wrongly been also attributed to Churchill.

## Newspapers

British and overseas newspapers and journals of all periods can be found in the excellent National archive collection belonging to the British Library situated in the Newspaper Reading Rooms in Colindale, north-west London. These first hand reports constitute important primary sources to many events from before the launch of organized Freemasonry in London in June 1717. All the classical and established newspapers and periodicals, so frequently referred to in our literature, can be sourced here: *The Flying Post*, *The Post Boy* and *The Tatler*, among many others. A primary source is the first possible available source, namely the actual original item itself, normally manuscript but may be printed, such as a newspaper report. A contemporary commentator will qualify as a primary source when his own words, as first expressed, are accessible.

## Primary sources

Primary sources need not necessarily be hand-written records. Whilst the most obvious primary source is an original manuscript text from any period in history, some printed texts may also serve as primary sources. Printed sources extend beyond contemporary reports to be found in newspapers, journals and magazines. They include political and religious pamphlets, as well as formal administrative records, legal documents, which may occur in manuscript or printed form. A primary source need not necessarily be a written record. Oral interviews and physical artefacts, such as paintings and sculptures, photographs and even buildings may constitute a primary source to a researcher. Bro R.A. Gilbert makes an excellent point in this context in emphasizing the important part that the type of paper on which the text of a book is printed, the size and watermark and the book's binding, among other related factors, can serve as a primary source of information.<sup>6</sup>

The more detail that is obtained about a primary source the better the researcher will be served. The author of the source, the reason for his writing and the date of the item in question, particularly the proximity to the time of the event described, are material information. The location of the source at the time of writing and the intended audience are also relevant, as is the motive for the writing. The established facts will often determine the authenticity and value of the source. An admirable example in the analysis and conclusions reached is to be found in 'An Anti-Masonic Leaflet of 1698' published in *AQC* 55 in 1942 where Bros Douglas Knoop and G.P. Jones reported on the only surviving example of this important leaflet, discovered by Bro Albert Frost of Sheffield. The two scholars arrived at far-reaching and detailed conclusions from their examination of every word and aspect of the 100mm by 165mm small sized leaflet, which at first appears to have nothing whatever to offer a researcher. They were able to speculate and conclude on the possibility that M. Winter, the author, whose name appears at the end of the document, was pious, probably a chiliast, condemning the masons as crypto-Romanists. That the

denunciations in the leaflet in 1698 may have been based on fact although there was no reason for the Masons to be accused of popery. That Freemasonry was considered an evil institution because of the secret signs and meeting places. The oaths referred to in the pamphlet did not correspond to contemporary 1942 obligations and the leaflet indicated to the two authors, that oaths were taken against all non-Masons. These oaths were more likely to be an interpretation of operative practices. They further concluded, after a great deal of additional speculation, that Winter may have genuinely believed the masons to be involved in plots against the Government. The freemasons were seen as Socinians (deniers of the divinity of Christ) and the term *antichrist* was used in the leaflet to support Gnostic and Judaising controversy. The most interesting conclusion reached by Knoop and Jones is that the statement in the leaflet that the Masons were *antichrist* implies that they were anti-Trinitarian. Therefore freemasonry may well have adopted a deistic attitude toward religion long before Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1723.

In this context the question arises as to whether James Anderson's report, in his second *Book of Constitutions* (1738), on the formation of the premier Grand Lodge in 1717, maybe considered a primary source. His remains the only surviving record of the formation of Grand Lodge twenty-one years earlier. The oft-quoted passage (p. 109) reads:

... A. D. 1716. the few *Lodges*; at *London* finding themselves neglected by Sir *Christopher Wren*, thought fit to cement under a *Grand Master* as the Center [*sic*] of Union and Harmony, viz. the *Lodges* that met,

1. At the *Goose* and *Gridiron* Ale-house in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*.
2. At the *Crown* Ale-house in *Parker's-Lane*, near *Drury-Lane*.
3. At the *Apple-Tree* Tavern in *Charles-Street*, *Covent-Garden*.
4. At the *Rummer* and *Grapes* Tavern in *Channel-Row*, *Westminster*.

It is logical to surmise that although no Minutes of the business transacted actually survive, some notes must have been kept allowing Anderson a source for his published comments. Such notes, were they to be discovered, would constitute a true and 'pure' primary source. In their absence, however, the 1738 records remain the first and the only available source of the events that took place two decades earlier. As no other source of information has survived on the subject, the 1738 *Constitutions* may be seen as constituting a primary source.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism goes beyond the dangerous quip that to use one source is plagiarism but to use two is research. Other sources are essential and unavoidable when researching a paper. Keeping a detailed record of all articles, publications and references of relevance that are found will serve the writer and reader of the paper to an equal extent. Detailed records, beyond author, title, publisher and date, should extend to the page number of the work referred to, particularly when quoting statements or making a particularly important point. The context in which these sources are used touches on the delicate subject of plagiarism. It is essential to acknowledge the sources that have been used. It will allow the readers of the paper to distinguish between new and original work. There are different systems of referencing and rich literature is available explaining referencing conventions, which are beyond the scope of this paper. A simple and straightforward clear-cut acknowledgment will suffice for our purposes.

## Part Two

### A New Theme

In the early years of the *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge, selecting a masonic theme that had *not* previously been researched was a relatively easy task. New discoveries were coming to light and new theories and ideas on our origins and definition of nomenclature, heretofore not considered, were being promulgated, respectfully discussed and commented on at each meeting of the Lodge and published in our *Transactions*. This is a far cry from today, when every new Master of the Lodge appears to struggle as much with finding a suitable theme for his Inaugural Address as he does in researching it. It was with considerable forethought and wisdom that our founders did not allow comments following an Inaugural Address at the Installation meeting.

### Literature

This period toward the end of the nineteenth century has to be placed in the context of the available masonic literature at the time. It would be invidious to attempt a complete bibliography of such publications and consideration is here given to books published of immediate influence to the researchers in the Lodge. They go beyond the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century classical pioneer works such as William Hutchinson's *Spirit of Masonry*, Alexander Lawrie's *The History of Freemasonry* and Preston and Oliver, already mentioned above. Furthermore, by now a number of masonic magazines had come and gone. Just two remained in circulation: *The Freemason* (1869-1951) and *Freemasons' Chronicle* (1875-1957), both regularly publishing, *inter alia*, articles of historic interest and establishing the names of masonic scholars. The most important work was, undoubtedly, Bro Robert Freke Gould's monumental and voluminous *The History of Freemasonry* (1882), which embodied 'in a single publication the legendary and authentic histories of the craft'.<sup>7</sup> Just two decades earlier in 1861, J.G. Findel of Leipzig, Germany had published his *Geschichte der Freimaurerei* [*History of Freemasonry*], which has been generally accepted as the first comprehensive history of the Craft. In the United States of America, Dr A.G. Mackey's *Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry* had seen the light of day in Philadelphia in 1874. A publication accepted as an exceedingly useful work, though again not always reliable in the factual interpretation given to mythical events. The same applied to *Kenning's Masonic Cyclopaedia and Handbook of Masonic History* compiled by the Revd Adolphus F. Woodford (1821-1887) and published in London in 1878. Of relevance to what follows, was the important publication by Bro William James Hughan entitled *The Old Charges of British Freemasons*, a title that has since 1872 become a standard term of reference to the ancient *Constitutions* of the operative masons.

### The Old Charges

The Old Charges, mostly manuscript documents, which explain the legendary history of the Masons' Craft, setting out the rules for the conduct of its members, are a prime example of the opportunities that arose for the discovery of previously unknown manuscripts, their interpretation and analysis. Today we know of a total of one hundred and thirteen surviving Old Charges and clearly some more remain to be unearthed. The earliest we hear of these Old Charges is in Dr Robert Plot's *Natural History of Staffordshire* (1686) in the much-quoted statement:

'... for here I found persons of the most eminent quality, that did not disdain to be of this Fellowship. Nor indeed need they, were it of that Antiquity and honor that is pretended in a

large parchment volume they have amongst them, containing the History and Rules of the craft of masonry. Which is there deduced not only from sacred writ, but profane story, particularly that it was brought into England by St. Amphibal, and first communicated to S. Alban, who set down the Charges of masonry ...'

These 'Charges of Masonry', were formally incorporated into our first book of *Constitutions* by James Anderson in 1723, where page 49 is headed:

THE  
CHARGES  
OF A  
FREE-MASON,  
EXTRACTED FROM  
The ancient **RECORDS** of LODGES  
...  
TO BE READ  
At the making of NEW BRETHREN, or when the  
*MASTER* shall order it.]

In the second 1738 edition Anderson expanded on the subject in his opening address to the reader, stating (page vii) that freemasons always had a *Book of Constitutions*

'... (of which they have several very antient Copies remaining) containing not only their *Charges* and *Regulations*, but also the History of *Architecture* from the Beginning of Time ; ...'

In the subsequent 'minutes' (page 110) of the *ASSEMBLY and Feast* of 24 June 1718 he refers to 'several old Copies of the *Gothic Constitutions*', which were brought to Grand Lodge at the request of the Grand Master, George Payne Esq.

In 1872 Hughan was the first scholar to study closely thirty-two of the Old Charges and by the time his pioneer work was taken up by Gould in 1882, the total list had increased to sixty-two manuscripts and printed versions. With the launch of Volume I of *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* [*AQC*] the *Transactions of Quatuor Coronati Lodge* in 1888 (covering the period January 1886 to November 1888), three of the articles published referred to the subject, most importantly the paper by Bro Dr Wilhelm Begemann, who for the first time classified the Old Charges into four general family groups. The frequency with which new manuscripts were being discovered at the time is manifest in a margin note by Begemann stating:

'The lately discovered Cama MS has only reached me, in transcript, whilst these sheets were going through the press; too late to modify the text ...'

Hughan used Begemann's classification in 'Bibliography of the Old Charges' published in *AQC* 9 in 1896 and in his second edition of *The Old Charges of British Freemasons* (London, 1895), which now listed no fewer than sixty-six manuscript versions, nine printed ones and eleven missing versions. This total reached ninety-eight by the time Brother Roderick H. Baxter, Past Master of this Lodge, presented his paper 'The Old Charges and the Ritual' to the Lodge in March 1918, subsequently published in Volume 31 of *AQC*. Many of the Old Charges are named after their discoverer, not least the two earliest ones. The Halliwell MS, now known as the Regius MS because of its provenance from the library of King Charles II, dated from c.1390,

was first identified as a document of relevance to Freemasonry by James Halliwell (incidentally, not a freemason) in the King's Library in the British Museum in 1839. The Cooke MS of c.1410 is named after Bro Mathew Cooke who also discovered it in the British Library in 1861, just two years after it was acquired by the Museum from private hands. The study of these two earliest manuscripts led to the original theories of a 'direct transition' (a term first used by Gould) between the operative medieval masons and speculative Freemasonry. It was supported by Hughan<sup>8</sup> and was later promulgated by Harry Carr in his Prestonian Lecture.<sup>9</sup> The 'Transition Theory' is no longer sustained as a viable explanation of our origins. Bro Colin Dyer's paper in *AQC* 95 (1982) entitled 'Some Thoughts on the Origins of Speculative Masonry' is one of the leading articles rejecting the operative-transitional-speculative theory, and is supported by the comments of a number of scholars, following the article. The great value, however, of these discussions and theories of our origins and the links to the Old Charges is that they did finally lead to a deviation from Anderson's mythical history. In subsequent editions of *AQC* this important and basic theme of the Old Charges, new discoveries and interpretations are announced with almost regular frequency. Bro Lionel Vibert dedicated his Inaugural Address to the subject in *AQC* 34 (1921). The subject continues to be of interest to date and the most recent edition of *Heredom*, the transactions of the U.S. Scottish Rite Research Society, has republished Bro Wallace McLeod's authoritative article 'The Old Charges', which remains the standard reference work on the subject.<sup>10</sup>

## The Royal Arch

Original documents other than Old Charges that surface from time to time are often discovered because of the presumption that such documentation must exist. A prime example of new material and fresh thought, so to speak, is to be found in Bro John Hamill's paper on the Royal Arch in England prior to 1830.<sup>11</sup> This is a classic work of search, research and discovery. Intrigued by the contradiction in the statements (a) that the ritual of the Royal Arch had been completely revised in 1834 whilst (b) there being apparently no available information on the subject prior to that date, Bro Hamill decided to research all available sources to enable him to reach new conclusions. His work entailed close analyses of twenty-six manuscripts on the Royal Arch, throwing totally new light on the practical aspects of the ritual of the Order between c.1792 and 1834. It also showed that the differences in the ritual working of the Supreme Grand Chapter and that of the fourth degree of the Antients Grand Lodge was minimal. Bro Hamill's concluding paragraph 'we must hope that further research will lead to the discovery of more material of undoubted Antient origin' is a *cri de coeur* to every budding and experienced researcher. Bro John Hamill, the doyen of researchers, has published many scholarly papers and his task was undoubtedly eased by the fact that he is a professional freemason. His access to new and original documents would have been considerably enhanced by his being then the Librarian at Grand Lodge, though it does not in anyway detract from the quality and depth of his research.

## The Post Boy

It does, however, make me feel that my own good fortune in discovering a hitherto unknown catechism was all the greater for my not being a professional freemason. The details of the discovery of Issue 5373 of *The Post Boy* have been published in a summarized format in *AQC*<sup>12</sup> and as a fully fledged article in *Heredom*.<sup>13</sup> Here I would like to consider briefly the circumstances of the discovery and methods employed in the subsequent research, as an illustration of the *profit and pleasure* that can ensue from masonic research.

For many years I had been purchasing from David Godfrey, a dealer from the Channel Islands, old newspapers in which reports on my various subjects of interest had been appearing. In November 1997 I was pleased to receive from him, on approval as usual, a bundle of newspapers in which was included a copy of *The Post Boy*, no. 5373 dated Thursday, December 26 to Saturday, December 28, 1723. Browsing through the back page, I was at first delighted and gradually astounded to read through the second column and ending nearly at the end of the next, a letter addressed 'to the Author of the Post Boy' and anonymously signed 'Yours &c A.B.' It was a masonic catechism that looked like an exposure of the ritual but was clearly a deviation from recognizable terms to an established freemason. I recognized in the text the reference to the first exposure of masonic ritual to appear in print just eight months earlier, in the *Flying Post or Post Master* No. 4712 of April 11 to April 13, 1723. It was clear to me from the start that I had an important document in my hands. The first step was to establish where else copies of my new find were located. With colleagues we searched all accessible libraries in Great Britain with emphasis on newspaper collections, enquiring whether No. 5373 of *The Post Boy* was extant or known and soon came to the conclusion that here was a lone surviving copy of the catechism. It was an exciting discovery. At this time the original copy was offered and deposited with the Library and Museum of the United Grand Lodge of England, whilst I contacted Bro Brent Morris, a close friend and Lodge colleague, whose speciality, *inter alia*, I knew to be deciphering and interpreting literary texts. He first repeated in the United States the search I had undertaken in the United Kingdom and also found no evidence of the existence of a second copy of this edition of the *Post Boy*. It was Brent's subsequent analysis that revealed the true importance of the newspaper. The most obvious source to search for more information on this early eighteenth-century document was Knoop, Jones & Hamer's *Early Masonic Pamphlets*, which led us to an anonymous forty-page anti-masonic pamphlet *Free-Masons accusation and defence in six genuine letters between a gentleman in the country and his son in the temple*, which had gone into four editions in the first year of publication in 1726. The format is as described in the title, three of the letters written by the father attack the Craft and three feeble responses by the son, defend it. In the first of the six letters, addressed from the father the following reference is made to the 'examination':

'I remember, when I was last in Town, there was a Specimen of their (the freemasons') Examination published in the Post Boy; but so industrious were the Masons to suppress it that in a Week's time not one of the Papers was to be found; where-ever they saw 'em they made away with them.'

The implication is that the freemasons had succeeded in obtaining and destroying all available copies of the newspaper. As we delved further to trace references to the incident referred to in the father's letter, we found that scholars had come up with their own theories as to what the author of the *Accusation and Defence* may have been referring to. One common conclusion, including that of Knoop and Jones, was that the allusion to the existence of an additional exposure was fictitious. Those who had searched had been unable, like us, to trace a copy of the issue of *The Post Boy* referred to in *The Free-Masons Accusation and Defence*. The existence of our copy of *The Post Boy* was evidence that this was not the case and that here we had the only known copy to date of this edition of *The Post Boy*. The Grand Lodge Library in England not being interested in the item, I withdrew it and offered it, through my friend Brent Morris, to the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J. in Washington, who have since published full size facsimiles of their prize acquisition. Brent's brilliant analysis of the text showed our copy of *The Post Boy* catechism to have been a 'sham', a misleading publication, appearing as a disclosure, intended to lead contemporary readers away from the real secrets of the Craft. Bro Brent believed that the sham exposure was most likely 'leaked to the press' by freemasons, perhaps the Grand Lodge. This was a gratifying instance of a combination of good luck, good research and hard work.

## Part Three

### New Angle

It would be illogical for any historian, masonic or otherwise, to expect to be able to place a permanent claim to facts and new theories he may have established in the past. Times change, resources improve and new discoveries are bound to be made, some of which may change the view of our perception of a subject previous to the new discovery. Facts true at the time of their first promulgation are thus 'adjusted' and adapted to fit in with more modern thinking. Numerous masonic researchers since 1886 have provided us with such new well-researched evidence that has changed pre-existing concepts of their particular subject.

#### 'Free' and 'Freemasonry'

A good instance can be found in the pages of *AQC* 10 (1897) where we encounter the first attempt at a full fledged definition of the word 'Free' in its masonic content by Bro G.W. Speth, long-standing Secretary of the Lodge, in a paper titled '“Free” and “Freemasonry”: a Tentative Enquiry'. It was a new theory that the word 'Free' in 'Freemasonry' meant the freedom from control of the local masons' guild where employment was to be found. This was in contradiction to the previously established explanations by such prominent scholars as Robert Gould, that the freedom related to the masons' guild in general. It was considered at the time a revolutionary concept, and was formally sanctioned when the definition was incorporated in the *New English Dictionary* published in Oxford in the same year (1897) where the relevant entry states:

'Mr. G.W. Speth (who) suggests (3) that the itinerant masons were called 'free' because they claimed exemption from the control of the local guilds of the towns in which they temporarily settled.'

#### The Antients

Classically, however, it was Henry Sadler's publication *Masonic Facts and Fictions* (1887) that finally laid to rest one major erroneous theory on the origins of the Antients' Grand Lodge. Until then the concept that there had been a schism from the premier Grand Lodge, finally leading to the formation of a competing Grand Lodge in 1751, had been universally accepted and never challenged. The meticulous and pedantic text of Sadler's book, subtitled 'A New Theory of the Origin of the Antient Grand Lodge', showed beyond doubt that the establishment of the Antients was a far cry from a schism from the premier Grand Lodge. Sadler had been appointed sub-librarian of the Grand Lodge at the time he also acted as Grand Tyler. It was his discovery and study of Morgan's Register, the first Register and Minute book of the Antients that allowed him a detailed analysis of the membership of the Antients which proved conclusively that the founding members of the Antients' Grand Lodge had no connection whatever with the premier Grand Lodge of 1717. The schism theory had been instigated by the premier Grand Lodge in the derogatory exchanges that had taken place between the two rival Grand Lodges and was accepted as fact in later publications. Sadler established the now well-accepted fact that the Antients' Grand Lodge was formed by a group of Irish freemasons. The late Bro Cyril Batham selected the subject of the Antients for his 1981 Prestonian Lecture, entitled 'The Grand Lodge of England according to the Old Institutions', which was the very first serious and comprehensive study of the history of the Antients' Grand Lodge published since its formation.

## The fourth degree

It was Bro Batham's Prestonian Lecture that attracted my attention to the contradiction in terms between the emphasis that the Antients apparently placed on the Royal Arch and the relative lack of information on the subject in the available documentation. When I was privileged to be invited to be the fifth Batham Royal Arch Lecturer in 2000, the Royal Arch as the established fourth degree of the Antients seemed an appropriate theme for the lecture. My full paper was published by the Supreme Grand Chapter as a pamphlet, 2000 copies of which are now sold out, though it was reprinted in *Heredom*, vol. 8, 1999-2000. Here, once more, I would merely like to relate the personal approach to this aspect of research, which entails the establishment of new facts in order to change previously held views.

The Antients had always contended that '... Antient Freemasonry consists of Four Degrees of which Royal Arch was the fourth, a degree that was certainly more august sublime and important than those which precede it, and is the summit and perfection of Antient Masonry.' If so, I could not understand why the Royal Arch was not mentioned in *The Three Distinct Knocks*, the anonymous exposure published in April 1760. This booklet was an accurate and detailed account of the ritual working of the Antients' Grand Lodge. It was, after all nearly a decade after the formation of the *Antients* and there seemed to me to be no explanation or reason for the exclusion of the Royal Arch from *Three Distinct Knocks*, unless the author was unaware of the existence of the degree. I first began to trace in detail the relevant documents published by the Antients from the date of their formation.

The earliest available document of the Antients, as mentioned, is *Morgan's First Register* of 17 July 1751. John Morgan was the short-lived Secretary who resigned from the Antients less than a year after his appointment, to be succeeded by Lawrence Dermott. *Morgan's First Register* is a comprehensive and detailed document in which there is no mention of the Royal Arch whatever.

The first minutes of the Antients are dated 5 February 1752, although records show meetings having taken place before that date. The Royal Arch is now mentioned for the first time in the second minutes of 4 March 1752, which reports that formal complaints were made

'... against Thomas Phealon and John Mackey, better known by the name of the leg of Mutton Masons. In course of the examination it appear'd that Phealon and Mackey had initiated many persons for the mean consideration of a leg of Mutton for dinner ... That upon examining some brothers whom they pretended to have made Royal-Archmen, The parties had the least Idea of the secret ... Nor had Mackey the least idea or knowledge of Royal Arch Masonry. But instead thereof he had told the people whom he deceived, a long story about 12 white Marble stones &c &c and that the Rain Bow was the Royal Arch with many other absurdities equally foreign and Reditulous.'

The two men were expelled from the Craft. Thus the first mention of the Royal Arch in the available records of the Antients in March of 1752 is of two men involved in the making of Royal Arch Masons without authority.<sup>14</sup>

It has always been understood that the Royal Arch (and, indeed, many other orders beyond the Craft) was conferred in lodges under the authority of the Grand Lodge of the *Antients*. On 14 September 1752 retroactive Warrants dated 1751 were granted to the five of the early lodges. None of the Warrants emanating from the Grand Lodge of the Antients authorized lodges to work the Royal Arch, or any other degree beyond the Craft. *Ahiman Rezon*, the book of constitutions of the Antients, a curious title that still defies definition, was first published in September 1756. There are extensive and lengthy discourses, addresses, charges, prayers, rules and regulations and songs in the two hundred pages of the first edition of *Ahiman Rezon*, yet less than three negative

pages in total are devoted to the Royal Arch. The prayer entitled ‘Ahabath Olam [Eternal Love] – A prayer repeated in the Royal-Arch Lodge in Jerusalem’ has only the title to link it to the Royal Arch. It is after these three hundred words that the oft-quoted statement, so closely linking Dermott and the Antients to Royal Arch Masonry, is made:

‘Having inserted this prayer, and mentioned that part of Masonry commonly called the Royal Arch (which I firmly believe to be the root, heart, and marrow of masonry) I cannot forbear giving a hint of a certain evil designer ...’

My conclusion, contrary to the traditional view, was that the Antients did not practise the Royal Arch for the best part of the first two decades of their Grand Lodge; that the Royal Arch proved to be an important distinction between the Antients’ and Moderns’ Grand Lodges, because the latter failed to recognize the Order as an entity. Dermott capitalized on that difference from the start. Whilst keeping the concept of the Royal Arch alive, however, Dermott may well have discouraged its activity. This is a reasonable assumption, considering the Antients were, in those early days, having considerable difficulty in finding brethren able to take the chair of a lodge and administer the Craft degrees. There was an insufficient number of qualified Royal Arch Masons and attempts at organizing any Royal Arch activity at this time would have been futile and inconvenient at best. This would explain why *Three Distinct Knocks*, the exposure disclosing in detail the Antients’ working in 1760, does not include the Royal Arch as the fourth degree.

I was not surprised to find that the two statements, namely that ‘Antient Freemasonry consists of four degrees’ and that ‘every craft lodge may exalt Royal Arch Masons’, is promulgated for the very first time on 1 October 1794 at a meeting of the General Grand Chapter (which was not an independent body),<sup>15</sup> held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern. This was forty-three long years after the establishment of the Antients’ Grand Lodge. There is no earlier mention of the Royal Arch as the fourth degree in any document or source material until the publication of these rules and regulations.

The clinical presentation of a well-prepared paper will not convey the emotions ranging from despair to joy that are experienced when researching. Nor does it convey that very special sense of pride and satisfaction experienced when invited to present the finalized version, as I have done here this afternoon. Research can be extremely gratifying. It remains, in its Masonic environment, an open field not least in the important co-relation between freemasonry as an institution and its place in the history and development of man and society. There are many new areas awaiting research, many new discoveries to be made. They just await new entrants into this fascinating world of search and discovery. Join us.

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## **Bibliography and Credits**

I am as always indebted to many friends and colleagues for their kind guidance and in particular to Diane Clements and Bros Brent Morris, Trevor Stewart and Bruce Hogg. I have made extensive use of articles in *AQC* and on the Internet, which I acknowledge in general and the following in particular:

Acaster, J., ‘The Joys of Discovery’, in *MAMR*, Vol. XCII (2002).

Dyer, C., *The History of the first 100 years of Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076* [QCCC Ltd, 1986].

Hextall, W. B., ‘Masonic Research’ [Inaugural Address], in *AQC* 27 (1952), pp. 224-231.

Heywood, H. L., *The Old Charges* //altreligion.com/library/texts/oldcharges

- Knoop, D. & Jones, J.P., 'Masonic History Old and New', in *AQC* 55 (1943).  
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Mendoza, H., *Getting and Giving Masonic Knowledge* [Prestonian Lecture] 1984  
Rylands, J.R., 'Apathy as regards Masonic Research', in *AQC* 66 (1953).  
Stewart, T., *English Speculative Freemasonry—Some Possible Origins, Themes and Developments* [Prestonian Lecture] 2004.  
Vibert, L., 'A Survey of Masonic Research', in *MAMR*, Vol. XXIV (1934).

## Notes

1. Vibert, L., 'A Survey of Masonic Research', in *MAMR*, Vol. XXIV (1934).
2. (1809-1882).
3. Prof Prescott moved to the University of Wales in Lampeter in March 2007 where he has taken on the post of Director of the Library and Research.
4. Beresiner, Y., 'Brother Winston Churchill as a Freemason', in *MQ Magazine*, Issue 3, October 2002.
5. E-mail exchange addressed to Mrs Diane Clements, Director of the Library and Museum of Freemasonry from Yasha Beresiner, PM *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge No. 2076, Reference: Primary Sources in the Library, dated 29 July 2002 and the reply of the same date. Not wishing to labour this point, I would, nonetheless, like to quote John Hamill on the subject. In his introduction to 'English Royal Arch MS Rituals c.1780-c.1830', in *AQC* 95 (1982), Bro Hamill states:

'Bro Hackney was using photostats or transcripts and had not seen the original documents, which led him into serious miscalculations as to their dating. This in turn casts doubts upon his conclusions.'

6. Gilbert, R.A., 'The Role of Bibliography in Masonic Research', in *AQC* 103 (1990), p. 131.
7. Gould, R.F., *The History of Freemasonry*, Vol. I, p. 2.
8. Hughan, W.J., 'Connecting Links Between Ancient & Modern Freemasonry, From a Non-Masonic Standpoint', in *AQC* 1 (1886-88).
9. Carr, H., *The Transition from Operative to Speculative Masonry* [Prestonian Lecture, 1957].
10. McLeod, W., 'The Old Charges', in *Heredom*, Vol. 14, 2006 [First published as the Prestonian Lecture, 1986].
11. Hamill, J.M., *op. cit.*
12. Beresiner, Y., 'The "Sham Exposure" in *The Post Boy*, December 1723', in *AQC* 111 (1998).
13. Morris, S. Brent, 'The *Post Boy* Sham Exposure of 1723', in *Heredom*, Vol. 7 (1998), incorporating a facsimile of the newspaper.
14. There is one most striking aspect about this report. It is the coincidence of the circumstances and wording of these minutes with those used by Dr Fifield Dassigny in his reference to the Royal Arch in 1744, the earliest available reference to the Order as a whole. In his *A Serious and Impartial Enquiry*... Dassigny wrote:

'... some have been led away with ridiculous innovations [...] by a certain propagator of a false system [...] under a pretence of being a Master of the Royal Arc [...] his fallacious art was discovered by a Brother of probity and wisdom [...] hereupon the Brethren [...] ordered him to be excluded from all benefits of the Craft ...'

The Minutes of the Antients Grand Lodge in 1752 referred to state:

'... (two) impostors in Masonry [...] pretended to teach the Masonical Art by which any man could render himself invisible. Macky had no idea or knowledge of Royal Arch Masonry but instead deceived the people with many absurdities equally foreign and ridiculous [...] The Grand Committee [...] ordered that neither be admitted into any Ancient Lodge during their natural lives.'

The mention of the Royal Arch in these two important and totally separate instances refer to extraordinarily similar circumstances. A mere coincidence?

15. An Antients' Grand Chapter as such never existed. Grand Chapter Officers were never appointed, nor were there any separate finances, nor was a separate Grand Treasurer appointed for the Royal Arch. Decisions and resolutions agreed by the Grand Chapter Committee had to be approved and confirmed and passed by the Antients' Grand Lodge.

**Bro David J. Peabody, WM,** said:

Brethren, it gives me great pleasure to propose a vote of thanks to Bro Yasha this evening. The subject of the paper is one dear to my heart, and I am especially pleased that it was at my suggestion that he commenced it. Every now and again a paper such as this is needed, not only to take stock of what has gone before, but to look at where Masonic research is going.

It was as early as 1890 that Bro Speth, the first secretary of the lodge, wrote a paper entitled 'A Masonic Curriculum' in which he directs the attention of the Masonic student to those books available and which might be considered essential reading. He divided them into six bands:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Preliminary and general information.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Masonic tradition.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Authentic History.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Symbolism and ethics.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Jurisprudence.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Ritual.

He also divided Masonic students into three sections.

1<sup>st</sup> Masons of scant leisure and small means who would fain content themselves with a good general idea to be acquired from one book only.

2<sup>nd</sup> Those of more leisure who would wish to be placed in a position to come to independent conclusions, and yet to accomplish their purpose without too heavy a drag on their resources.

3<sup>rd</sup> Those to whom neither money nor time is of great consequence, or whose interest in the subject enables them to sacrifice some other pleasure in order to attain the desired end.

These remarks still hold good today, without the effort, there is no reward.

It has often remarked that the *Transactions* of this Lodge can be heavy going, but one must view them in the round, as one would a serial – each back volume one reads adds to the knowledge base, until you are filled with a desire for yet more volumes ...

With a current full set of the printed version of the *Transactions* costing in excess of perhaps £5000, (if one might so purchase them), my Junior Warden, Brother Currie and I have spent the last four and a half years scanning them and turning them into PDF (portable document format). A PDF reader (included on the disc containing each volume) provides a search engine whereby one may call up any item by name or by subject. This facility discovers many of the lesser-known subjects, hitherto unlisted in the master index, indeed, I still refer to my volumes of *AQC* on a daily basis, even to the St John's Cards – the list of the members printed in the back of the early volumes, which can prove surprisingly useful. If I may cite one particular example, I found the following entry by means of the search engine: 'Bro Henry Logsdail SARSON, Vinegar Works, City Road, South East'.

Brethren when next you put Vinegar on your chips, at the end of Southend pier, you may say with the utmost confidence Sarson was a Mason and he is to be found in the *Transactions* of the *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge.

Thank you Bro Yasha for an excellent paper and entertaining delivery. It gives me great pleasure to propose a vote of thanks.

**Bro Peter Hamilton Currie, JW,** said:

Worshipful Master, Brother Warden & Brethren, I can conceive neither of a more timely nor appropriate paper to have been set before the Lodge on this celebratory visit to the Province of Essex in which we honour the masonic origins of our Master.

I must preface my comments on Bro Beresiner's work by reiterating a warning contained therein and adding, as an adjunct, one of my own.

The first warning, concerns the avoidance of secondary sources in research work and the second is to beware of relying too heavily on modern technology to assist in the production of a research paper.

When re-reading the paper in order to prepare these comments, I was struck by two separate items. The first was that the word reproduced in note 14 after the paper, was reproduced as 'Arc' rather than 'Arch'. Having spotted this I determined to find the original, wherever it had been reproduced and therefore, in each case and by definition a secondary source and to see whether this was a correct transliteration of the original or merely a slip from flying fingers on a keyboard. I turned to the standard works – Coil, Gould, Jones, Kenning, Mackenzie, Mackey, &c, to see what might be found under Dassigny. Taking the authors alphabetically, Coil and Gould spelled the word as 'Arch', Bernard E. Jones, in his *Freemasons' Book of the Royal Arch* reproduces D'Assigny's original in a fuller version and it is there reprinted as 'Arch', Kenning directs us from Dassigny to Assigny but for good measure tells us, under Assigny, that we should also refer to Dassigny although without an apostrophe and thereby launching us into a perpetual circle ..., but of the 'Arch', he makes no mention other than the shortened initial form. Kenneth R.H. Mackenzie, under Dassigny, (no apostrophe), mentions the Royal Arch but not in the context of our search and informs us that:

'... competent authorities are of opinion [*sic*] that Dassigny was unacquainted with the nature of that degree.'

Mackey contents himself with a dissertation on the three possible ways of spelling Dassigny and refers to Dermott's citation in *Ahiman Rezon* but again does not quote Dassigny's original text.

One might pursue this sort of search for ever and a day, but mindful of Bro Beresiner's injunction on the matter of secondary sources, it must surely be to John Heron Lepper that we must turn. Heron Lepper's paper 10, in *AQC L*, is a brief observation in which he informs us that:

'The United Grand Lodge of England in 1945 acquired a complete and perfect copy of the book (*A Serious and Impartial Enquiry...*), including the copperplate. [...] This unique volume was discovered by one of our own members, W. Bro. Wallace Heaton, P.G.D., and by him presented to the Library of Grand Lodge, a fitting home for such a treasure.'

It must be to this volume therefore that we should refer for our primary source. I am reminded of Bro Beresiner's own observation that:

'... *AQC* predominates because the papers presented in open lodge are published with written comments. This secondary source ensures that errors are rectified and it often adds information or a new perspective to the body of the paper presented.'

Indeed – and this brings me to my second warning. It may be that the majority of papers for *AQC* in the present age are submitted using Microsoft Word or a similar word processing programme. Before the final work can be printed it has to go through a number of processes, not least of which is the conversion to PDF file format. The proof reading is generally done before the conversion and it would seem that this very paper has shown up a failing in this system and to which I must hold up my own hand. It has been found that occasionally during the conversion process, certain solecisms may creep into the text, which then requires further correction. Having received this

paper for typesetting and already proofed, I was less vigilant than I might otherwise have been, relying upon the excellent qualities of our proof reader. Alas I failed to spot 'Bergmann' where the text should have had 'Begemann' until after the paper had been disseminated. I can assure the brethren of the Lodge that steps have now been taken to change the point at which the proofreading takes place to ensure, just as Bro Beresiner has said, that '... errors are rectified' and that before publication.

Worshipful Master and brethren, I have the highest regard for Bro Beresiner's capabilities as a researcher beside which many academics' efforts pale into insignificance and I have no hesitation, and indeed the utmost pleasure, in asking that my name be associated with the vote of thanks proposed by the Worshipful Master, this afternoon.

**Bro James W. Daniel, PM,** said:

Everyone here today has demonstrated by his presence an interest in what Bro Beresiner has called 'Masonic Research', and we should all be grateful to him for what he has been doing for many years to encourage other Masons to share his enthusiasm for the subject.

Like Bro Beresiner, the *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge's objective is to encourage research into Freemasonry, and from its foundation this lodge has tried to disprove or ignore 'baseless conclusions...derived from...imaginative writings'.<sup>1</sup> As historians or would-be historians, we must nevertheless realise that as human beings we cannot be completely objective – as Robin Winks wrote, 'History is, minimally, three things: what happened in the past, what people believe happened in the past, and what historians say happened in the past'<sup>2</sup> – but we must try to be so, and to ensure that our theories are soundly based.

Winks also wrote that 'Historians seek patterns in the events of the past'<sup>3</sup> and in this connection it might be worth reminding ourselves that, like the *Historische Zeitschrift* (founded in 1859), the *Revue Historique* (1876), the *Rivista Storica Italiana* (1884) and the *English Historical Review* (1886), this lodge, warranted in 1884 and the publication of its proceedings were part of a much wider movement that led to the historical discipline of the present day. Masons investigating and writing about the fraternity's history often lose sight of the wider context in which Freemasonry exists and is commented upon, and thus choose to be chroniclers rather than historians. But there appears today to be a growing interest in Freemasonry among what we might call professional historians, as evinced by the large attendance at the recent International Conference on the History of Freemasonry in Edinburgh. As Masons and historians we should be aware of what academic historians – and, indeed, other critics – are writing about Freemasonry, and engage with them. To do this we must be armed with a better knowledge of our organisation, and to that end I trust we will all support any initiatives that Grand Lodge may take as it approaches its tercentenary in 2017 to draw up a social history of English Freemasonry.

**Bro R. Rigby-Saunders** said:

I have very much enjoyed this meeting of the *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge and the paper given by Bro Yasha Beresiner to the brethren present this afternoon. I heartily agree with his exhortation to seek primary sources of information in the endeavour to research material for a paper. One ought never to rely on secondary sources for such purposes and I am pleased that he has seen fit to draw attention to the many written and published mistakes in our Masonic past. The incorrect transcription of dates and spelling when accessing past papers of research can send the researcher down a blind alley and allow him to draw erroneous conclusions.

<sup>1</sup> *AQC* vol. 118 (2005), p. iv.

<sup>2</sup> *The Oxford History of the British Empire* vol.V: *Historiography* ed. R.W. Winks (Oxford, 1999), 'Preface', p. xiii.

<sup>3</sup> ditto

Unfortunately, I have been less than successful in utilizing primary sources in my own research into the reasons for the choice of Dr Samuel Hemming for the Lodge of Promulgation. Practically every account commences with the observation that no-one knows why he *was* selected. If I were able to have access to the private letters of royalty of the time (which I do not) it may well be that the answer would lie there. Lacking such access, therefore, I tried to think ‘outside the box’ and started to research the meteorological records for the period in question. The purpose was to establish whether weather conditions between 1811-1813 were sufficiently severe to inhibit communications. The results showed that conditions *were* severe and it seems that Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex, appeared to have avoided selecting freemasons resident in London for office in that Lodge. It is currently impossible to say why this should be and one is reminded that he once offered the office of Deputy Grand Master to the Eleventh Duke of Norfolk despite the fact that he was not a freemason at the time!

Seeking primary sources from written records of Lodge meetings at Hampton Court Palace during the period 1811 to 1813, I again drew a blank although we know that such meetings definitely took place. In support of this fact there are letters extant from Hemming’s Lodge, The Lodge of Harmony No. 255, sent to Sussex in London but sadly, nothing from Sussex in return. The content material of the correspondence between the William Walton, the secretary of the Lodge and the Duke of Sussex must be assumed to have gone with Walton to the grave. Strangely, Walton’s name is much celebrated in the Lodge while Hemming’s – surely far more important to the history of Freemasonry – is not.

I can only observe that scouring relevant newspapers and periodicals of the time, ascertaining where certain people met and dined, royal visits, the Guild or indeed any other form of Masonic investigation during this period, has proved fruitless in my finding what must have been a private decision known only to Sussex and Hemming themselves the reasons for which we shall never know but which had such profound consequences for Freemasonry over the succeeding three centuries.

One thing I do know, however, is that while there seemed to be very few ‘experts’ concerned in this particular field, I myself have learned an enormous amount in the process which may serve me well in future enquiries.

**Bro Beresiner** replied:

Bro Currie, having gone through the search and research for the origin of the word *Arch*, may now like to consider the same effort with regard to *Antient* as opposed to *Ancient*. Having established that the former is merely the archaic form for the latter, I have been unable to pinpoint an original source for either expression. I have no doubts our Editor would welcome the results of any Brother’s searches into this, or any other of the similar anomalies so frequently encountered when researching a subject.

I am grateful to Brother Daniel for his comment and reiterate that we cannot repeat too often the importance of *not* isolating Masonic research. It was one of the weaknesses of our predecessors and we are in a position to make amends. Every researcher, irrespective of the importance of his undertaking, should always endeavour to set his work within the context of non-Masonic circumstance.

Bro Rigby-Saunders speaks from the heart and his extensive efforts must be worthy of a full-fledged article we can soon look forward to in the pages of our *Transactions*.

Thank you again Brethren – those who made great organizational efforts for this meeting and to those who so willingly supported and participated in our event.