

The development of the Craft Ritual.

The earliest positive information that we have of anything that can be regarded as ritual — for we cannot include under that heading extracts from ancient manuscripts — is that which we find in a batch of 'exposures' which were published about 1730, especially that by Pritchard.

There appears to be little doubt that the ritual practically in the form indicated in these exposures, had existed long before the formation of the first Grand Lodge of England in 1717, and probably right back to the first beginnings of our speculative masonry.

Apparently in the seventeenth century the ritual consisted of two parts, one known as the 'Apprentice's part', and the other as 'the Master's Part', the former dealing with the Pillars and the latter embodying the Hermetic legend.

P/A74

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In the early part of the 18th century few brethren troubled to take the Master's Part, which was frequently, if not normally, worked at special "Masters' Lodges" often held on Sunday evenings.

In those days the ritual as we now know interpret the word, was exceedingly short and the major part of the instruction ^{of the candidates conveyed} was completed by working the lectures; as an example a ritual in cypher published in the 18th century had 80 pages of devoted to the lectures of the 3 degrees (42, 1st, 22nd, 16, 2nd) and only 6 pages to the ceremonies i.e. 2 pages to each degree; doubtless the printed ceremony was amplified by the Master at his discretion.

The reasons advanced at the time for the formation of Ancient Grand Lodge are well known to you all; it is probably true to state & however that it was not so much a reason as an excuse. Nevertheless some vital differences existed between the

Antients and the Moderns. With the Moderns for example both Wardens sat in the West, the words of the first and second degrees were used in the reverse order, and the P. W. had been given a position of importance apparently superior to that of the actual Ws.

18th Century

It was unusual in Modern Lodges to appoint Deacons but this probably is explained by the form of the ceremony at that time.

Summarising the position at the end of eighteenth century it may be said that under the jurisdiction of the Moderns the ceremony, as it was then, and instruction given by lectures or Catechisms; the words ^{of the words} were interchanged; under the Antients there a strong Irish influence prevailed and the general spirit of the ceremonies accorded the more closely with ~~work~~ post. human working.

It was in effect a condition precedent to the Union that the Moderns should bring their working into accord with that of the rivals, and to do this they set off the special hedge of Promulgation. On April 12th 1809 the Grand Lodge of Moderns passed the following resolution

"That this Grand Lodge do advise in opinion with the Committee of Charity that it is not necessary any longer to continue those measures which were resorted to in or about the year 1739 respecting Irregular Masons, and do therefore desire the several Lodges to revert to the Ancient hand marks of the Society", and some

six months later, the Grand Master issued a Warrant to form the Lodge of Promulgation for the purpose of promulgating the ancient hand marks of the Society and instructing the Craft in all such matters and forms as may be necessary to be known by them in consequence of an obedience to the said resolution and order".

The Lodge of Promulgation existed only for eighteen months but it accomplished a deal of important work.

It resuscitated the Deacons and might say here that they prescribed that the Junior Deacon received the candidate for initiation, but after the invocation the Senior Deacon took him through the rest of the ceremony. This however was soon altered to ~~the~~ an equivalent of the present usage.

It also decided that the ceremony of initiation was a hand Mark.

It corrected the words and passwords.

Finally, and most important of all, the Lodge of Promulgation paved the way for the Union of the two Grand Lodges on 27 Dec. 1813.

The Lodge of Reconciliation was formed just before the Union became an accomplished fact, and the Grand Secretary from each of the Grand Lodges were nominated by and accepted from their respective bodies.

The production of a set of regulations, forms, rules etc acceptable to both parties to the Union, ^{was} despite the good work of the Lodge of Promulgation, a long and a times a painful procedure.

The bitterness and rivalry between the Members of the two former Grand Lodges, although theoretically at an end, took many years to die out, and naturally each section did its utmost to cling to certain old customs in their respective Lodges.

The Lodge of Reconciliation lapsed in mid 1816 but not before it had given demonstrations at Grand Lodge as a result of which Grand Lodge declared in 1815 the wording of what they termed 'the only pure & genuine declarations'. It must not be forgotten that memory alone was relied on for the preservation and transmission of the facts & verbal details for Lodge of R.C. did not permit of any writing whatever of esoteric details.

The Constitution L. of I. for M.M. L. of I. - to give it its full title was printed in 1823 & the famous Peter Gilkes, judged by many to be a natural son of Lord Peter at one time G.M. of the M. became its proceptor in 1825, retaining that office until his death in 1833.

Peter Gilkes, born in 1765 and initiated into the Moderns in 1789 ^{may} probably be designated the most famous Masonic instructor of all

time. In his dated printed rituals - other than exposures - were unknown, his ritual is unknown but it is reasonably safe to assume that the Claret ritual represented his working very closely, for Claret was his assistant for many years.

It may be said here that Claret had had experience in the lodge of P. & the L. of P.

He first knew

Claret's first ritual ~~is~~ is dated 1838 and was priced at one guinea - a large sum of money in those days. Sunday & block

Claret's ceremonial had been incorporated in the lectures as worked by Emulationists, so Claret cut much opportunity of learning it.

Claret copied many of Filles' grammatical errors and of course as you know they have ^{subseq.} been transmitted pure & uns.

a stated day having been appointed.

Claret.

Number 102 1838. North Wales on
Leas - Bristol.

Bristol. Working tool
probably oldest circle of swords
30.

Oxford Claret with many granite
faults corrected.

Perfect Cer. 1870

Number circa 1840.
similar Bristol. Printed 1922
Number 57. Hull

York

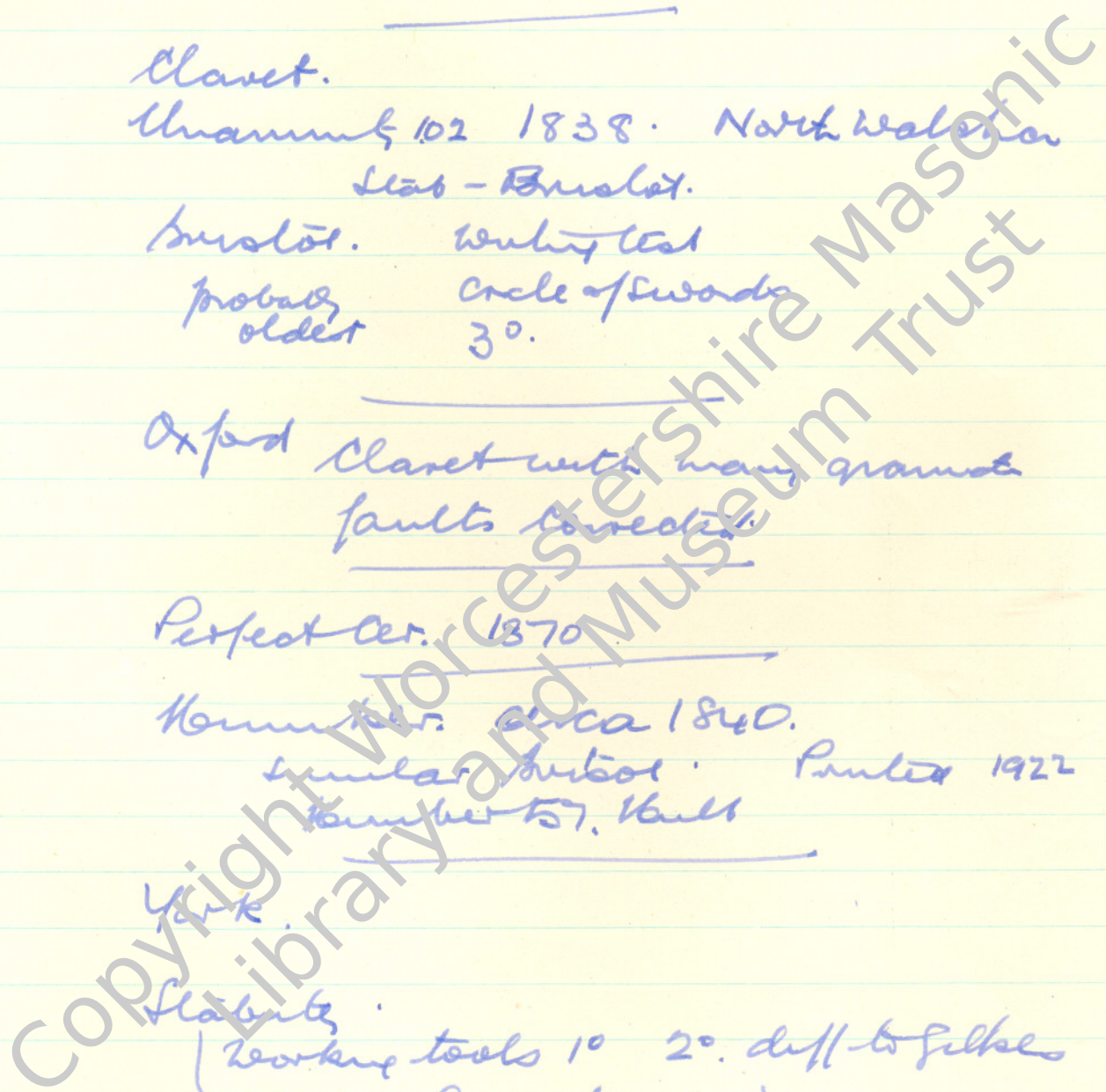
Slab

Working tools 10 20. diff to fibres

Domestic
South hander
East hander
West hander
Melroport. derived

Essex. St John Baptist L. 39.

139/William Sheffield.



P/A 74

recently installed, but of long association
with you all; you have a happy
Province. May the S.A.O.T.U. long decree
that those great acquisitions of the —
and indeed of all men — be yours

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