

(42)

P. 2 1/3

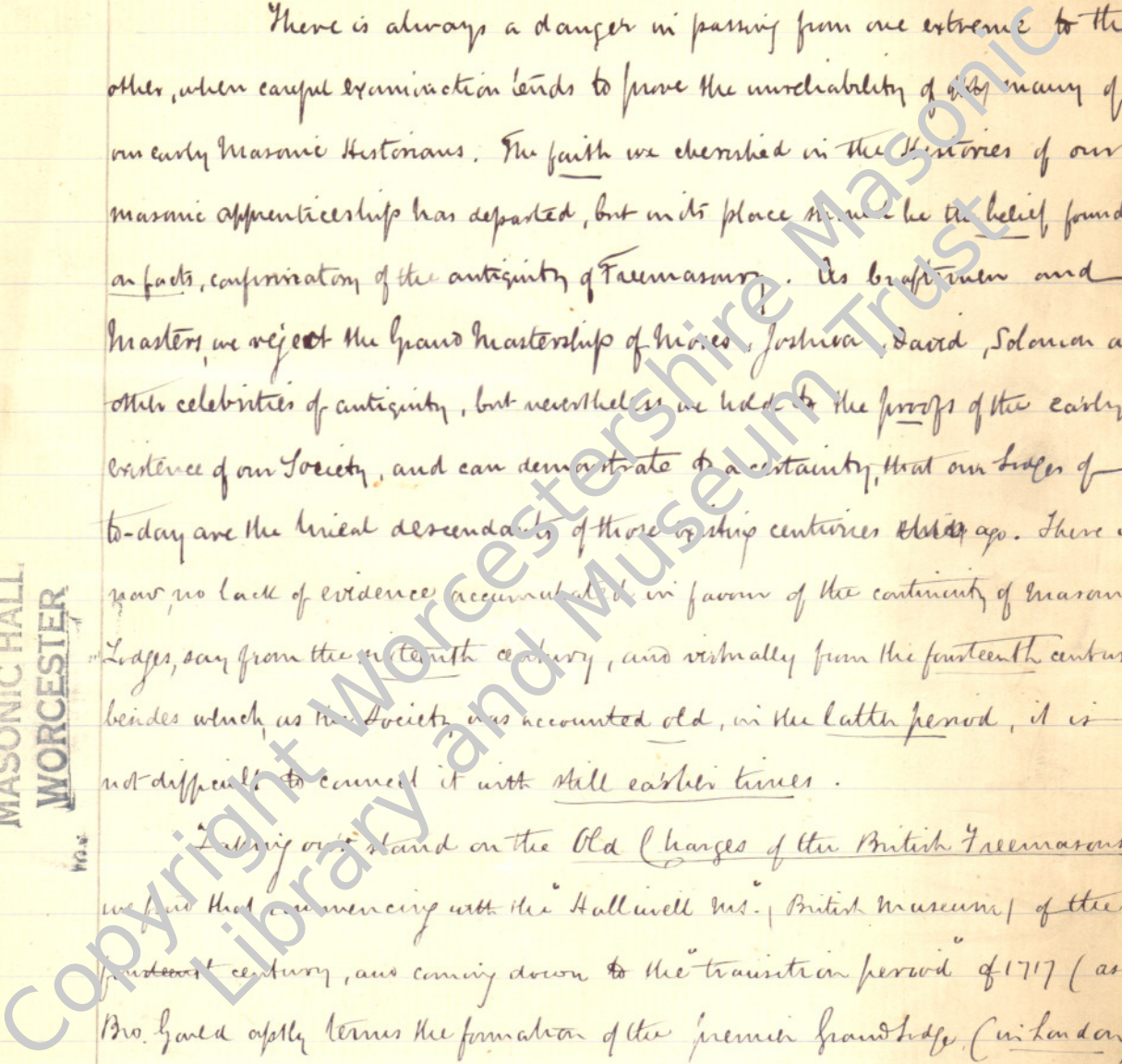
A/1/A3

Connecting Links between Ancient and Modern Freemasonry

There is always a danger in passing from one extreme to the other, when careful examination tends to prove the unreliability of ~~the~~ many of our early Masonic historians. The faith we cherished in the histories of our masonic apprenticeship has departed, but in its place ~~shall~~ be the belief, founded on facts, confirmation of the antiquity of Freemasonry. As brethren and Masters, we reject the grand mastership of Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon and other celebrities of antiquity, but nevertheless we hold to the proofs of the early existence of our Society, and can demonstrate to a certainty, that our Loges of to-day are the lineal descendants of those of ship centuries ~~back~~ ago. There is now no lack of evidence accumulated in favour of the continuity of Masonic Lodges, say from the ninth century, and virtually from the fourteenth century, besides which, as the Society was accounted old, in the latter period, it is not difficult to connect it with still earlier times.

Having our stand on the Old Charges of the British Freemasons, we find that commencing with the Halliwell MS. (British Museum) of the fourteenth century, and coming down to the transition period of 1717 (as Bro. Gould aptly terms the formation of the premier Grand Lodge (in London) ~~MS. B. 1. 1. 1.~~) these copies of the History, Legends and Laws of the Masonic Body are all of one family, though varying considerably at times as to minor points. These Rolls, Scrolls, or "Charges", Books &c, legendary, historical and legal, give us a firm grip of the old fraternity, and afford

Et Libris
 WORC. PROV. LIBRARY
 MASONIC HALL,
 WORCESTER



us some fifty witnesses in proof of the owners of the Lodge as to their acris, character and constitution for at least some 500 years; and inferentially ^{for} ~~the~~ about double that period. (a) In the 14th century, the Master Mason was required to be "stedfast, trusty and true", and in our modern constitutions the Masters of our Lodges annually at their Installation pledge themselves to be "good men and true, and strictly to obey the moral Law"; (b) the members were required to "swear the same oath of the Masons" (c) to keep all the "passwords", much as is done now, ^{the} ~~the~~ being obligated to keep their Master's Council in and out of "Lodge", and all were to "love me! God and holy Church". In the next document, Mr. [Booker's] 15th century (British Museum) references are made to the "Book of Charges", the "olde Bookys of Masonry" &c, these two were, ⁱⁿ ~~in~~ reality, reproductions in part of the "old Charges". Other stones ⁱⁿ ~~in~~ Rowen is ~~of~~ ^{have} declared to a Speculative a "Mason", some later copies stating it was at Windsor that he was "made a Mason", and all generally unite in acknowledging their indebtedness to him for a Master from the King for holding the Annual Assemblies at York &c, these ~~to~~ ^{to} be concluding earlier Assemblies under St Alban, and an in - charge of charges. Each Master was required there as near to "through his and" "Hele the councell of his felows in lodge and in chambere,"

and especially ~~to~~ "shall he be true to the King of England and to the Kene (realm), the W. concluding with the true Masonic phrase, "Amen, so mote it be"!

In the "Lansdowne", "Melrose", "Grand Lodge", "York", "Hilson", "Jesse Jones", and "Wood" MSS. (the last two in the "Taylor Collection", Kidd—)

The O.B. was taken on the Bible, as with us, the York masons enforce the injunction "Do all as you would be done unto, and I beseech you at every meeting and assembly you pray heartily for all christians."

The title free-mason occurs in several of the "Rolls", and the word "free-mason" is met with from the fourteenth century, Fabric Rolls, Westminster Hall &c. and clearly refers to the freedom of the Trade, not Free Mason, as one of our ablest Historians (Bro. Fort) considers. If the term meant British Mason, we should not meet so often with the words, Brother free mason, besides which, as we find a guild of free stonemasons at Woolwich in the 15th century composed of men and women, of free carpenters at London in 1666, and so frequently note the reference to free men in the Scottish lists, it is evident to any mind, as also to Bro. Gould's (our latest and best Historian) that free mason meant free stone mason, freedom as a mason to work in the Town &c. as an accepted Member of the Society, Sledge.

"Loge" was first found in the Fabric Rolls of York Minster 1355; one was erected according to W. de at Malton Abbey 1200, another at Carnarvon Castle 1320 and one at St. Stephens, Westminster, being in fact covered sheds or houses in which the masons assembled, and in private, to hew, cut, and carve the stones. Hence a Loge then and now, is a place in which masons assemble in secret, "cowans and snavedroppers" being excluded. "Cowans" were men who had obtained a knowledge of operative masonry, in an irregular manner, & so were not accepted, neither were they allowed in Loge, & employed by regular masons, unless absolutely needed (then carefully provided for by restrictions)

L 1/3

P 1/A3

10 minutes

a "Cowan" in Scotland being traced back to the 16th century, and defined later as a "mason without the word". We preserve in our Rituals and usage two obsolete words (worth noting), viz Hele and Cowan. Hele, to Hele, is masonically connected with the evening of the Lodge, ^{or roof} making it an enclosure free from Carans and Listeners (Haversnappers), hence we use it, with the two other words, all referring to separate acts viz "Hele (hide, cover etc) the Sign "Conceal the Sign, and "never Reveal the word, each appropriately fitting the exterie portion needful to be kept secret, and not exchangeable or synonymous as some erroneously consider. "Helling", i.e. to hele for the Roof is a term still used in London, and in another County, Essex speak of the "Turnips being heled", (or covered) thus proving that we as Masons are correct in the use of the word.

or extract in
Hugbani's
Mason Register
Dr Plot's
Staffordshire
1686

That the Lodge met in secret assembly, and used signs &c, prior to the last century, though not accounted with Masonic Degrees as now, is abundantly proved by the testimony of one of the opponents of the Society, in 1686, viz Dr Plot who in his History of Staffordshire mentions the Free Masons as having signs of the old Charges which were read to the neophytes, and that they used "secret signs" of recognition of great powers frequently.

Hugbani's
Mason Sketches

In my "Masonic Sketches & Reprints" will be found ^{a portion} copies of Harleian ms. 2054, British Museum, which is really an O.B. To keep inviolate, the "words & signs of a free Mason" A.D. 1670 [circa], and there are also other evidences of such customs and ceremonies prior to 1717, hence there is testimony beyond question that our brethren of the period anterior to the Grand Lodge era, used signs and words, just as we use them now.

Records

L1/3

Of actual Lodge ~~records~~, there are numerous Minute Books from 1598-9 to now. The Lodge of "Dunburgh" No. 1, Scotland has an unbroken series for all this long period, and was one of the lodges that formed the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1736. These ancient Minutes consequently, completely bridge over the transition period of 1717-1736, the lodge having been active for more than ^{century, and a} quarter prior to the advent of the British Grand Lodge, and was existing as a Lodge, over a hundred years before the formation of the Grand Lodge of England, the premier masonically of the world. John Boswell Esquire, attended this same Lodge, ^{and} signed his name and made his mark (as the others) in the year 1680, and a host of other gentlemen and noblemen became members during that century. A number of brethren "swarmed" from No. 1. in 1688 and formed a new Lodge which still exists, and in a quarrel with the Journeyman of Lodge No. 1, the Masters resorted to such strict measures, that this led to an open revolt, and the Journeymen took upon themselves the unusual privilege of communicating the "Mason Word" to other Journeymen, contrary to the rule in operation previously; two of them being put in prison, by decree of the Masters for so doing, the end being a separate Lodge according to the "lowest Arbitral" of A.D. 1714, the Lodge from thence being known as the "Journeyman Lodge", as at the present time. "Another Lodge Kilwinning" has a most eventful history, and has lay been No. 0 on the Scottish Roll. Its records are most important, of those preserved from 1642, many of the marks being very interesting, and in 1677 it formed a Lodge in Edinburgh "to entertain and pass"

L/13

Masons, as of old, which separate Lodge is on the present Roll as No 2.

Lodge No 3 Perth has existed for very many years, and one of its earliest documents is of the year 1658, in which it is spoken of as "ancient free Lodge", the ^{having been} McClure family connected with it, and the Lodge of Edinburgh through five or more successive generations. In the Lodge No 3 bis Glasgow, with Records in part from 1820, the latter was not admitted until 1841, yet in the old Lodge of Dumblane operatives were in the minority in 1696, and particularly was this so in the old Lodge of Aberdeen, for in the year 1670 out of 49 members, only some 12 were actual operative Warrors, the ^{only remainder} others being drawn from various other Trades, Professions, Gentlemen and Noblemen, including a Factor Merchant as the Master of the Lodge, and members, Barls of Deerfornshire and Smolles, Lord Pitsligo, Ministers of Religion, Advocates, Professors, Smiths, Announcers, Carpenters &c. a most remarkable company as Masons of the year 1670. Their marks are duly recorded in the mark Book, as also those of their Successors, and the Apprentices. Several of the marks are the same held by the Journeymen of craftsmen, and the Apprentices of the same Trades, presumably Fathers and Sons; and as Apprentices had to choose and register marks some being the same as their Father's or relatives, clearly it would be impossible of course to decide from the mark, the Masonic position of the user thereof, for he may be an Apprentice, Journeymen or Master.

See Vol 2
Gould
for specimens
from many
Photographs

including a Factor Merchant as the Master of the Lodge, and members, Barls of Deerfornshire and Smolles, Lord Pitsligo, Ministers of Religion, Advocates, Professors, Smiths, Announcers, Carpenters &c.

L1/3

The "Somatic" (operative) and the "Geometric" (non operative, gentlemen) were thus both represented in Lodges long before the advent of the St^o of England 1717, when some would have us believe that speculative freemasonry began! ^{For} ~~and~~ ⁱⁿ my part it appears to me as clear that freemasonry was speculative as well as operative, say three hundred or more years ago, that to doubt the fact must argue ignorance. Lodges by the Aberdeen Laws of 1670 were required to be held where none can "hear or see us", and masons assembled on the highest hills or lowest valleys "for their private meetings" ^{in the "open fields"}, as alluded to later on, in addition to the facilities offered by their Lodges in Buildings.

The Rules for the government of the Aberdeen L^s were printed in 1680-2, but are missing alas. How much they would be valued as indications of operative legislation for that period? It appily however we have those of 1690, given by Lyon in his History of Scot. Scotland.

Lyon's
History
(as cited)

An extraordinary ^{Story of an} ~~event~~ ^{is} narrated in the History of the Lodge of Kelso ^{in Scotland} by Bro Vernon from 1701, that L^s consisting of operative and speculative, and Bro Gould refers to a curious question ^{put} by the Presbytery of Kelso, whether the Rev James Arisbie, a strict Presbyterian Clergyman, was justified in being a freemason, the decision being just unequivocally in his favour, the Presbytery taking his view of the matter, and acknowledging the support the L^s had received from others than operatives from about the year 1600. Atcheson-Haven, and Haughfoot Lodges are also cited by Lyon, Smith and myself

Gould
Vol 2 page 444

L1/3

as illustrative of the general similarity of the customs prevailing amongst the various Lodges prior to the Grand Lodge period. Many Lodges in England and Scotland joined their several Grand Lodges, dating either from their oldest Records preserved, or being allowed to work without Warrants, as the present No 24, London, while other new old Lodges joining later on, had to be entered with warrants bearing the years of their joining, though they actually antedated the year of the Grand Lodge-union; and in particular (still existing) with Records preserved from 1674, ^{as in 2d} ~~still~~ holding aloof! and working as a separate Lodge viz. the old body at Inchrose. A mutual bond was signed by ²⁴ members in 1675, and the Records are most suggestive of the substantial family likeness of all the Lodges of the seventeenth century.

Though the Records existing are much older than those of England, it is very remarkable that all the Scottish copies of the old by-laws contain a clause indicative of their English origin!

The Earl of Cassillis was Sec. of Lodge Libermont in 1672, the Earl of Argyle in 1677, and Lord Forster was a Warden in 1678. Lord Stratmore was Master of the Lo. at Dunblane in 1696, and the Roll of members of the Lodge of Edinburgh contained the names of Lord Alexander 1634, and other noblemen and gentlemen later on in that century. ^{or Essays} Masterpieces, as with other Travels had to be submitted for approval, prior to the passing of Journeymen, & or Fellow Crafters