

MANUSCRIPTS IN THE WORCESTERSHIRE PROVINCIAL
LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

W.Bro. Chairman, and Brethren,

When I last stood in this hall and addressed you I took you on a tour of the Worcerstershire Provincial Library and Museum, and on that occasion most of our time was spent on talking about and looking at the various jewels and other items of Glass, and China etc. This Brethren is only part of this wonderful collection held in the Worcester Museum.

When I was invited to come back and talk to you, I had to think for a while what I could bring you of interest, and decided that I would bring along some of the Manuscripts and books of Interest which many of you may have heard about but did not know where they existed. We are very proud at Worcester that we now hold the following old Manuscripts and Charges, these together with other items I have brought and set out in a display for you. It will give many of your Brethren a chance to see such items of interest. I do however ask you not to handle these items as they are delicate and irreplaceable.

The M.S. Charges which I have brought along are as follows.

The Wood M.S. dated 1610-1640

The Inigo Jones M.S. dated as 1607, but on information available following our having the scrip etc. varified is 1700

The Woodcock M.S. 1702-1744

The Lechmere M.S. 1700.

The Hathway M.S. 1730-1740 (could be earl than this date.

It is not my intention to give a talk on and how these M.S. belong to the various families, as this has been well carried out by Brethren who have researched these M.S. and the papers have been printed in the various issues of Q.C.

We are offer informed that in the very early days a copy of these M.S. was virually all that was required for a number of Brethren to form a Lodge. Very rarely do we get an insight as to what they contained. I will say a little about each, and go deeper into the contents of the Wood M.S.

You may be saying to your self how did these items come into the possession of the Museum.

The Lechmere M.S. is not a complete text, it is of the late 17th Century and it belongs to the Sloane Family of M.S., it differs

little from the other M.S. in this Family Group. Its interest lies in the fact that it was purchased in London by Sir. Edmund Lechmere whose name was given to it, and by him exhibited at the Exhibition held in Worcester by the Craft in 1884, from which came the formation of the Provincial Library and Museum. It was the first version of the M.S. Charges to come into our possession.

The Inigo Jones M.S. was acquired by Bro. Woodford, and was purchased Messrs Kenning, by Bro. George Taylor, who was Provincial Grand Secretary and the guiding light in the formation of the Library and Museum. Its previous History is unknown, it was given this name because the Frontpiece has on it the Legend Inigo Jones delineated. This would appear not to be a true record. Inigo Jones was a skilled artist and could never have been guilty of the bad drawing and worse perspective of the picture on the front page. The M.S. also bears the date 1607 twice. This date, again is quite impossible as in the text there is a quotation which can be identified as having been taken from the 1655, or a later, edition of Jeseplus, and it also contains passages which it has in common with the roberts print of 1722.

Further information on this question may be obtained from Bro. Pooles Two versions of the Old Charges. But in all events this text is the Senior of the Spencer Family and is a particular fine specimen of these M.S.

THE WOODCOCK M.S. OF OLD CHARGES.

This copy of the old charges came to light since the end of the second world war in Worcester. It was named after its owner at the time. It was in the possession of W.Bro. G.P. Woodcock, PAGDC, who acquired from his brother-in-law, a merchant captain, to whom it was presented by a brother in china.

The Watermark shows a motto "Pro Patria", Britannia helmeted, holding a trident. Also a lion and a curious low palisading. This is a Dutch mark on paper specially made for the English Market in the reigns of William, Anna and the early Georges. Both the watermark and the engraving on the cover are the adaptation of the Dutch Watermark which showed the Maid of Holland surrounded by her fortified frontiers maintaining liberty by force of arms.

The small A in the middle possibly Anna or Pro Patria, and the N.E. on the name plate, Queen Anne. 1702 - 1714 gives one limit for the date of this M.S.

On the outside of the cover are two signatures in ink, but they

are unfortunately indecipherable. On page 1 there is a blind die impression of a shield showing a swan not quite adorsed but ruffled, and the initials D.P.K. evidently of some previous owner. The handwriting is an exceptionally clear script. In the classification of these charges it belongs to the Thorp Branch of the Sloan Family. Bro. Rev. H. Poole has given his opinion that it is a close relative of the Strachan M.S., and consequently not of much interest textually.

W. Bro. Woodcock was a regular visitor to Page Lodge No. 3573 after the war, and on one visit to the Lodge presented this M.S. for keeping by the Lodge. They put it into the Library and Museum for safety, but it was not until about five years ago when the matter was raised by myself that it was handed over to the Museum on permanent loan, and the necessary written acknowledgement to the Lodge sent. For over a period of some twenty years none of the Brethren of the Lodge knew that this M.S. existed.

The HATHWAY M.S.

This M.S. is the latest to come into our possession, it formerly belonged to Mr. M.P.S. Hathway, a solicitor in Stourbridge, who was not a freemason. He was a personal friend of Bro. H.R. Matthews and in 1972, when he learned that Bro. Matthews was about to become Master of the Lodge of Stability No. 564, Stourbridge, he brought the manuscript to his attention. In fact he loaned it to him, and Bro. Matthews started transcribing it, in collaboration with a colleague and Past Master of the Lodge Bro. G.F. Harris. In the meantime, however Mr. Hathway died; the scroll was thereupon returned to his widow through her son-in-law Bro. J. Edwards, a member of another Stourbridge Lodge. Sometime later it was loaned again to Bro. Matthews. Eventually, through the good offices of Bros. Matthews and Harris, it was (by arrangement with Mrs. Hathway through her son-in-law) sent to Grand Lodge Library for examination.

It would appear that nothing was heard of this manuscript for some considerable time, though letter from the Grand Librarian indicated that they wished to know if it was on permanent loan to London, as it needed repairing, and this they would do if this was the case. A later letter indicated that the repairs had been carried out, but in the meantime in January 1981 Bro. J. Edwards had written on behalf of Mrs. Hathway to the Provincial Grand Secretary asking for the return of this M.S. From the

correspondence available (i.e. that from Grand Lodge) it would at first appear that some person had given authority for this M.S. to be on permanent loan to Grand Lodge, they having had the repairs done to it.

Howevr on 31st January 1981 Bro. Edwards wrote on behalf of Mrs. Hathway to London (following letters from W.Bro. Perks) informing Bro. Haunch that Mrs. Hathway would like to have the M.S. returned to her for it to go on permanent loan at the Provincial Library and Museum at Worcester.

On Ferbruary 9th, 1981, I received a letter from W.Bro. Haunch informing me that this M.S. had been in London for upwards of 8 years, without any decision having been made for its future. He did say that I would most likely have heard about it. He went on to say that they would be sorry to be losing the M.S. especially as it had been carefully restored and repaired for them by the Guildhall Library. It was actually on the recommendation of Bro. Haunch, who was a very good friend of ours in the Museum that it was deposited with us. It was to valuable to send by post and so I travelled down to London to bring it back. Mrs. Hathway was immediately informed of its arrival and made a visit to the Museum to see it. Brethren it shows how careful we should be in hadning out on loan any of these valuable Masonic items, this M.S. could have been lost to this Province for good, had not Mrs. Hathway ask for its return, and may I say for the close friendship which existed between the staff of both Museums.

This M.S. is a parchment consisting of three strips $5\frac{7}{8}$ " wide and stitched together to form a rol which is 6'-10" in length. The deimensions fall within the nromal range for scrolls of the old charges. In size it is fairly close to the Beswicke-Royds and the Tew.

Bro. W. McLeod in hsi paper on this M.S. shows that this M.S. is closely related to the Hughan M.S., and shows however that there are distinctions between them. In 1978 both these M.S. were loaned to the Guildhall Library of the City of London. The Library's Keeper of M.S. was then engaged on a systamatic comparative examination of all copies of the Old Charges in the Grand Lodge Library in order to provide a modern assessment of the dating previously assigned to them. He compared both the Hathway and Hughan M.S. and stated that the Hathway M.S. does seem to be written in a slightly earlier hand than that of the Hughan M.S. (But there is no conclusive evidence about this) and they both appear to have been written in the first half of the eighteenth Century. Bro. McLeod in his relationship of the Hughan

and Hathway Versions, says it is evident that the Hathway M.S. was not copied from the Hughan M.S. for time and again the Hathway M.S. preserves the standard reading, or something close to it, when the Hughan M.S. has diverged or erred. On the otherhand there is not a single passage in which the Hughan preserves an original reading abandoned by the Hathway. That is to say, the Hathway M.S. presents a text which is indistinguishable from that which served as the source of the Hughan M.S. For the purpose of textual criticism the most economical hypothesis is to recognise in the Hathway M.S. the parent of the Hughan M.S. If this is true, the Hughan M.S. is what is known as a codex descriptus, a copy whose original is extant.

It is interesting to note that the Hughan M.S. was presented to the Library of the Provincial Grand Lodge of West York in 1892 by R.W.Bro. Thomas William Tew, who had purchased it in that year or shortly before. Bro. William Watson, the librarian, who knew something of the circumstances of its acquisition, stated that it had recently been traced to the Midland Counties of England. This assertion may find support if we believe that the Hathway M.S., the original from which the Hughan was copied, was even then in the vicinity of Stourbridge and has been there ever since. Unfortunately there is no way of checking.

The Hughan M.S. has been assigned by Bros. Poole and Worts to 1730-1740. The Hathway M.S. should then be early.

The Woods M.S. 1590-1640

This M.S. commences with the following:-

Breifly declared the First Foundation of divers Sciences, and principally the Science of Masonry, with divers good Rules, Orders and precepts necessary to be obsrved of all Masons.

Newly translated by W. Whyte Jones ?

for John Sargensome

1610.

The Text begins:- The Might of the Father of Heaven, with the wisdom of the Glorious Son, through the grace of the Holy Ghost three persons in one God.

This is followed by the Legendary History and we are informed of the period before Noahs Flood, to a man called Lamech, following a few notes on his family(s) we come to King Nimrod (King of Babylon) who was a mason, and gave Masons' their Charges.

These charges are then listed, and then this is followed by a reference to Euclid and the King of Egypt giving him a commission He also set a number of charges to his masons, and the history informs us that Solomon finished the temple at Jerusalem.

80,000 heavers of stone

70,000 heavers of burdens

3,600 Overseers (Masters or Govenors of his work)

We eventually arrive at the time of St. Alban, he served a pagan king, Alban was a worthy Knight and Chief Steward of the Kings Realm, and also of the Building of the Walls of St. Albans.

Before his time throughout the land, Masons' took a penny a day, and meat and drink. Albon mended their wages and gave them a charter, from the King to hold assemblies and gave them Charges and Orders.

Following the death of Albon their ensued divers wars, and the good name of Masonry was distroyed until the time of King Athelston

Athelston granted a charter to his son Edwin, who held an assebly at Yorkwhere he made Masons and gave them charges

No.1. stated That they shall be true to God and the Holy Church.

No. 8. That every Mason shall call one another Brethren and Fellows, and not any other evil name.

Then followed a further set of Charges listed as Rules and Orders to be obsrved faithfully and kept by Masters, Governor and Apprentices of the Science of Masonry. All the charges came under seperate headings.

Masons should be skilfull to perform their work as they undertake. Masons must take their work at fair rates, as they may sufficiently pay wages and maintain themselves and their families.

Masons can take no apprentices for less term thatn seven years

Mason Apprentices must be of good birth and sound of limb.

No man can be made a Mason without consent.

Masons must be true to their Brethren, and that they shall give no more wages than they deserve, that the Master of the work be not decéived by false workman.

That Masons should be humble.

That no mason walk abroad in the night from his Lodgings except one or two of his brethren or fellows go with him, that they may satisfy that he was in no evil company.

1. First that no Master shall take upon himself any Lords work neither any other mans work, except he know himself well able, and sufficient mestrated and experienced or skill to perfor the same, so that the Lord may be well and truly served to the credit of the science.
2. That no Master of Masonry take any manner of work, except that he take it at reasonable rate - whereby the Lord may be well and truly served with his own goods, and that the Master of the work may thereby be well able truly to pay his fellows their wages, and himself may live thereby honestly to maintain his family as the science requireth.
3. That no Master or Brother of the Science of Masonry do take or or put any Master of his Science out of any manner of work which he hath taken before to do, except the Master of the Science find him not able or inefficient of Skill or experience to perform or finish it.
4. That no Master or Brother of the Science of Masonry should take any apprentice for any less term than 7 years, and that he be one that is not base of birth, but right and sound of his lymns.
5. That no man take any allowance to be made Mason without the assent or consent of 6 or 7 of his Brethren of the said Science.
6. That he that is to be made a Mason be well able and of good degra (that is to say) that he be of good birth, true, free born, and no bondsman, that he be right and sound of Lymns as a man ought to be.
7. That no man can take any apprentice except he have sufficient work not to employ one, two or three fellows upon, at least.
8. That no Master nor Brother of the Science of Masonry put any Lords or other mans work to task which was wont to be journey work.
9. That every Masons shall give no more wages to any of their Brethren than they shall deserve, that the Master of the work be not deceived with false workman.
10. That no Mason or Brother of the Science do slander one another behind their backs, whereby they might accuse one another to loose their good names or worldly substance to their hinderance.
11. That none of the Brethren of the Science of Masonry, within the place or house where they Lodge or without, shall use any manner of ungodly speech one to another where by quarrels might arise,

except there be reasonable cause.

12. That every Mason shall reverence and yeild workship to their elder or Govenor.
13. That no Mason shall use to play at any unlawful games whereby their Science shall be discedited.
14. That no Mason shall use any Ribalde talk, whereby the Science might receive disgrace or discredit.
15. That no Mason shall walk abroad in the night from his Lodging except one or two of his Brethren or fellows go with him, that they may satisfy that he was in no evil company.
16. That every Master and their Brethren shall come to the assembly of the Masons if it be holden within 50 miles compass of his or their dwelling, if he or they have any warning sufficient, at which assembly, who soever hath trespassed against his brother of his science that then they shall stand and abide such an award as their Masters and Brethren shall thereafter determine and set down to make them accord or agreement between them, than to have the them go to Common Law.
17. That no Mason shall make any Moulds, or squares or rules for any layer.
18. That no Mason set layers on work within the Lodge or without to have mould Stones, with any mould of his own making.
19. That every Mason shall receive and cherish strange Masons, who travel abroad into the divers countries to seek work, and to set them on work according as their Science requireth (that is to say) if he have Mould stones ready he shall set him in work a fortnight at the least and pay him his wages truly, and if there be no stones to set the strange Masons on work, then the said Master of the Science of Masonry shall relieve the stranger Mason with money to bring him to the next Lodge.
20. That every Mason make an end of any manner of work which he hath taken to do, be it task of Journey work and finish if he may be well assured of his pay which he ought to have by agreement.

These twenty precepts, Rules, or Orders and every one of the other precepts or Oders before in the present book prescribed which belongeth to the Science of Masonry. Whatsoever every Mason shall well and truly observe, perform- fullfill and keep to his or their power so God him helped.