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17th September 1912

Dear F.W. Bro White - Deputy Provincial Grand Master
in Charge.

I thought you might wish to have
a copy of of my research into the
background to the Grand Lodge Certificate.

It was remiss of me, on reflection
not to offer you a copy last night,
everyone seemed to be enjoying the
whole evening's programme, I simply forgot.

Hope it will not be another five
years until you come again.

Yours sincerely & fraternally

W. Bro & B. Kt. Granville Angell
Lord of Cannock
P.P.G. Sr. B.

Brother.....

The presentation of a GRAND LODGE CERTIFICATE is the culmination of you being regularly initiated, passed and raised in your Mother Lodge.

On attaining the degree of a Master Mason you are entitled to receive a certificate from the GRAND MASTER OF THE UNITED GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND. I now have much pleasure in presenting the certificate to you and if you will examine it I will explain some of its history, symbolism and significance.

These certificates have varied over the years in design, size and style. The whole theme of the information portrayed is a pictorial representation of the ornaments, furniture and appointments in a Lodge of Freemasons.

Certificates are known to be used from 1663 but were PRIVATE LODGE CERTIFICATES handwritten and now called MANUSCRIPTS.

The emergence of the GRAND LODGE CERTIFICATE commences in the reign of King George II with a minute at Grand Lodge of 24th July 1755 which stated that every certificate granted to a Brother should have the Seal of Masonry and be signed by the Grand Secretary.

Added
FOR
BRO
M. BROWN

In August 1756 an order was placed for a copper plate for engraving, the following year an order for Vellum for the certificates. In 1798 JOHN BROWNE, printer, introduced the first design of an ear of corn near to a tall of water.

You will observe that the document is headed by a Coat of Arms, until 1910 this was of the reigning monarch but from that date it is that of the Grand Master, at present His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent.

The outstanding feature of the certificate is the representation of the three great pillars from which the document derives its name of the "PILLARS CERTIFICATE". (Issued 27th October 1819)

The column in the centre is of the IONIC order signifying Wisdom and alludes to the wisdom of Solomon, King of Israel in building, completing and dedicating the Temple at Jerusalem to the service of the Great Architect of the Universe. Flanking this central pillar are two others, that on the left is of the DORIC order, denoting strength and alludes to the strength of Hiram, King of Tyre in supporting King Solomon with men and materials.

That on the right is of the CORINTHIAN order meaning Beauty and alludes to the beautiful work of Hiram Abif in adorning the temple which was the admiration of all its beholders.

These pillars are physically represented in the Lodge by the three candlesticks which stand on the Black and White Mosaic or chequered pavement of the Lodge, representing the Light and Darkness the Joy and Sorrows of our chequered existence.

On the floor of the Lodge you will observe the three great, though emblematical lights of Freemasonry, the Volume of the Sacred Law, the Square and the Compasses. Also depicted are what are described as "JEWELS", three movable, and three immovable. The three movable are the Square, Level and Plumb Rule. The Square teaches morality, the Level equality and the Plumb Rule justness and uprightness of life and actions. They are called movable because they are worn by the Master and his Wardens on their respective collars.

The three immovable jewels are the Tracing Board and the Rough and Perfect Ashlar. They are called immovable because they lie open and immovable in the Lodge for the Brethren to moralise on.

Also shown are the CELESTIAL and TERRESTRIAL Globes of the World pointing out Freemasonry universal. In 1910 the Terrestrial Globe design changed being shown as a mirror image with the islands and continents in reverse, as it remains displayed today.

As regards the wording of the document the information is shown in English, previous to 1964 it also had a Latin text.

It states that the Brother whose name appears thereon has been regularly initiated into our order. There is also the date of your raising, not Anno Domini, but Anno Lucius, or Year of Masonic Light, which preceded the Christian era by four millenaries. In testimony that your name has been recorded at Grand Lodge the Right Worshipful Brother, the Grand Secretary has subscribed his signature and also the Seal of Grand Lodge. On that seal will be observed the motto of our Craft AUDI, VIDE, TACE, meaning hear, see and hold your tongue. Also on the seal are various Hebrew characters which are the Kodesh Lo Adoni meaning holiness to the Lord.

From 1916 the material was changed from parchment to paper and the Seal impressed direct on to the certificate instead of the previous water on a blue backing.

A final clause states that "This certificate shall not entitle a Brother to admission into any lodge without due examination". Neither, it should be noted, does this examination alone give entrance without the production of this voucher should it be demanded.

To the Brother to whom it has been issued, therefore, this document is of unique value. It testifies that Grand Lodge considers that the foundation stone placed in the N.E. corner of the Lodge not many months ago, has been well and truly laid.

It is not only a means of identity, especially in unforeseen calamity, but also a passport to a foreign lodge whose signs may differ from our own; and as no lodge is regular without the production of the Warrant which is entrusted to its Master, so should no individual Mason attend any Masonic assembly without taking his certificate with him. It should not therefore be hung or framed for display purposes.

Brother..... your certificate is not yet complete as it requires your usual signature in the place provided in the margin and from which there should be no future variation. This you will now do at the Secretary's table.

* Address given in Open Lodge by
16 W. Bro. G.S. Angell. P.P.G.St.B
September 1992

W. Bro. Granville Angell
Lord of Carriock

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HISTORY OF ENGLISH CRAFT CERTIFICATES

Compiled by W.Bro. G.S. Angell. P P G St B

- 1663 Private Lodge Certificates
Handwritten, known as MANUSCRIPT.
- 24th July 1755 Grand Lodge Certificates start with a number
Reign of on this date. With Grand Lodge Seal and
King George II GL Secretary's signature.
Issued on application - 5/- fee.
- 13th August 1756 Order placed for Copper Plate for engraving
certificates.
- 14th January 1757 Order placed for Vellum for the certificates.
Fee 12 gns.
- GRAND LODGE UNION 1813
- 1st November 1818 Masons had to apply to Grand Lodge for a
Certificate. Entry made against name
"CERTIFIED"
Private Certificates no longer granted.
- 1798 John Browne, Printer and Publisher
GL Lodge Certificates 2/-
Neatly Coloured 3/-
Lodge Summons 3/- per 100
- Bro. Browne introduced first design of a Certificate
to show an ear of corn near a fall of
water.
- 1813 - 1910 FIRST PILLAR CERTIFICATE
- 1910 (1) Royal Coat of Arms replaced by the
GRAND MASTERS.
- (2) TERRESTIAL GLOBE. Shown as a mirror
reflection, continents and island shown
in reverse, same today.
- Up to Parchment used.
1915
from Paper used.
1916 Seal impressed direct on to the Certificate
instead of on wafer with blue backing.
- From 1965 Latin text omitted.
English text reset either side of
central pillar.