

Book Review

by Tony Pope



My Book, My Opinion! Thoughts Garnered on my Masonic Journey



Hugh Young

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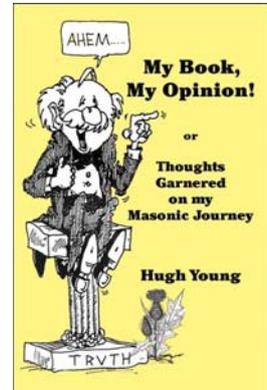
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Take one young Scotsman, make him a Mason in his late father's lodge at the age of 20, the following year transport him and his bride to Canada, enrol him in a lodge in Alberta, start him on the promotion ladder, some 30 years later enthrone him as Grand Master for a year, then put him on Buzzard's Roost to vegetate. If that was the grand design, it did not quite work out according to plan with Brother Hugh Young. Certainly, he served as Grand Master of Alberta for 1997–98, a worthy achievement, but that goal did not prevent him from pursuing others before, during, and after his grandmastership.

He has been a contributor to the Alberta Masonic Spring Workshops since 1975 and this year (2014) is its Chairman. In 1993 he set to work in the Grand Lodge library, re-cataloguing all the holdings and computerising the records, and was later appointed Executive Librarian. In 1996 he came to international notice among researchers by making available on line an ever-increasing number of previously published papers, in his collection 'One More Time, Please' (OMTP), which is still available on his Linshaw Enterprises website (above). In 2000 he was foundation Master of Alberta's Internet Lodge of Research, and subsequently organised live sessions linking researchers in other countries, including New Zealand (with Kellerman Lecturers Kerry Nicholls and Kevin Allen). He has presented papers to the Sheffield Masonic Research Society in England and the first International Conference on the History of Freemasonry in Scotland, and has been elected a member of the US-based Masonic Brotherhood of the Blue Forget-me-not.

Not surprisingly, after a Masonic journey of more than 40 years, this active Mason has made many observations and formed firm opinions about the Craft—'If an idea *might* work, try it and find out; not trying it is not an option!'—and shares them with us in *My Book, My Opinion*.

Thoughtful readers will welcome most, perhaps all, of Bro Young's 'thoughts' and 'opinions', and may be surprised at how many of them apply not merely in Canada, but also in Australia and New Zealand. In twelve brief chapters, he covers 'the degree mill' (solicitation, membership, speed of promotion, teaching); the Master's 'job' (involving all members in the lodge's activities, lodge planning); origins of Freemasonry; Landmarks; Masonic education and personal development; ritual work (learn from both ends towards the middle); putting Past Masters to good use; looking after (and forgiving) the elderly Mason; and a look at the future for Freemasonry.

In addition to the sound common sense and valuable advice contained in this work, there are some wonderfully quotable 'nuggets' and 'gems':

- the ramblings of masonophobes (those who have an unnatural apprehension and fear of Freemasonry and anything Masonic) (p58)
- It is important to recognize that Freemasonry is found in Masonic Lodges, not necessarily in Grand Lodges (p61)
- The philosophy of Freemasonry: Sometimes referred to as the Spirituality of Freemasonry (p62)
- the whole *raison d'être* for a Grand Lodge is to maintain the status quo—to enforce regulations as they stand, **not** to move in new directions (p88)

- enjoy your Freemasonry as an integral part of your life. If there is no enjoyment, there is no point in participating (p91).

This book will not take up much space in your personal library, either as a paperback or as an e-book, but it is a treasure worth owning, reading, and from time to time re-reading. And if perchance you disagree with Brother Young on a particular point, you may have an opportunity to discuss it with him in person at the ANZMRC Conference in Cairns later this year. If not, then remember it is *his* book, *his* opinion.