

# *Transactions* of the **Discovery Lodge of Research**

No. 971, United Grand Lodge of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory

*direct descendant of the Research Lodge of New South Wales  
and the Sydney Lodge of Research*



The lodge generally meets in the  
Sydney Masonic Centre  
on the first Thursday of the month  
March (Installation), June, August & November, at 7pm.  
Dress: lounge suit, lodge tie, regalia.

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*Foundation member of the*

***Australian & New Zealand  
Masonic Research Council***

website: <http://anzmrc.org/>



## From The Editor

*Dear Sir and Brother,*

*Welcome to the 8<sup>th</sup> Volume of the transactions of DLoR No.971. In this volume we have two very interesting papers for your consideration.*

*At our November meeting Br Granville Angell gave us a rollicking tale of the development of the Victoria Cross medal and the Freemasons who were involved in its creation and as its recipients. While he produced no written paper for the occasion he has kindly given Discovery Lodge permission to reproduce part of his book 'Victoria Cross Freemasons, 2014' in our transactions. The Introduction to that book covering very similar territory to his talk has been reproduced here. Thankyou Brother for your contribution to our work...*

*The second paper is a dissertation on the Trowel delivered by a new affiliate (Br Benjamin Wharton) to his private lodge (Australian Lodge of Fidelity No.101). Ben has been kind enough to share his work with us. He will also have work appearing in next Transactions along with his co-researcher WBr Wayne McPhee our WM-Elect.*

*On that note, the next meeting will be the Installation on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 at the Sydney Masonic Centre.*

*See you at the Install...*

*Yours fraternally,*

*Ian Shanley*

*Secretary*

*Email: [secretary@discoverylodge.org](mailto:secretary@discoverylodge.org)*

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### Officers for the year 2017-2018

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# Victoria Cross Freemasons – “Band of brothers”

Presented on 14 November 2017

*by Bro Granville Angell*

## Introduction

Curiosity over 30 years ago on the award of the Victoria Cross to Freemasons developed over time to a consuming devotion to continuous research for knowledge on the subject. At the 150th anniversary in 2006 of the signing of the Victoria Cross Warrant, the United Grand Lodge of England Library Records indicated that 100 Freemasons throughout the world had been bestowed with this ‘supreme award for gallantry in the presence of the enemy’. Since that time, the author has travelled to 17 countries to research the subject further and has discovered an additional 56 previously unknown names.

The total number of awards is 1361(including three dual award bars), of which Freemasons have received 156 (11.46%), which is an impressive statistic. In the Great War (1914 –1918) the total number of Victoria Cross awards was 634, of which 91 were Freemasons. This publication endeavours to provide comprehensive biographical details of the 91 Freemasons who received the Victoria Cross, so awarded for their gallantry during the conflict, and each with full individual VC citations and confirm Masonic Lodge details. In the past, a number of erroneous claims had reported that certain Victoria Cross holders were also Freemasons, but in this volume only those which have been positively verified has been accepted and included.

I have attempted to weave a tale of the tapestry of life - with my pen acting as the shuttle, interweaving a Masonic ‘golden thread’ that links the deeds of supreme gallantry and Freemasonry involvement with the colourful threads of courage, heroism, patriotism, religion, education, social background, honour, leadership, gallantry, Masonic principles and military reforms, to produce an overall image. As with all finished tapestries, the conclusions reached will be stretched and tested by other examiners, most importantly by you the reader.

In my research I initially have a handicap, in that Freemasonry, although not intrinsically a secret society, is however, a society with secrets, not withstanding that increased openness of the past few decades. Information still remains hidden and difficult to extract from personal Lodge records throughout the world. The “weaver of tales”, at best, is partially sighted and at worst is blind. However, over the years, the perseverance has produced its due rewards. Through diligent primary research many new facts have been discovered which reveal interesting evidence for the first time.

Observers have often raised questions over the ability of Freemasonry and militarism to flourish side-by-side, and indeed any compatibility.

Certainly there are numerous references in Freemasonry in the maintenance of peace. For example, numerous Lodge minutes have concluded with the statement: ”the lodge was closed in peace, love and harmony”. In an installation ceremony, under the Ancient Charges (EC) the Secretary states to the Master Elect, ”you are to be a peaceful subject and cheerfully conform to the laws of the country in which you reside”. Similarly, during an initiation degree the candidate is charged, ”never to propose or even countenance any acts that may have a tendency to subvert the peace and good order of society, by paying due obedience to the laws of any state which may become your place of residence or will provide you with protection and above all, by never losing sight to the allegiance due to the sovereign of your native land”.

From these statements it could be construed that in times of war Freemasons may require to be conscientious objectors, but this is not so. The adherence by Freemasons to “be obedient to the laws of any State” requires that as citizens they require to defend their country in times of war. The most frequent reminder in Masonic ritual is derived from the old Testament and is regularly revealed in the explanation in conjunction with the Masonic second degree tracing board. This concerns the war between the Ammonites and the Gileadites and the death on the field of battle on the banks of the river Jordan of 42,000 Ephriamites. The supreme gallantry displayed at that time it epitomises the Freemasons aims, and serves to further inspire their Masonic beliefs. Perhaps the character of each of

the VC recipients was in some way inspired by their beliefs.

Each of the following personal stories is a unique history of an individual life. There are wide variations in personal details. They contain their own special set of circumstances from environment and experience. Yet, they are united to each other through an act of bravery or gallantry which embodies Masonic principles.

The bestowing upon them of the Victoria Cross was a significant moment for each of them and, for most, it changed their lives for ever. Some moved on to fame and further glory, becoming national heroes, rewarded with acclaim, recognition, titles, position and power. Others receded into obscurity.

Hence the details given in the brief biographies are varied in length and scope. Likewise, there are differences in the quality of the various photographs utilised, as they originally were taken around 100 years ago. Despite the variances, the Masonic "band of brotherhood" unites them in a common endeavour, which neither time, distance nor decay can destroy. The principles of 'Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth' upon which they gave a solemn oath to maintain and uphold, still endures today.

This research is now published for the first time to commemorate the Centenary of the start, of the Great War in 1914. The Victoria Cross has now been in existence for 158 years during which time periodic amendments have been made with regards to eligibility of selection, procedure of recommendations and conduct of its recipients. Close scrutiny was applied to any previously published appraisals and there is evidence to suggest that mistakes occurred. Hindsight, is a wonderful research tool.

### **The Formative Years**

It is necessary to invite the reader to consider the situation prior to the time that the initial Victoria Cross Warrant was approved and signed on 29th January 1856. Also, to peruse some of the relevant clauses in order to understand the pressures which prevailed at that time which might have led to any discrepancy or variants from fact. The problem started as early as 1803 when Napoleon Bonaparte first instituted a tangible reward for bravery displayed by his troops, the Legion de Honneur. 50 years later, during the Crimean war, the French, then allies of Britain, found delight in the ridicule of the British troops by pointing out to them that their French nation recognised it's fighting men's brave deeds. At that time there was no military censorship and when very critical reports were published in The Times newspaper, awareness and public outrage was aroused to such a degree that it brought about the fall of the Earl of Aberdeen's government. The new government was led by Viscount Palmerston and his Cabinet included Fox Maule, 2nd Baron Panmure a Scot, who was appointed the new Secretary of State for War (1855-1858). He later became 11th Earl of Dalhousie. Although he may not have had the political finesse of his predecessor, the Duke of Newcastle, Panmure was nicknamed the 'bison' because of his brawny physique and bullish temper. Significantly, and perhaps not well known in academic research circles, Lord Panmure was not only a Freemason but also (elected 29th April 1857) the Deputy Grand Master of the Freemasons's United Grand Lodge of England. Later, he became the 69th Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, a position he held between 1867 and 1870.

It was an opportune time for Queen Victoria to regain some of the perceived loss of Royal prerogative, which had occurred through a series of Parliamentary statutes that had eroded previous Royal influence. The Victoria Cross, from its inception to the present day, was the exclusive prerogative and under the sole control of the reigning monarch. Only when the recommendation for the award of a Victoria Cross is approved personally by the monarch and duly signed, can it be granted. It is known (according to records held in the Public Records Office, Kew) that during the great war HM King George V changed some applications. He denied some he considered unsuitable and upgraded some deserving cases which he considered to merit a Victoria Cross.

Queen Victoria delegated the entire drafting of the Victoria Cross warrant and at the same time the design, production and presentation arrangements of the award to Lord Panmure: subject to her personal approval at all stages.

The original VC Warrant stimulated a great deal of thought and correspondence (The Panmure Papers), between Lord Panmure, the Queen and her husband Prince Albert. The content was mainly on establishing the parameters concerning how the clause would be implemented. It was finally drafted,

approved, signed and published on 29th January 1856, a year to the day after the Duke of Newcastle had written to Prince Albert asking if the Queen would be interested in the new military award for bravery.

The first two clauses of the original Victoria Cross Warrant raise the most challenging questions.

### **The First Clause**

*It is ordained that this distinction shall be styled and designated the "Victoria Cross" and shall consist of a Maltese Cross of bronze with our Royal Crest in the centre and underneath which a scroll bearing the inscription "FOR VALOUR".*

The Clause was achieved after a number of possible considerations were rejected.

In practice the Maltese Cross as proposed (shaped with a 'V' in each of the four arms to produce an eight pointed cross) never materialised. It was produced as a "Cross Pattee" for some unknown and still unexplained reason. The shape and design of the existing cast "Cross Pattee" is now so well established and universally recognised to remain the permanent choice.

### **The Second Clause**

*It is ordained that the cross shall be suspended from the left brest as a 'BLUE' riband for the Navy and a "RED" riband for the Army.*

The terseness of the Clause is indicative of the lack of attention which was apparently given to the ribbons. It is in marked contrast to the substantial and prolonged discussions concerning the bronze cross. The most significant error was not to clearly and explicitly specify that exact shade of the colours which were to be adopted. Such vagueness permitted the Secretary of State, Lord Panmure a degree of latitude to implement his own choice, with eventually, as explained below, far-reaching repercussions. It was decided that for the Royal Navy it was to be a very light blue, which may be described as 'sky blue' but more correctly described as an 'astral' blue or a 'cerulean' blue.

Historical research demands that, whenever possible, primary research is employed and implemented. Bearing this in mind the author went by appointment to the National Maritime Museum Greenwich, London to inspect the Royal Naval Victoria Crosses held in their collection. The first naval Victoria Cross to be inspected was that of Rear Admiral Sir William Nathan Wrighte Hewitt. It was a shock to discover the ribbon was not the shade I had preconceived from leading Victoria Cross journals and military sources. It was immediately obvious to myself, a Freemason, that the ribbon displayed was an exact match with those used on a Worshipful Past Masters jewel ribbon. Further inspection substantiated that all those awarded to John Harrison, Thomas Young, John Sheppard, William Peel and Edward Robinson, likewise have the same shade of ribbons. Lord Panmure must have given his approval, even if it was only tacitly. It is inconceivable that he was not fully aware of exactly what transpired.

The fact that this Victoria Cross ribbon discovery had been unknown for over 150 years is truly remarkable and the author is extremely privileged or very lucky to have been the one to discover and reveal its relationship and significance for the first time to the rest of the world. There is no hesitation in asserting that the ribbon is Masonic in nature and a universally accepted one. The WO File 32/3443 further added to the story "*Effecting a General Revision and Recodification of the Conditions of Award of the Victoria Cross*". The red ribbon was of a Crimson or Scarlet Shade, precisely the same as the Order of British India, which is also exactly the same colour as the Masonic Royal Arch Order ribbon.

A second discovery, and as far as the author is aware has not been previously published, was in relation to the material which was originally used for the ribbons. In order to identify the type of

material, a ribbon from an award to one of the earliest recipients for the VC, (name withheld by request) was provided by a museum from its Victoria Cross collection. The fabric was professionally analysed and it was confirmed that it was made from silk and produced in a coarse weave.

Information was forthcoming when during the authors prior written research in the national public records office at Kew (WO File 333/1), six communications were found concerning proposed changes to the colour of the Pictoria cross with. One provided the confirmation evidence, which stated: -

*...When the VC was instituted in 1856, a great deal of pains was taken to make the badge it self perfectly distinctive, so that it could be recognised by anyone with the most elementary knowledge of metals and decorations. The ribbons at that time if all were comparatively unimportant, but now that was alone are worn it is perhaps well to reconsider the question.*

Two additional files were made available to me when is a 30 year embargo was lifted, under the 'Freedom of Information Act'. These were WO File T 373/188 and WO File 32/3443 "*Effecting a General Revision and Recodification of the Conditions of Award of the Victoria Cross*".

I took into consideration the contribution of M.J. Crook and the excellent research in his book, "The Evolution of the Victoria Cross". He makes reference to a letter of 1<sup>st</sup> May 1918 from the War Office to the Admiralty (although this letter was not found in the PRO, Kew). Crook quotes:-

*... the King had (allegedly) commanded that the colour of the riband of the Victoria Cross should be the same whether awarded for services in the Navy, Army or Air Force i.e. the red color of the riband of the Victoria Cross awarded in the Army. This command said nothing about the naval crosses that had already been issued and with being worn with a blue ribbon..... on 10 July 1918 and further letter went from the WO to the Admiralty.... I have now received the King's command that the same water be retrospective with regard all Victoria crosses which have been awarded to the Navy.*

To the writer of this letter appears to have forgotten the basis on which the role of war and the sovereignty was in body in parliament following the Civil War(1642 – 1651). The monarchy according to William Bagehot (*The British Constitution*) still had three prerogatives, the right to be consulted, the right to encourage and the right to born. The monarch Rules and Reigns but does not Regulate. The King might have tried to instant gate changes to the Victoria Cross warrant, but until they were placed before Parliament, duly approved and then finally signed on 22 May 1920 such changes could not come legally into force. This point is crucial to understanding exactly when the changes to the ribbon colours became an fictive legal identity, is a unified colour representing all three services.

On 1 April 1915, (All Fools Day) the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Navy Flying Division Word amalgamated to form a new fighting service, the Royal Air Force. Consequently, A suitable ribbon colour for the new entity was required. It was decided that a common in a fight colour. All three branches of the services was the answer. Certainly the army and the Navy help strong views on their own PC Bridget and would not concede their distinctive colours without strong resistance.

Occasionally, one has to be repaired to be expect the unexpected and to react to information which may be considered as controversial it was just eating to discover that previous records of the English and a pro is of the Victoria Cross might not have been historically accurate. Such a discovery produces a personal dilemma for a researcher-either to remain silent and join the ranks of the taciturn masses or, Conversely to express an opinion, stands square and support fully the historical truths.

It was with some disdain I discovered that the ribbons off and displayed with the metals were not original or indeed accurate this is becoming increasingly noticeable in of individual plans which, because of security, or financial reasons have left the care of the original Victoria Cross recipients

family. The new holders, museums, military metal collectors, and still a topic patron is of bravery are removing and rereading the Victoria crosses incorrect and improper colour shade replacements this it would appear that has been done on the grounds that the ribbons were showing the fracture of age through 'fair wear and tear' and needed replacement, or to provide 'uniformity' in the VC collection display. The problem is further exacerbated either sale of spurious copies, some pertaining to be of the named VC holders.

It is disturbing to see such commercial exploitation based on monetary reward rather than the respect due to the intended ideal of honouring supreme acts of bravery and gallantry, especially when they work originally awarded in recognition of supreme sacrifice, and some being a bestowed posthumously. At best, these are acceptable practices are distorting historical originality and at worst, destroying the true original evidence. In the case of those 634 Victoria crosses awarded during the great War all would have been originally invested appropriately with David blue or red ribbons. The inception of the Royal air force on April 1, 1918 did ultimately induce a required change. King George V had expressed his concerns how best to devise and implement the change of ribbon.

*The King cannot help thinking that, our highest award for bravery should be perfectly distinctive, although his Majesty would be sorry to alter, in any way, a ribbon which had been in existence for so many years.*

This was achieved by a clever compromise, utilising the simple expedient of joining the two primary colours together. As we might remember from our school days, if you mix blue and red together the colour changes to maroon, or claret, the colour which is universally accepted for the Victoria Cross Maroon ribbon today. Officially, the *Amendments to the Victoria Cross Warrant* to implement the changes were completed by Parliamentary approval and Royal Assent on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1920.

Queen Victoria had been very much aware of the role of the monarchy in exclusive control of the new award for supreme gallantry and wished to ensure that it would not be perceived as an expensive project for the public purse. During discussions with William Frederick Hancock of "Hancocks Fine Silversmiths & Jewellers" of Bruton Street, London, she asked him if he could produce the Victoria Cross for "*just a few pence*". His firm already had a Royal warrant from the Queen for his fine silverwork and was well known to her Majesty. Hancock gave assurances that all work would fulfil and satisfy the Queens requirements. Lord Panmure presented Hancock was a Royal Commission with the sole prerogative of producing the Victoria Cross. Hancock proudly retains it's Royal appointment to the present day.

The initial 'proof cross' was considered too large and a slightly modified smaller version was required. In keeping with the requirements to keep the costs down Hancok's solution was quick, cheap and simple. A die could be made and used to stamp out the design on copper, a soft malleable metal. The pre-production specimen cross was immediately rejected by the Queen who had other ideas of what was required. In a letter to Lord Panmure she wrote, "*It was copper and would look very heavy on a red coat. It would not wear very well and would soon look like an old penny. Bronze (gun metal) has a rich colour and is very hard.*"

How prophetic this statement turned out to be. The 'Royal Command' to use bronze instead of copper challenged the whole project. The task was then to source some suitable bronze, and with the cost considerations, it was a test to everyone's ingenuity.

The Army was the first to react to the challenge with the idea of '*if it's free it's for me*'. Someone, it has never been discovered who, remembered the two captured Crimean War bronze canons which were languishing in the Woolwich Arsenal. The supply problem was solved and the two 'Cascabels' were removed to provide the metal. It was a godsend in one respect and "a gift from the devil" in another. An

attempt was made using the prepared die but to the concern of all the interested parties, the dies split on contact with the much harder bronze. One can imagine the consternation which would have swept through Whitehall. Hancock's reputation would have been on the line, (under signed Royal and National contractual agreements) and the Queen may have said "*We aren't not amused.*" The precarious public relations situation would have been a further exacerbation, much to the worry of the politicians. The general public dismayed at undelivered promises. Lastly, but not least, fighting forces, already with strained tempers, awaiting the just reward, might have been raised to mutiny levels. A festering sore amongst the troops was that they already perceived themselves to be devalued by the nation. The failure to provide the promised reward of a 'Supreme award for Gallantry' for all ranks would merely serve to confirm their suspicions.

The British innate characteristic of "the difficult we do immediately impossible may take a little time" saved the day. Using sand moulds (very primitive method by today's standards), the bronze was heated to 900°C and poured 'hot'. This time Gods Will prevailed, because in being produced in that way the cross took on unique features and it became an individual entity. First, each one manufactured had to have that extraneous metal removed by hand, to produce the finished product. In technical terms, they had to be 'fettled', in simple layman's language they had to be hand-filed. Secondly, the casting raised the profile of the design giving it more clarity and detail than would have been achieved by the original die stamping. The result was that each Victoria Cross was unique.

In addition to the special feature, it also has to be appreciated that the bronze gave it a simple solemnity of appearance. The Times newspaper report on the first investiture and public displays of the VC commented, "*The Cross of Valour, nothing could be more plain and homely, not to say of coarse-looking*". It's completely missed the significance. In pure monetary terms its price was only a couple of pence, but in esteem and value as the 'supreme award for gallantry' it was priceless. It was deliberately plain, of low intrinsic value, not silver, gold or platinum, or enhanced with glamorous enamels. It declares the where is bravery in action and the gallantry embodied in its award, not its status as a jewel or adornment. The enduring pride and respect that the Victoria Cross established in both the military and the public's esteem was further enhanced when the Victorian practice of wearing military awards on a uniform based on a personal choice was at last given clear establishment guidance. Early photographs taken show a profusion of medal alternatives both in numbers and left breast positions.

The VC ribbon on the early black and white photographs are often seen as a white ribbon, so light was the blue shade.

For over 150 years of the legend endured that because the bronze needed to cast the VC came from the cannons captured during the Crimean War that they were of Russian origin. In March 2006, John Glanfield published (Victoria Cross Journal, eighth edition) scientific evidence that challenged this misconception. It eventually transpired that the Russians had themselves captured the cannon from the Chinese, its original manufacturers. So the term 'Made in China' is not such a recent experience in Great Britain.

In 1881 the Queens Regulations and Admiralty Instruction's gave the prescribed position of the Victoria Cross in relation to other awards, confirmed by a direction in 1902 by King Edward VII that the Victoria Cross must be worn before all other decorations and metals and thus ensuring that it was pre-eminent and not obscured by being overlapped with other medals or decorations. The Military Dress Regulations of 1904 reflected and established the changes.

The last of the quadri of personal discoveries began in 2006 (the 150<sup>th</sup> Victoria Cross Anniversary) when the author, while attending an exhibition by Hancock's and their historical participation in the production of the VC, was alerted to the realisation that for the very first investiture special twin-pronged pins were used by Queen Victoria. That resulted in the now well-known incident of the first



man to be invested, Commander William Raby, Royal Navy, who when the Queen bending down from the side-saddle of her horse Sunset, misjudged the distance and unknowingly, impaled Raby with the Victoria Cross attachment not only into his uniform but into his flesh. Without any reaction of his inflicted injury, he stood and took it as the very brave man he was. The research challenge was to find the evidence to confirm with positive proof, the investiture use of these two pins. During the following seven years the conjecture or supposition remained as all the sources in England were unsuccessfully investigated. With over an estimated 1200 books already written on the Victoria Cross since 1856, one would have thought that someone would have published the evidence required. Not so, to the authors knowledge. Finally, in 2013, due diligence produced the evidence of conclusive proof in Scotland. A letter, dated June 19, 1857, just seven days before the first Victoria Cross investiture, written by Prince Albert to Lord Panmure stated:-

*The pins (plural) attached to the Victoria Cross, as in the specimen you submitted, will answer very well. The Queen has tried them and found them to do so.*

With the formative years of the Victoria Cross explained, the details of the world changing conflict will slowly be revealed through the many acts of bravery and gallantry of the 91 Freemason recipients of the Victoria Cross. It is presented, in alphabetical order by surname, with 91 fascinating individual biographical portraits meticulously researched and supported by additional information, including many photographs, maps and diagrams.

[Ed. The book then continues with the entries of the Freemason recipients of the VC.]



# The Trowel

Presented on 25 May 2017 in Australian Lodge of Fidelity No.101

by *Bro Benjamin Wharton*

Throughout time Brethren, Freemasonry has evolved and developed in various ways across the globe and through the creation of different Constitutions.

With each change, some ‘innovations’ are made with the mindset of adopting the Craft to suit the context in which it finds itself. Some very recent changes would be in the memory of many in this room tonight such as the obligations, penalties, and the what the candidate wears.

I will not go into these tonight Brethren, instead, I want to point out that with change there also comes some loss. Whether it be the loss of a word or a phrase; a charge or a lecture; tools even. These losses become forgotten in an attempt to tailor the Craft to suit a certain image it sees of itself.

One of these lost items I wish to talk about tonight – it is the trowel. Not only was it a working tool, it was an emblem for Freemasonry itself; as distinct as the square and compasses today. It is worth noting here that some Constitutions mostly in America, Canada and in Europe still use the trowel. Here in New South Wales, however, the trowel has been removed from our ‘tool box.’ It does remain in one place though. The candidate will hear it referred to after his initiation that ‘...Monarchs themselves have not thought it derogatory to their dignity to exchange the sceptre for the trowel.’

It is interesting to note that our Brethren south of the border in Victoria have omitted the trowel completely from that charge and replaced it with the gavel – to which, Bro. Allan Richmond in Victoria explains how the substitution has changed the philosophical and humbling meaning of the phrase completely – you can hear him discuss this matter, and his work on restoring the trowel to its proper place in the charge on the podcast *Brought to Light*, episode three, aptly named ‘The Trowel.’

So, in part, the Trowel remains to some degree in our ritual, though, with no further explanation of its meaning or significance in Freemasonry.

Before I go further Brethren, as an aside, how many know the trowel in operative or speculative sense?

Well, first of all – in the operative sense we can understand the trowel to be:

‘a small handheld tool with a flat, pointed blade, used to apply and spread mortar or plaster.’

It is the last part of that definition ‘...to apply and spread mortar or plaster...’ that leads us to its speculative meaning.

However, before we go into that, lets first look at the Masonic trowel in an historical light.

We can start here in our own Lodge Brethren; Lodge Fidelity, in our beginnings under the Irish Constitution from the 1840s to 1880s we had as our emblem, our seal, an image of a bowed arm strongly holding a trowel in the air. Interestingly, our Brethren of the other Irish Lodges at the time, namely, ‘Australian Social Mother Lodge’ No. 260, now No.1 on our NSW register, and the ‘Leinster Marine Lodge’ No.266, now No.2, also share this same image of the bowed arm holding a trowel. There is a distinct reason why the seals of the Irish Lodges were all very similar and represents a strong significance and meaning to the history of Irish Freemasonry. It is in fact a ruling by the Grand Lodge

of Ireland. The Book of Constitutions of the period, the *Ahiman Rezon*, states in clause 27 of the Chapter relating to Private Lodges, that:

27.—Every Lodge shall have a Seal, with an impression of a Hand and Trowel, encompassed with the name of the place where such a Lodge is held, and the number of the Lodge, in order to verify the Lodge transactions; and no Brother shall receive a Grand Lodge certificate without producing one signed by at least the Master and Secretary, and sealed with the seal of his Lodge.

So why the trowel? Going back into Irish Masonic history, the earliest account of the use of the trowel also happens to be the earliest known account of a Grand Lodge in Ireland. To quote from a paper in the *Quatuor Coronati* volume 105, says:

The Dublin Weekly journal in 1725 describes a procession in great detail of a 'Mason King at Arms ... carrying upon a Velvet Cushion, a little Gold Trowel with a Black Ribbon', and this he subsequently hung about the neck of the Grand Master.'

The trowel was the distinguishing badge of the Grand Master, and to quote again: '...was evidently looked upon as the most important symbol of the Irish Craft.' This however has died out in time, and the Grand Master wears a jewel similar to that worn by the Grand Master of England.

So, I ask again, why did the trowel serve such a prominent position in the Craft. Why not the square and compasses? Why was that not the symbol on our seals? Wouldn't that be the obvious choice? Because Brethren, while the Square and Compasses symbolise lessons for ourselves to take on as individuals; the trowel is an emblem regarding Freemasonry as a whole. It relates to your individual role as a Master Mason, but also your Lodge and its relation to other Lodges in unity, as well as the role of the Craft to the world around us.

With those questions let us review then a Masonic description of its speculative meaning. The description I am about to read is from Brother Albert Mackey's *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* published in 1873. He wrote of the trowel that it is:

An implement of Operative Masonry, which has been adopted by Speculative Freemasons as the peculiar working-tool of the Master's Degree. By this implement, and its use in Operative Masonry to spread the cement which binds all the parts of the building into one common mass, we are taught to spread the cement of affection and kindness, which unites all the members of the Masonic family, wheresoever dispersed over the globe, into one companionship of Brotherly Love ... and as a symbol it goes back to the practice of the Ancient.

Today [being the 1870s] this implement is considered the appropriate working-tool of a Master Mason, because, in Operative Masonry, while the Apprentice is engaged in preparing the rude materials, which require only the Gage and Gavel to give them their proper shape. the Fellow Craft places them in their proper position by means of the Plumb, Level, and Square; but the Master Mason alone, having examined their correctness and proved them true and trusty, secures them permanently in their place by spreading, with the trowel, the cement that irrevocably binds them together.

It is therefore understandable Brethren, as to why every Lodge were to have the same symbol of the Trowel. It is an emblem of unity, symbolising the many lodges across the globe, as individual ashlar, joined together into one edifice – one body of Freemasonry. It is the tool of the Master, not just in terms of degrees taken, but in act.

Duncan's Ritual of 1866 states that, after the Worshipful Master hands the newly raised Master Mason a trowel to hold he says in part:

The working-tools of a Master Mason are all the implements of Masonry appertaining to the first three Degrees indiscriminately, but more especially the trowel.

The trowel is an instrument made use of by the operative masons to spread the cement which unites a building into one common mass; but we, as Free and Accepted Masons are taught to make use of it for the more noble and glorious purpose of spreading the cement of brotherly love and affection; that cement which unites us into one sacred band, or society of friends and brothers...

So, Brethren, I hope that from these descriptions we have gained a greater understanding of the trowel, not only as a working tool, but also its significance with respect to a greater understanding of Freemasonry as a whole.

There are some other areas of the use of trowels outside of a Tyled Lodge and ritual. Such as its use in foundation stone or cornerstone laying ceremonies, or as gifts from Lodges to prominent Masons in society. There are lovely examples of these in the museum at Grand Lodge. There are also some examples connected to more well-known historical figures in the collections of our State Library of New South Wales, including one used by Bro. Gov. Lachlan Macquarie when he laid the first stone of the first Catholic Church in the Colony, which later developed to what we now know as St Mary's Cathedral at Hyde Park. There is also a trowel commissioned by our Mother Lodge, No.260 I.C. dated 1823, crafted by the famous Bro. Samuel Clayton and presented to Lt. Gov. Erskine on his departure from the Colony.

