

VICTORIA LODGE OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
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SOME MASONIC TRIVIA:

A Collection of Little Known Facts About Freemasonry
1997 - 2

Presented by V. W. Bro. Bob Stewart, Goldstream Lodge No.161

1. Name the Freemason who was MP. for Victoria and Prime Minister of Canada?

The answer of course is Sir John A McDonald, who was an ardent Freemason and the representative of

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the Grand Lodge of England to the Grand Lodge of Canada. He was defeated in the General Election in his home riding and consequently ran in a by-election in Victoria which he won. He only visited Victoria once.

2. Name the Freemason who made the first journey through the North West passage from West to East and East to West.

Henry Asbjorn Larson, a member of the RCMP and also a member of Mt. Newton Lodge No.89, made the journey in the schooner St. Roche from Vancouver to Halifax between June 1940 and October 1942. He made the return journey in 1944 in 86 days. He joined Mt. Newton Lodge in 1935 and was made an honorary member in 1947. He died in Vancouver on October 29, 1964.

3. Name the youngest man ever made a Freemason in British Columbia.

His name was Eli Harrison Jr., son of M. W. Bro. Eli Harrison. He applied for membership at age 18 in BC Lodge No 1187 under the Grand Lodge of England. His father being the Master of the lodge at that time, and after a ruling by the then District Deputy Grand Master, R. W. Bro. Robert Burnaby "that it was in order provided his father was made party to his obligation bond." The petition however was rejected, although at a later date that rejection was expunged from the minutes. He then applied to Quadra Lodge and received his Master Mason degree when he was 19, in 1871.

4. Can you name the Freemason who drew the plans and designs for both the Empress Hotel and the Parliament Buildings.

His name was Francis Mawson Rattenbury, who as far as we know only received the Entered Apprentice degree. He was not a very likable man and made many enemies in Victoria. He divorced his wife and ran off with a much younger woman, Alma, who at the time was playing the piano in the Empress Hotel. They settled in Bournemouth, England, where his wife became infatuated with their young gardener. The young man plotted and carried out the murder of Rattenbury and he and Alma were both charged with murder. They became the principals in a very famous court trial which was later made into a stage play by the playwright Terrance Raffigan called 'Cause Celebre.'

5. Does anyone know the longest lodge meeting ever recorded in BC?

Star of the West Lodge No.61 at Nakusp met under dispensation on May 29th, 1912. The lodge opened at 8:30 p.m. and in addition to the regular business, a ballot was held. Six delegates were then elected to attend Grand Lodge. The Lodge then conferred (after appropriate examinations) the Master Mason's degree, the Fellow Craft degree, and another Master Mason degree, and after all this, the lodge

closed in peace and harmony at 4:05 a.m., the meeting having lasted 7 hours and 35 minutes.

6. Can you name a BC lodge named after a great Italian patriot?

Mt. Garibaldi Lodge No.127. Although named after the mountain, it is significant that the name of the lodge should contain the name of Guisippi Garibaldi, Italy's national hero for his success in uniting Italy in 1860. He is also known by Freemasonry in performing the same services to the Craft. He united all of the Grand Lodges in Italy in 1865 and was elected Grand Master for life. Speaking on one occasion he said, "Wherever there is a human cause, we are certain to find Freemasonry for it is the fundamental basis of all true liberal associations." During his military career devoted to freeing his country he surrounded

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himself with Freemasons. Eli Harrison Sr., who had studied art in Italy became a good friend of Garibaldi-so close in fact that when Garibaldi came to power he wanted Harrison to remain in Italy and become part of his cabinet.

7. Has there ever been an occasion when a Bro. could sit in lodge without his apron?

One of the traditions of Mt. Newton Lodge No.89 is that every prominent visitor is piped into the Lodge by a piper in full Highland dress. On one occasion when the Grand Master was piped into Lodge, a brother noticed that the piper (Bro. Charles Wilson, a member of Mt. Newton Lodge) was not wearing an apron. When the brother questioned the propriety of the piper not wearing an apron in lodge, the Grand Master ruled that being a Highlander dressed in the uniform of his office he was not required to wear a Masonic apron, his sporran being the apron of his office. It was also revealed that after close examination, Bro. Wilson's sporran was lined with white lambskin.

8. Name the first lodge charter by the Grand Lodge of BC in the Victoria District.

It was United Service Lodge No.24. This lodge, with some exceptions, consisted of members who were not in any way connect with BC but were only in the vicinity until their tour of duty with the armed forces called them elsewhere. They were members of the British Army or Navy, hence the name United Service. The name is believed to have been chosen by W. Bro. George Hickey who was a member of United Service Lodge No.1341, English constitution, in Hong Kong.

9. Does anyone know the name of the smallest mason?

It was a Brother named Charles S. Stratton, a midget who was two feet high and weighed 46 pounds. He lived in Bridgeport, Connecticut and in 1862 joined St. John's Lodge No.3 in that city. He was also a member of the Royal Arch and Preceptory. He is better known as the original Tom Thumb and part of Barnum and Bailey's circus.

10. Does anyone know the name or size of the largest Mason?

His name was Bro. John Assin, a member of Highland Park Lodge No 382 in Los Angeles. He was eight and one half feet tall and weighed 532 pounds. It took twelve brethren to raise him to the sublime degree of a Master Mason, and there were 1500 masons present to observe the ceremony.

11. Does anyone know the longest recorded Masonic membership?

It was Bro. Charles McCue who was born on June 11th, 1756 in Ireland where he became a Freemason at the age of 18. He immigrated to Canada in 1837 and affiliated with St. Johns Lodge No.68 at Ingersoll, Ontario. At the time of his death on the 5th, of May, 1870, he had lived 114 years and been a Mason for 95 years.

12. Can anyone tell me the Freemason with the most unusual name?

It was a Brother born on Dec. 18th, 1866 at Murray, Kentucky. He moved to Texas at an early age and in 1891 he was ordained a minister in the Methodist Church. He was elected Bishop of that Church in 1922 and became a member of Granger Lodge No.677 under the Grand Lodge of Texas. Because of his unusual name, when he received his third degree a large number of masons attended. His name, believe it or not, was Hiram Abiff Boaz.

13. Does anyone know the name of the famous Freemason who took the longest period of time to take his three degrees?

It was Field Marshall Earl Douglas Haig, Commander in Chief of the British Forces in World War I. He was initiated in Elgin Lodge No.91 Leven, Scotland on 27 December 1881. He received his third degree in the same lodge forty three years later in 1924 and served as Worshipful Master of the lodge a year later in 1925.

14 Can anyone name the most famous Masonic aviator?

It was, of course, Charles A. Lindberg who was a member of Lodge No.243 St. Louis, Missouri. He was the first man to make a solo flight across the Atlantic and on that occasion he wore the square and compasses on his jacket and had the Masonic emblem painted on his plane, 'The Spirit of St. Louis.' (Editor's note: There is no doubt but the Aussies would name Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith for this distinction.)

15 Brethren in the tracing board lecture in the Entered Apprentice degree, the universality of Freemasonry is depicted as being from the surface of the earth to its center and even as high as the heavens. Does anyone know the highest spot above the surface of the earth where the symbols of Freemasonry are to be found?

The answer, brethren, is the surface of the moon, for on July 20, 1969 Bro. Buzz Aldrin in Apollo II landed on the moon and among the things he left there were the square and compasses. Bro. Aldrin is a member of Lodge No.144 Mont Clair, New Jersey, a 32° Mason and a Shriner.

The following item appearing on the June 26, 1997 Summons of Quatuor Cortonati Lodge No.2076 will be of considerable interest to members of the 1760 Degree team of this Lodge.

FIRING GLASSES

Q. We have a query which you could perhaps resolve. A new lodge has been formed

in our area and the members have decided to use firing glasses at the Festive Board. There is dissent on the correct use and at a recent meeting of our Lodge of Instruction a member asked as to the proper method of using them. I could not, locally, obtain an answer and would thus be very grateful for any advice and guidance you may be able to give.

I can well understand that the members of your lodge are not agreed on the method of using firing glasses because quite frankly there is no one correct way and I find that practices vary. What is quite a common method is not to use them for drinking but solely for firing and to hold them by the rim for the 'Point, Left, Right; Point, Left, Right; Point, Left, Right; One Two' and then the glass is banged on the table and left there on 'Three' and the normal claps follow.

Another method I have known is to have the glasses filled with wine and on the command from the Worshipful Master all the brethren stand, leaving their glasses on the table. The following drill is

then gone through, the commands being given by the Master:

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1. 'Hand to Arm'. The glass, remaining on the table is held in the right hand.

2. 'Take Aim.' The glass is then raised and held with the right arm stretched out vertically.

3. 'Fire One.' A sip of wine is taken.

4. 'Fire Two.' Another sip is taken.

5. 'Fire All.' The glass is drained.

6. Without any word of command, the glasses are banged three times on the table, on each occasion with a shout of 'Vivat'. This is not a practice I would recommend if there are to be many toasts. The only suggestion I can make is that you discuss the procedure to be adopted on some suitable lodge occasion and select that favoured by the majority of your brethren.

Your Secretary believes mailouts from a Lodge of Education and Research should never have a blank page which costs as much to mail as one carrying some item(s) of interesting information hence the following information obtained from The Southern California Research Lodge is added.

THE ROSICRUCIANS

(1600-1700)

The history of Rosicrucianism is based on a novel about the life of Christian Rosencreutz. (1378-1484), a fictional character. Born of good birth but of limited means, he joined a monastery at a young age. In 1393, he accompanied another monk on a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulcher. In route his companion died, and the young Rosencreutz (C.R.C.) , being of limited means, was forced to go to Syria thence to Damcar of that country. He spent considerable time in Damcar studying and learning the secret mysteries of the ages.

Leaving Damcar he journeyed to Fez where he received further instruction in the ancient mysteries before moving on to Spain. His hope was to enlighten the scientific community with his newly acquired alchemic wisdom and art. His efforts were not well received. Discouraged, he returned to Germany and successfully practiced the healing arts.

Eventually, he recruited three friends from his former monastery and taught them the art, wisdom and mysteries acquired on his pilgrimage. The practical aspect of his endeavors soon interfered with his purpose of establishing the Temple of the Holy Ghost.

Four more "adepts" were initiated and taught the secrets of the order. It was decided that six of the adepts would go throughout the world, living according to the rules of the order. Two remained with Father C.R.C., but each year the adepts would return. Father C.R.C. lived to 106 years of age, (1484). He was entombed, but only two of the adepts knew where. His tomb was to be discovered after 120 years, and the mysteries made known to the world.

The adepts maintained the continuity of the order during the 120 years, although the whereabouts of Father C.R.C.'s tomb was foregotten. Upon doing restoration work to the Temple, the adepts removed a plaque from a wall and discovered a hidden door which turned out to be the entry to the sacred vault. The vault was lighted by bright light although it was sealed and not open to any source of natural light. The vault was seven-sided. Each side was 5' wide and 7' tall, and each served as a door to a room containing the secrets, relics & writings of the order. The body of Father C.R.C. was found under the altar and in

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perfect condition although 120 years had passed.

Such is the story of Christian Rosencreutz, the founder of the Society of Rosicrucians. The story is based on a German publication in 1614 entitled "Fama Fraternitatis Benedicti Ordinis Rosae Crucis" (The History of the Fraternity of the Meritorious Order of the Rosy-Cross). As customary in those times, the publication bore no authorship. Nevertheless, most scholars attribute the book to Johan Valentin Andrea of Herrenberg, Wurtemberg, Germany.

Andrea was born August 17, 1586. He toured Europe from 1610 to 1614, and upon his return to Germany, he entered the Protestant clergy. He died June 27, 1654. Besides the Fama, he is credited with authorship of "Chemische Hochzeit"

(Chemical Marriage) purportedly written by Christian Rosencreutz, in 1616.

What information is known about Johan Andrea comes from Thomas Vaughn, a Welshman and Andrea's biographer who wrote under the name Eugenius Philalethes. Others of that period who wrote on the subject of the Rosey Cross were Michael Majer & Dr. Robert Flood. Outside the writings of Johan Andrea Thomas Vaughn, Michael Maier and a few others, there is hardly any evidence that there was a Brotherhood of Rosicrucians existing in the 1600's. And with small exception, there are only a very few individuals that can actually be identified as "Rosicrucian" contrary claims notwithstanding. The term "Rosicrucian" had common usage in that age, and perhaps the secrecy of the organization accounts for the lack of evidence.

Rosicrucianism is an acknowledged product of alchemy, the science of the middle ages. The name Rosicrucian is said to derive from 'ros' (dew) the most powerful solvent of the alchemists and 'crux' (cross) signifying 'light' in the chemical style.

Historically, the Rosicrucians are said to have founded (invented) Hermetic (occult) philosophy. "Hermetic" coming from Hermes Trismegitus, Greek for Thoth, the Egyptian god of intelligence, magic, etc. The essence of Rosicrucianism is the esoteric thought and teachings of the ancient mysteries. The Hermetic schools are:

1. ALCHEMICAL:

Divided into three branches, to wit, (i) Transmutation of base metals; (ii) Universal solvent or panacea; (iii) Philosopher's Stone. Elias Ashmole further grouped the philosopher's stone into (a) mineral or transmutation; (b) vegetable or secret virtues of plants in the style of Paracelsus; (c) magical or the science of vision/Astral Light; and (d) angelic or spiritual.

2. ROSICRUCIAN:

The refinement of the alchemical schools in the legend of Christian Rosencreutz and the practical application of the "new" science for the good of mankind. It is said to be the link between the ancient mysteries and Freemasonry.

3. KABBALISTIC:

Hebrew esoteric philosophy, preserved from ancient times, and forming the theological basis of hermeticism.

Rosicrucian theorists are of four types:

1. Literal acceptance of the legend of Father C.R.C.

2. Acceptance of Rosicrucianism as a society without belief in the Farna legend. The brotherhood

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being founded by Agrippa and reformed by Andrea. A second school believes that the rosy cross is a secret society founded in ancient Egypt to perpetuate the mysteries of Persia & Chaldee, and that Rosicrucian adepts (Unknown Philosophers) possess superhuman if not supernatural powers.

3. Outright denial of Rosicrucianism as pure myth.

4. True Rosicrucians as people of two worlds, having physical and ethereal bodies not subject to limitations of time and distance, i.e., Astral Form. Their purpose is spiritual with a triune nature, i.e., Casting of the Molten Sea (transmutation), The Making of the Rose Diamond (universal panacea) and Achieving the Philosopher's Stone.

Rosicrucian writings after Johan Andrea are for the most part apologetic, meaning that the fanciful hypothesis of the brotherhood is intended as allegorical for the spiritual salvation of man. Generally, written at the time of the reformation, Rosicrucian writers were opposed to papal authority, and believed that there was a truer religion that could only be expressed in the language of Adam and Enoch, not Latin, the language of Babylon. The order teaches that Rosicrucianism offers a path to spiritual attainment through Mount Sophia (knowledge of nature); Mount Kabbala (Knowledge of angelic language to communicate with God's messengers) and Mount Magia (language of God as taught by God).

It has been claimed that Rosicrucians were the founders of Freemasonry, and at the very least had substantial influence on Masonry. The primary basis for this boast is the incorporation of certain Rosicrucian symbols into Masonic ritual. Specifically, the square, compasses, triangle, three grand masters, sun, and moon.

Despite the certainty that the story of Christian Rosencreutz is pure fantasy, it is acknowledged that the idea of a Society of Rosicrucians is not without merit. Nevertheless, no creditable scholar, Masonic or otherwise, can support the supposition that Freemasonry is an evolutionary product of the Brotherhood of the Rosey Cross.

Presented at April 17, 1994 Stated Meeting by Norman Leeper, P.M., Junior Warden, Southern California Research Lodge.
