

FAMOUS FREEMASONS

At our last meeting when the Brother Initiate was placed at the North East part of the Lodge he was instructed about CHARITY. During this part of the ceremony there is a passage in the ritual which goes- 'In a society so widely extended as Freemasonry, the branches of which are spread over the four quarters of the globe, it cannot be denied that we have many members of rank & opulence...'

As always when I listen to our ritual, I try to discover something new in it. So, when I returned home I sat down to list all the famous Freemasons I could recollect-. I managed 3-Our Grand Master, the Duke of Kent, George Washington & Mozart. There must have been many, many more I thought, especially in my chosen career of medicine. As one does in the 21st century I turned to Wikipedia and was transfixed by the many names on my computer screen reading them almost to sunrise.

There are some great freemasons (& I see many as I look around Victoria Lodge) & there are some great men who were/or are Freemasons. Justifiably our world-wide fraternity takes pride in having men of stature as members. No less than 16 American Presidents (I can state with a sigh of relief that Donald Trump is not one of them) were Freemasons starting with the first, George Washington. Some that most of us remember include Franklin D. & also Theodore Roosevelt & Harry Truman. I will return to Washington later. There are other great leaders & politicians such as Sir Winston Churchill, Benjamin Franklin, Napoleon Bonaparte, Simon Bolivar, Nelson Mandela, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Francois Marie Arouette- better known as Voltaire & possibly Fidel Castro. Many Kings & Royalty graced/grace our ranks like George 1V, King Edward V11, George V1, Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh & Prince Harry from Britain. Prince Charles, who will be visiting Barbados is not a Mason. Many of the European Kings & Princes were Freemasons as well.

There are famous sportsmen such as Sugar Ray Robinson, Jack Dempsey, Malcolm Campbell & Arnold Palmer. Many actors-Clark Gable, John Wayne, Gene Autrey Peter Sellers, Bud Abbott, W C Fields & Telly Savalas (Kojak). Great musicians are amongst our numbers- Mozart, Beethoven, Hayden, Sibelius, Listz, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, George Gershwin, Irvin Berlin, Al Joelson, Glen Miller & Nat King Cole. We have poets like Oscar Wilde, Robbie Burns & Nobel Laureate Rudyard Kipling-let us just recall how much of what we try to attain in our daily practice is summed up in his poem "IF" If you can walk with Kings but keep the common touch

Authors like Arthur Conan Doyle (Sherlock Holmes), Oscar Wilde & Mark Twain; personalities such as Simon Cowell who has done much for Barbados, Bob Monkhouse who used to live here & Steve Wozniak of Apple fame; Scientists such as Isaac Newton & Erasmus Darwin; medical men like Edward Jenner & Alexander Fleming & even astronauts such as John Glenn & Buzz Aldrin who was with Neil Armstrong when they walked on the moon. Yes, Brethren Freemasonry has even been on the moon! I could go on & on with this list but I would rather mention a few who have possibly changed the face of history.



My first must be Sir Alexander Fleming who discovered penicillin & was a member of one of my London Lodges-Sancta Maria, no. 2682,

but, I hasten to say, long before I became a joining member. He was initiated in 1909 at the age of 27. He was also a member of Misericordia Lodge, no. 3286 an off shoot of Sancta Maria.

Fleming was born in Ayrshire, Scotland on the 6th August 1881, the son of a farmer. He moved to London at the age of 13 & later trained as a doctor. He qualified with distinction and began his research at St. Mary's Hospital, University of London under Sir Almroth Wright, a pioneer in vaccine therapy, in 1906 -73 years before I was appointed as a consultant surgeon to the same hospital. It took Fleming 25 years before he was placed in the Chair of King Solomon. I was a joining member of Sancta Maria Lodge in 1982 & became Master 2 years later. Fortunately, in Victoria Lodge we have young masons so I may have to wait a long time here! In the year of my birth Fleming was appointed Grand Junior Warden.

As I am sure you all know Fleming discovered penicillin 90 years ago. He was described as a careless lab technician which led to his amazing discovery. Returning from a two-week vacation he found mould had developed on an accidentally contaminated staphylococcus bacterial culture plate- possibly from bread that Fleming had left next to the plate by an open window. On examining the mould, he noticed that the culture prevented the growth of the bacteria. Fleming said "one sometimes finds what one is not looking for. When I woke up just after dawn on the 28th September 1928, I certainly didn't plan to revolutionize all medicine by discovering the world's first antibiotic, or bacteria killer. But I guess that is what I did." He named it penicillin but it was not produced until his research was completed by Flory & Chain at Oxford who are credited with its development. The first patient was successfully treated for streptococcal septicaemia in 1942. It helped reduce the number of deaths & amputations during world war 11. Its discovery changed medicine saving millions of patients' lives from pneumonia, bacterial endocarditis, syphilis & other infections. He was knighted by King George VI in 1944 & the following year was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology with Flory & Chain. He died of a heart attack 10 years later.



I will stay with medicine for my second famous masonic doctor, Edward Jenner, who also changed the face of history. Born in 1749 in Berkeley, Gloucestershire, England, the son of the local vicar. At the age of 14 he was apprenticed to a local surgeon & later trained in London under the great surgeon, John Hunter. In the 18th century Physicians were learned people who went to University & spoke Latin whereas surgeons were apprenticed & members of a guild, such as the Barber Surgeons. Even today surgeons trained in the United Kingdom are Mr. not Dr. -----

He practiced medicine in Gloucestershire &, at the age of 47, in 1796 carried out his now famous experiment on an 8 year old boy named James Phipps who was his gardener's son.. It was during this experiment that Jenner was able to prove the use of cowpox-a mild illness found largely in milkmaids. What he did was to collect samples of cowpox from the sores of the milkmaids & scratch this into the skin of the boy. He rendered Phipps immune to smallpox, one of the great killers of the age. 250 years too late to save Queen Elizabeth 1 being scarred for life. You may remember that she contracted smallpox when she was 17 & this scarred her face badly so that she had to wear heavy make up which contained lead which resulted in her losing her hair & teeth. Over the next 2 years he developed his findings publishing his results in 1798. He coined the word vaccine, derived from the Latin word vacca, meaning cow. Edward Jenner is regarded as the father of immunology & he saved thousands of lives. He once said "I shall endeavor still further to prosecute this inquiry, an inquiry I trust not merely speculative, but of sufficient moment to inspire the pleasing hope of its becoming

essentially beneficial to mankind". Note the Freemasonry terminology. He was an active mason throughout his life & served as worshipful master in 1812 of the Royal Lodge of Faith & Friendship, no, 270 , which still meets in the Provincial Grand Lodge of Gloucestershire. The Lodge was regularly visited by the then Prince of Wales-the future King George 1V & many members of the Jenner family became members.

Jenner certainly studied many aspects of the 'hidden mysteries of nature & science' & found in Freemasonry a means by which he could convey his scientific beliefs as well as his spiritual & moralistic values. It is interesting that the Royal Lodge of Faith & Friendship held a science select lodge organized by Jenner where lodge members had to produce a paper on a specific scientific subject; this was similar to the Lunar Society meetings. Other lectures had taken place within masonic lodges throughout the United Kingdom such as the Old Kings Arms Lodge, no. 28, in London. The lectures were intricately mixed with the lodge meeting itself. Another example of scientific teaching taking place within lodges can be seen in the Lodge of Lights, no 148, Warrington, which held lectures on Newtonian gravitational astronomy in 1800 & 1801. These 3 lodges are all still working today.

Interestingly Jenner's lodge's emblem, used to this very day, commemorates the gift given to him of a wampum belt by the 5 States of North America after Jenner personally sent them a sample of the cowpox virus along with his work on vaccination. Jenner wore this belt in front of his apron at the last masonic meeting he attended.



MUSIC

My next connection with a famous mason is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart through having attended Mozart Lodge, no 3735, which was

established in 1914 in Warwickshire, England. Not surprisingly it is a musicians' Lodge. What was different on visiting this lodge was that music was played when they called off from the ritual and also at their festive board by the musicians of the lodge as well as visiting brethren. It was a lovely surprise on my first visit.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg on the 27th January 1756 & was a child prodigy. He moved to Vienna in 1781 where he remained until his death at the early age of 35, 10 years later. He wrote his first Masonic work at the age of 16 when he was commissioned to write music for the Bavarian Lodge Zur Behutsamkeit entitled 'With Restraint' 12 years before he became a Mason.

He was initiated into Freemasonry on the 14th December 1784 into Lodge Zur Wholtatigkeit (which means 'Benevolence') but was passed to the 2nd degree at a meeting of another Viennese Lodge, Zur Wahlen Eintracht ('True Harmony'). There are records of Mozart attending various lodges in Vienna & Prague. Soon after being raised he introduced his father, Leopold & was also instrumental in bringing Hayden into Freemasonry. Mozart began composing music for Masonic occasions immediately. These pieces include Gesellenreise-Mason's Joy; Odes for the opening & closing of the Lodge, which we all sing; Eine kleine Freimaurer Kantate-Little Freemasons' Cantata & many more. There are many Masonic allusions in his work-both in the music & libretto. Take his famous opera The Magic Flute composed in 1791 shortly before his death. The libretto was written by Emanuel Schikaneder who had become a Mason in 1788 whilst the model for Sarastro is believed to have been Ignaz von Born, Master of Mozart's Lodge. The opera is filled with ritual & symbolism. The theme is Geometry & Harmony, Good vs Evil, Enlightenment vs Ignorance & the virtues of Knowledge, Justice, Wisdom & Truth. That the Magic Flute is a barely veiled Masonic allegory cannot be doubted. There are 3 loud chords at the beginning of the overture signifying the 3 knocks of the initiates at the temple. Some people believe that Mozart revealed too much in his opera & was subsequently poisoned. He certainly appeared healthy at the

young age of 35 when he died so he could have been poisoned though I doubt by Masons.

Before I leave Mozart it must be remembered that he joined Freemasonry despite the fact he was a Roman Catholic by faith & that Pope Clement X111 had prohibited membership in 1738-46 years before he joined. He seemed to be involved in both Masonry & Catholicism writing beautiful music such as his Requiem & the C Minor Mass as well as his Masonic music I have mentioned.



Let me move on to my second musical mason-Satchmo. From classical music to jazz. He along with Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin, Nat King Cole & Adolphe Joseph Sax-inventor of the saxophone, the most jazz associated instrument, ALL brought jazz & Freemasonry together. Perhaps at this stage of my lecture I should be playing “Mac the Knife’.

MUSIC

Jazz originated in New Orleans just over 100 years ago &, in that time, it has developed much more than the classical European music has achieved in 700 years. Originating as a mixture of African & European music, improvisation occupies an important place for the jazz musician. Improvisation & phrasing resembles the allegoric expression practiced in Freemasonry. Over the years jazz music like Freemasonry has started conveying its message in symbolic ways. Also, jazz is a lifestyle like Masonry. Both are important pillars of human culture.

Due to diffused reasons, the masonic rite was greatly appealing to the 20th century’s most acclaimed African American jazz musicians. Perhaps it was an opportunity to get to know other artists through the social aspects of camaraderie, or perhaps simply because of the pleasure of attending ceremonies & enjoying certain privileges.

The Masonic Rite was always particularly appealing to musicians, especially jazz players.

Black masonry actually began before the American Independence War, when a man named Prince Hall was not admitted into St. John's Lodge in Boston. Hall was already a freeman & an abolitionist. In 1775 he & 14 other freed African Americans were initiated into Masonry by the British Military Lodge in Boston.

Masonry was also helpful to the great jazz players as it provided friends & some stability when they were on the road.

Louis Armstrong was born in New Orleans in August 1901. It is claimed he was a member of Montgomery Lodge, no. 18 in New York, a Prince Hall Lodge. But there is no such Lodge. In his autobiography he wrote he was a member of a Lodge of the Knights of Pythias. I believe he was a mason which helped him overcome his troubled childhood & lack of family support.



A discussion of famous masons would be incomplete if one omitted George Washington, America's first President. The earliest records of American Masonic Lodges are in Philadelphia. In 1732, Boston's St. John's Lodge was duly constituted by the G L of Eng. & remains the oldest lodge in North America, a mere 8 years before Alexander Irvine introduced Freemasonry to Barbados & started St. Michael's Lodge. During the revolutionary period, Masons of note included George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, James Otis, & Paul Revere. While these Freemasons & others actively participated in the American Revolution, Freemasonry, as an institution as well as its local lodges, remained politically neutral.

Washington joined Freemasonry in the Lodge at Fredericksburgh, Virginia. He was 20 years old when he received the first degree of

Entered Apprentice on the 4th November, 1752. I wonder if he lied when asked during the ceremony “are you a freeman of the age of 21?” But then it is said he never told a lie so perhaps the question was not asked!! It cost him 3 pounds & 3 shillings-3 guineas as it was termed then, to join. 10 days after turning 21, on the 3rd March 1753- a year later, he was passed to the 2nd degree of Fellowcraft & a few months later on the 4th August was raised to the 3rd degree of a Master Mason. The Lodge’s minute book records he only attended 2 more meetings in September 1753 & January 1755. However, beginning in 1788 & through the remainder of his life, Washington was a frequent participant in Masonic ceremonies. After the war, in 1784, he was elected an Hon. Member of Alexandria Lodge, no. 39. 4 years later he agreed to be charter master of the Lodge when it transferred its allegiance from the GL of Pennsylvania to the G L of Virginia. William Williams was commissioned by the Lodge to paint him dressed in Masonic regalia. After his death the lodge changed its name to Alexandria-Washington, no. 22.

As President, Washington exchanged letters with many Masonic local lodges & state grand lodges. His most significant Masonic activity occurred on the 18th September 1793 when Acting as grand master pro tem, he presided at the Masonic ceremonial laying of the United States Capitol cornerstone; everyone was in full Masonic Regalia. Washington himself best articulated his membership in, & relationship to, Freemasonry when he replied to the brethren of King David’s Lodge in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1790 as follows:-

“Being persuaded that a just application of the principles on which the Masonic Fraternity is founded, must be promotive of private virtue & public prosperity. I shall always be happy to advance the interests of the Society & to be considered by them as a deserving brother.”

At his funeral in 1799 brothers of Alexandria Lodge performed Masonic rites. The lodge opened a museum in his honour in 1812.

Many of you may have read Dan Brown's book "The Lost Symbol". In it he describes the Capitol & its museum. Washington DC has a rich masonic history. It was conceived & designed by master masons- Washington, Franklin & Pierre L'Enfant- powerful minds who adorned their new capital with Masonic symbolism, architecture & art. If you like suspense & symbolism with some Masonic background as the plot is set within the capitol with its many secret passageways & paintings, read the Lost Symbol,



My second Masonic politician has to be the Great war-time Prime Minister of Britain-Sir Winston Churchill. Winston Spencer Churchill belonged to the group I mentioned at the beginning of this lecture- some great men were Freemasons. Few would doubt the assertion that Winston Churchill was the greatest British statesman of recent history. It was, as in so many instances of fame, both personal talent & external circumstance that thrust him into the very unique historic role he was to play as a politician & the immortality he subsequently gained.

He became a Freemason in 1901. We should ask ourselves 'what induced him to become a Mason'? How active a Mason was he? Why did he change Lodges? Why did he resign? And most importantly, what part did Freemasonry play in his life?

He was born 2 months prematurely at Blenheim Palace on the 30th November 1874. Educated at Harrow, he freely admitted he was far from being a brilliant student, being particularly weak in maths & the classics but excelling in the English language. However, he became a successful author, artist, soldier, statesman & a family man.

At the time of his initiation into the Studholme Lodge, number 1591 on the 24th May 1901, he was surrounded by political & military

colleagues to whom Freemasonry was a fashionable social pursuit. All the more for having the Prince of Wales, about to be crowned King Edward VII, Grand Master of the Fraternity. The Prince of Wales' election to Grand Master in 1875 gave a huge impetus to Masonry. Having been a jovial leader of society, indulging himself in wine, women & gambling, the Prince vindicated himself when he succeeded his mother, Queen Victoria, in January 1901, & also resigned his Grand Mastership.

Britain, in this first decade of the 20th century, was doing exceptionally well, notwithstanding the humiliation of losing the Boer War in South Africa, in which young Winston had been an active & heroic participant. Studholme Lodge was warranted in 1875. Its summonses read like a Who's Who of the aristocracy & social elites. Winston was initiated at the age of 27, on the 24th May 1901 already a keen & dedicated politician, having taken his seat in Parliament as the conservative member for Oldham just 3 months earlier. His father, Lord Randolph Churchill, & his uncle the Marquis Blandford had both been initiated into Churchill Lodge on the 9th February 1871, but were excluded 12 years later, along with Oscar Wilde & others for non-payment of dues, but were subsequently reinstated as they had been in South Africa on HM's Service. So, Winston was following on a long-standing family tradition of Freemasonry.

Sir Sydney White, Grand Secretary between 1937 & 1957 wrote 'Churchill was initiated as a young man but never progressed in the order and has taken no part for many years'. By 1912 he was well on his way to political success & fame being made First Lord of the Admiralty. Winston was very helpful in helping promote new Lodges even during his time as Prime Minister but he resigned from Freemasonry publicly although I have been unable to discover in which year. If it had not been for Winston Churchill, we might all be speaking German, if indeed we had been allowed to live.

Perhaps, the present British Prime Minister should heed Churchill's view about Europe- 'We are of Europe but not part of it. If we ever have to choose between Europe & the East or the Sea & the West- we should choose the Sea immediately'.

I was fascinated to find that my hero Nelson Mandela, as well as Bishop Tutu, & Tabo Mbeki all became Freemasons when they overthrew Apartheid. To this list I must add Martin Luther King whose assassination on the 4th April 1968 prevented him being initiated the following month in Atlanta. His father & grandfather had been Masons.

Let me move on & leave world leaders to quickly move on to authors such as Oscar Wilde & Mark Twain.



Oscar Wilde stated that the 2 great turning points of his life was “when my father sent me to Oxford University & society sent me to prison”. Today no one will deny the genius of Oscar Wilde. Yet during his lifetime he was spurned & humiliated in spite of the success of much of his work. Freemasonry, which did play a significant part of his life during his time at Oxford, was also to reject him & let him down. He was friendly with Prince Leopold, Queen Victoria’s 6th child & this acquaintance will have encouraged his introduction to Freemasonry. Prince Leopold had been proposed by his elder brother, Prince Edward, Prince of Wales, to Apollo University Lodge, no. 357 when still an undergraduate. He made rapid advancement being made SW the year after his initiation & then was nominated as Provincial Grand Master for Oxfordshire that same year-1875. He was installed the day after his installation as WM of Apollo on the 22nd February 1876. Sadly, he died of haemophilia aged 30, as did many of Queen Victoria’s family.

Wilde was proposed by Sinclair Franklin & seconded by J E C Bodley & initiated by special dispensation being only 20. Both Apollo (Oxford University) & Isaac Newton (Cambridge University) Lodges enjoyed blanket dispensation to initiate candidates under the age of 21. It

was a busy evening the 23rd February 1875 with a 3rd degree ceremony followed by the passing of 2 or more EAs & the initiation of Wilde & 2 other candidates by the WM, W. Bro. the Rev. Pickard. The Secretary commented in the minutes 'Pickard is very energetic-3 ceremonies in one meeting'. Oscar Wilde's father had been an active mason in Ireland having been initiated into the Shakespeare Lodge no. 143 in Dublin in 1838 & became WM 3 years later in 1841. Oscar Wilde's Masonic career only spanned his 4 years in Oxford. It began & ended there but he did take to freemasonry as second nature to his character. He was fascinated by the craft & the degrees beyond & participated in many of them. After his initiation at the festive board Bodley wrote that Wilde said in his maiden speech to the Brethren 'I have heard that S J was the founder of this order. I presume that stands for St. John the Baptist. I hope we shall emulate his life but not his death-I mean we ought to keep our heads'. Of course, he was alluding to the 2 pillars at the archway or entrance to King Solomon's temple; as an initiate he would have known what B stood for but how did he know about J?

Apollo Lodge is a very old & prestigious lodge. It continues to practice its ritual in an historic style & traditional costume. Officers wear knee breeches, tailcoats & white tie, silk stockings & pumps rather than shoes as they have done for 2 centuries. Wilde loved this form of dress & took to wearing it in public, not that they knew it was masonic attire. He joined Churchill Lodge & the Rose Croix order spending all his money on regalia, 18 carat gold studs & cuff-links etc. so ending up in debt. This led to his non-payment of Apollo Lodge's dues so his membership ceased. He was expelled from Churchill Lodge for not acknowledging 3 summonses sent to him & excluded from the Rose Croix more due to neglect than deliberate action taken against him.

His rather brief albeit concentrated involvement with Freemasonry only once inspired his work. His very first play, 'Vera or the Nihilists. A drama in a Prologue & 4 Acts written in 1880 & first produced in New York, has Masonic connotations. He is best remembered for his

witty quotations-hundreds of them despite dying at the young age of 46 from meningitis. Let me share a few with you:-

'True friends stab you in the front' This could allude to Masonry.
'Experience is simply the name we give our mistakes'

'Always forgive your enemies-nothing annoys them more'

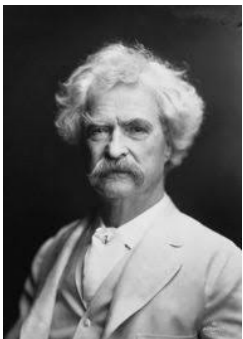
'I can resist everything but temptation'

'The old believe everything, middle-aged suspect everything, the young know everything'.

'In America the young are always ready to give to those who are older than themselves the full benefit of their inexperience'.

'What is a cynic? A man who knows the price of everything & the value of nothing' AND

'Bigamy is having 1 wife too many. Monogamy is the same'.



Who was Samuel Langhorne Clemens? He was Mark Twain-America's greatest humorist with his books still very popular today. He was a newspaper correspondent during the Civil War following which he took an excursion on the old Quaker City boat around the Mediterranean during which time he wrote 'The New Pilgrims' about his experiences on board. He married Olivia Langdon, whom he met on board, in 1870 & they lived first in Buffalo & then Connecticut. He

had become a Mason in 1861 initiated, passed & raised in the Polar Star Lodge no. 79. He later, during a visit to the Middle East, had a mallet made out of the cedars of Lebanon which he presented to the Lodge. There are many references to Masonry in his writings;- In 'Innocents Abroad' he mentions the Great Architect of the Universe.

'Tom Sawyer's Conspiracy' written in 1897 but not published until 1969 includes the following-"He was Inside Sentinel (Inner Guard) of the Masons, & Outside Sentinel (Tyler) of the Odd Fellows.....and there warn't no fancy apron agoing but he had a sample.....toting a bible on a tray....."

In 'A Tramp Abroad' when asked what was his father's religion denomination he replied 'a Freemason'

AND in 'Joan of Arc' he mentions 'the seeing eye' stating that the common eye sees only the outside of things, and judges by that, but the seeing eye pierces through & reads the heart & soul, finding there capacities which the outside did not indicate or promise, & which the common eye could not detect' -a reference to the "All seeing eye".

As with Oscar Wilde I will add a few of Mark Twain's sayings:-

'Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you would rather have talked'

'Giving up smoking is the easiest thing in the world. I know because I have done it thousands of times'.

It is better to keep your mouth closed & let people think you are a fool than to open it & remove all doubt'

'It is not the size of the dog in the fight, it is the size of the fight in the dog'

'Do the right thing. It will gratify some people & astonish others' AND

'Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter'

Let me finish with scientists.



First Erasmus Darwin founder of the Lunar Society in Birmingham, England. He was talked about evolution in Masonic temples 100 years before his grandson, Charles, claimed to come up with the process in his book "The Origin of Species" following his trip to the Galapagos Islands. Erasmus Darwin was a philosopher, poet, scientist & physician. He studied at Cambridge University from 1750 -1754 followed by medicine at Edinburgh University when he was initiated into St. David's Lodge, no. 36. He settled in Nottingham as a doctor but met with little success & so moved to Lichfield, near Birmingham, after a year where he became very successful.

He treated King George 111, who, you may remember, suffered from porphyria which was a disease yet to be discovered. His 3rd child, Robert, became the father of Charles Darwin. Erasmus 's greatest passion was invention. He was the inventor of many devices but patented none of them. These included a horizontal windmill; a steering mechanism for carriages that would be adopted for cars 130 years later.; a talking machine; a chair to straighten the spine; a canal lift for barges; an artesian well; a copying machine long before Xerox; a steam car; a rocket-engine & many more inventions.

Amongst his discoveries were correctly identifying sugars & starches as the byproducts of plant digestion. The importance of nitrates & phosphorus in sustaining vegetation. He used gases to alleviate infections & cancers; he successfully used electricity to reduce

tumours in a patient & he conducted research into the formation of clouds.

Amongst his accomplishments were that he was a master of verse influencing the work of Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge & Shelley. He translated the works of Linnaeus, advocated equality of women & despised slavery. He openly sympathized with the colonies in the American Revolution and became a lifelong friend of Benjamin Franklin. He was a good humoured, larger than life character known for his wit, charm & forthrightness. Energetic & sociable-the type of person who turns any gathering into a party. A kind man he never charged patients who could not afford to pay.

As mentioned earlier, Darwin was a leader of the Lunar Society & a mason. Many of the former Society were Freemasons such as Watt, Wedgewood, Priestly, Franklin & John Reinhold Foster.



Finally, & I hear you give a sigh of relief, was Isaac Newton a Mason? The first Masonic Lodge was founded in London in 1717 when Newton would have been 74. His religious views were based on a literal & logical interpretation of the bible. This led him to disbelieve the trinity but he was not an atheist & wrote that God was the reasons planets did not drift. Whatever his beliefs he was a genius. He changed the way we understand the Universe. He discovered the laws of gravity & motion (the 3 laws which form the basic principles of modern physics) & invented calculus. He helped to shape our rational world view. However, he had a huge ego believing he alone was able to understand God's creation. He was a workaholic & an insomniac. He was superstitious & cranky. He believed in alchemy & was bigoted against Catholics. An elitist, he hated women & was petrified of sex. As it is said-Genius is very close to madness! He certainly changed the world as did the others I have mentioned. But was he a Freemason? Well, the Royal Society, whose primary

stated purpose is supposed to be scientific, was founded by Freemasons & there have been over 8,000 masonic members recorded between 1660 & 2007. Amazing when the membership in any generation is kept to 1,600. The first President of the R S was Sir Robert Moray in 1660- a Mason. Newton's best friends-John Theophilus Desaguliers (the 3rd Grand Master of the Premier Grand Lodge of England) & William Stukeley were both Masons & members of the RS. In 1717 Newton was President (actually for 24 years from 1703 to 1727) of the RS whose members were nearly all masons. So, I believe he was one of us. He was probably initiated when he was at Cambridge University. Also, as an Alchemist, he was interested in symbolism. In Newton's time many of the existing guilds of masons converted into the fraternity of masons &, with it, incorporated much of the symbology & thinking of the spiritual side of alchemy into their rites & symbols, such as the 7 alchemical stages represented by a ladder with 7 rungs, Euclid's 47th & Pythagoras which are all depicted on the ceiling in Freemasons' Hall in London. There was also the philosopher's compass drawn by a Freemason called Lenhof in 1782---- but these symbols would take another lecture.

Newton was certainly a Rosicrucian which had a profound influence on him, particularly in regards to his alchemical work & philosophical thought. The Ancient & Mystical Order Rosae Crucis has always claimed him as a frater (brother). So why did one of the most profound scientists to have ever lived believe in Alchemy? Probably because he was a mason though there are many who believe there is no connection between Alchemy & Freemasonry. As my last famous mason I must also add his prediction that the world would end, as we know it, in 2060. He was convinced the future events were preordained by God. He believed 2060 would herald a new beginning. These ideas were based on the Book of Daniel & his prediction that the Earth will collide with Planet Niburu (now termed star V838-Monocerotis) due to Earth's magnetic polarity reversing suddenly, crushing us all to smithereens. Brethren just 41 years away!! Much as I admire Isaac Newton, I believe this is something

about which he was incorrect. Why- well asteroid 1997XF,11 is due to hit us on the 26th October 2028, 31 years earlier, & Brethren, that is just a decade away!!

So, what have I learnt from my study of these famous masons? Firstly, that there were some great freemasons & some great men who were Freemasons. Secondly, that the men I have spoken about practiced Freemasonry in their different livelihoods & were influenced greatly by Masonry. And lastly, through them & Freemasonry the world is a better place.

By

W. Bro. Professor Richard David Rosin