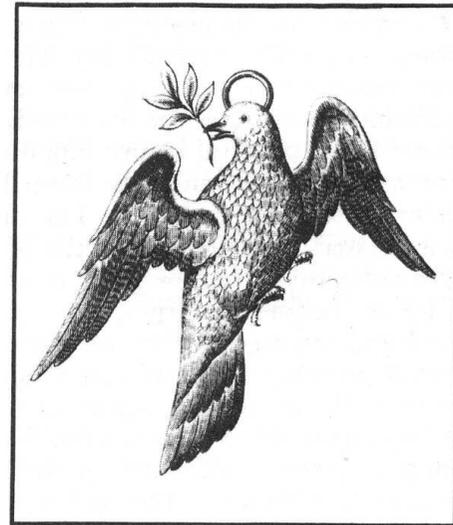


# MASONIC BOOKLET

No.4

**The Deacons.<sup>1</sup>**



**Dove with Olive Branch  
Deacons' Jewels. Introduced 1813.**

## Foreword.

The views expressed in these pages are mine and do not necessarily reflect the views of any other Lodge Member.

When we were made a mason, we promised to “make a daily advance in Masonic knowledge.” Our Master undertakes to “... impart light and instruction to the Brethren of the Lodge.”

Those are our good intentions but time is always against us. We meet, have an enjoyable meal together and depart. We have our business commitments, our wife and family to consider and even the ritual to learn and memorise. Few of us, except old ‘crusties’ like me, have the time to do a little research into Masonic matters.

The purpose of these pamphlets is to give a brief overview of various topics that may interest you or about which you may be curious. If you are seriously interested then please contact me and I will point you to all of the sources I have used where there is a wealth of detailed information.

Remember, I am not an academic or a scholar but just a Freemason with curiosity and time. I have only scratched the surface, as best I can and used (pinched) information from various web sites and from the Transactions of Quatuor Coronati

There is no intention here to add to or subtract from our ritual. The ritual book is of primary importance.

Alec Hall January 2005

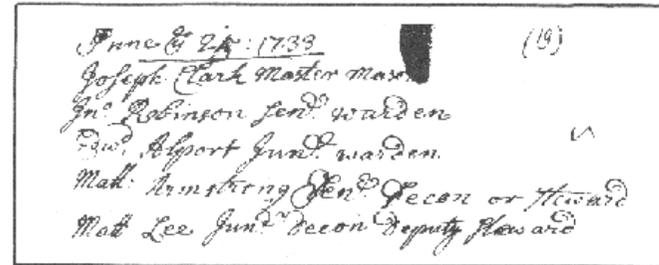
e-mail [alec@tisl.demon.co.uk](mailto:alec@tisl.demon.co.uk)

**Please let me have your views and comments.**

The Dove was not officially adopted as the jewel of the Deacons in the Grand Lodge of Ireland in 1859 and some regret the passing of the ‘handsome mercury’.

In 1793 there is some evidence that the Sun and Moon Jewels were worn by the Deacons. The Sun and Moon are emblems used in many states of America

June ye 25: 1733  
Joseph Clark Master Mason.  
Jn<sup>o</sup>. Robinson Sen<sup>r</sup>. Warden  
Edw<sup>d</sup>. Alport Jun<sup>r</sup>. Warden  
Matt. Armstrong Sen<sup>r</sup>. Decon [sic] or Steward  
Matt. Lee Jun<sup>r</sup>. Decon Deputy Steward



June ye 25: 1733 (19)  
Joseph Clark Master Mason  
Jn<sup>o</sup>. Robinson Sen<sup>r</sup>. Warden  
Edw<sup>d</sup>. Alport Jun<sup>r</sup>. Warden  
Matt. Armstrong Sen<sup>r</sup>. Decon or Steward  
Matt. Lee Jun<sup>r</sup>. Decon Deputy Steward

Earliest record of Deacons in England.  
The Lodge of Swalwell 1733.

The Lodge of Industry, formerly the Lodge of Swalwell, obtained new ‘Dove’ jewels for its d Deacons in 1850 and now the Sun and Moon jewels are worn by the Senior and Junior Stewards to commemorate the ‘Deacon or Steward’ of 1733

### Acknowledgments and grateful thanks to:-

Grand Lodge of British Columbia and the Yukon.

‘The Deacons’ by Bro. Sinclair Bruce (AQC Vol 98)

‘600 Years of Craft History’ Harry Carr. AQC

Zenit (an Italian masonic internet site) Masonry Disected.

carried out by the Orator and others situated anywhere in the room.

Again in 1730 from the Prichards exposure 'Masonry Disected' we have the this short section of the catechism:-

- Q. Where stands the senior Entered Prentice  
A. In the South  
Q. What is his business  
A. To hear and receive instructions and welcome strange brethren  
Q. Where stands the Junior Entered Prentice  
A. In the North  
Q. What is his business  
A. To keep off all cowans and eves droppers.

In 1733, two junior officers in the Lodge at Swalwell were recorded as Decons or Stewards - both being assistants to the Wardens. (See details on the last page when Deacons were in vogue.)

1778 Deacons were officially appointed by the Lodge of Antiquity and their duties added to the bye-laws of the Lodge in 1790. Deacons were displaced by Stewards a year or two later.

In 1809 the Lodge of Promulgation made their only pronouncement on the duties of the Deacon and recommended their appointment.

## Insignia



At a meeting of the new United Grand Lodge in 1815 the Constitution gave a list of insignia which included the Jewels for the Deacons which were to be the Dove with an Olive Branch. It has been understood but never enacted that Lodges which up to that time had other designs could continue to use their old Jewels.

In the exposure J & B, (1770) 'The Senior and Junior Deacons each have a black rod with the compass hanging round their necks.'

Some Masonic scholars have said that the Mercury was the earliest or original Jewel of the Deacons. But that is by no means certain.

It was unofficially adopted by the Antients and most of the examples still in existence come from those Lodges or from Ireland whence, one assumes the Antients obtained the emblem.

## Introduction.

At your Initiation, you were cared for throughout the Ceremony by the Junior Deacon who never left your side. He prompted you when an answer was required .

These notes concern the history of the Deacons in Freemasonry.

As with most things 'Masonic' there is some degree of confusion and may different interpretations. All I can do is give you my best shot with no guarantees that, when I find more evidence, my views will not be modified.

You must remember that communication was poor (no mobiles or Internet in the period we will be considering) in the early days of Freemasonry and therefore although there was communication it took rather longer than it does now. What happened in one part of the British Isles did not automatically become known or acted upon, in some other part. In any case, when information did arrive from another region, there would have been some brother who insisted on sticking with the established custom rather than change in favour of some different and 'new fangled' idea.

## Summary

The Deacon is first mentioned in Scottish Records of the Incorporation which concerned themselves with the regulation of Craftsmen within the town or city.. The Incorporation was similar to the English Craft Guild. The Deacon was 'boss' of the Incorporation of Masons while the Warden was 'boss' of the Lodge of Mason Fellow of Craftsmen.

I would speculate that Irish Masons imported Deacons from Scotland as did some Lodges in the North of England.

The Premier Grand Lodge, which was keen to involve nobles and intellectuals and modify ritual if it be considered 'cumbersome' (1717) and it's adherents did not generally have Deacons as Officers but used Stewards or Entered Prentices to carry out the familiar duties.. The Antient Grand Lodge which followed the old rituals and customs , formed by Irish Masons, (1751) usually did have Deacons as officers.

The Lodge of Promulgation was formed to unify the Premier Grand Lodge and the Ancients. One of the first decisions was to formally accept the office of Deacon in 1816.

## The Church Deacons

The Deacon is third in line behind the Bishop and the Priest. He assists the Priest and in some circumstances will act for him.

The Deacon was a Christian Church 'Officers' for probably a thousand years or so. As you will guess, I have chosen this quotation because the person concerned was a Free-Mason (Operative or Free and accepted or speculative? The former I suspect but who knows.)

*1589 "In the mean season, sweet Martin Junior, play thou the knave kindly as thou hast begun, and waxe as olde in iniquitie as thy father. Downe with learning and Universities, I can bring you a **Free-mason** out of Kent, that gave over his occupation twentie yeeres agoe. He wil make a good **Deacon** for your Purpose, I have taken some tryall of his gifts, hee preacheth very pretilie over a Joynd-stoole." (A.ijj)*

Please don't ask me what a 'Joynd Stoole' might be.

A Countercuffe given to Martin Junior, "Pasquill". [Thomas Nashe, possibly Robert Greene] London : John Charlewood, 1589. A Church of England sponsored response to criticisms from Martin Marprelate [Puritan pseud.; see Charles Nicholl A Cup of News]. The term "Deacon" would not refer to any masonic office existing at the time, deacons being a relatively modern addition. Cited by Ron Heisler in "The Impact of Freemasonry on Elizabethan Literature." The Hermetic Journal, 1990.

### **Deacons of the Operative Masons.**

Our journey now begins with the Schaw Statutes of 1598 and 1599 which mention Deacons in relationship to the Incorporation of the Masons Guilds in Scotland. A few words about King James VI (Sorry about the History lesson.)

#### **James VI of Scotland June 19, 1566 - March 27, 1625**

King of Scotland (1567-1625), and the first Stuart King of England (1603-25), English historians have tended to portray him as a coward and a fussy and foolish pedant: 'The wisest fool in Christendom'. In fact he was reasonably successful in his main goals, increasing national prosperity, maintaining peace with Europe and settling the church. Today, he is remembered for commissioning the so-called , or Authorized Version.

*On the west wall of the lodgehall used by Lodge Scoon and Perth No. 3 in Perth, Scotland can be found a mural depicting James VI kneeling at their altar at his initiation. The oldest existing record of the Lodge, called of 24 December, 1658, records that James was "entered Freemason and Fellowcraft of the Lodge of Scoon" on 15 April, 1601.*

*James also appointed William Schaw as Master of the Work and Warden General in 1583, with the commission of re-organising the masonic craft. In 1598, Schaw issued the first of his statutes, setting out the duties of masons to their lodge and to the public, imposing penalties for unsatisfactory work and inadequate safety practices. Schaw drew up a second statute in 1599 wherein the first veiled reference to the existence of esoteric knowledge within the craft of stone masonry can be found.*

**Initiated: April 15, 1601**

**Lodge Scoon and Perth No. 3, Perth, Scotland**

**Source: D. Crawford Smith and , *History of the Ancient Masonic Lodge of Scoon and Perth (Number 3, The Lodge of Scone)* Perth: Cowan and Company, Limited, 1898. Also see: *Year Book of the Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of Scotland* 1990, p. 50. Note that the *Contract or Mutual Agreement* is the only record of this initiation, that this history was commissioned by the lodge to establish its claims of precedence, and there is no primary source documentation. Image: artist unknown 'detail'. Scottish National Portrait Gallery.**

The following passage from the Schaw Statute is difficult to read but try to read just the parts referring to the deacons {dekyns} which I have emphasized.. Please don't bother to

read it all just yet.

### **FIRST SCHAW STATUTE OF 1598**

*At Edinburgh the XXVIII day of December, The zeir of God r V four scoir awchtene zeiris.*

*The statutis ordinance is to be obseruit be all the maister maissounis within this realme, Sett doun be Williame Schaw, Maister of Wark<sub>3</sub> to his maiestie And generall Wardene of the said craft, with the consent of the maisteris efter specifeit.*

*Item, first that they obserue and keip all the gude ordinanceis sett doun ofbefoir concernyng the privilegis of thair Craft be thair predicesso<sup>1</sup> of gude memorie, And specialie That thay be trew ane to ane vther and (eve cheritable togidder as becumis sworne brether and companzeounis of craft.*

*Item, that thay be obedient to thair wardenis, **dekynis**, and maisteris in alithingis concernyng thair craft.*

*Item, that thay be honest, faithful!, and diligent in thair calling, and deill uprightlie w'the maisteris or awnaris of the warkis that they sail tak vpoun hand, be it in task, meit, & fie, or owlkie wage.*

*Item, that name tak vpoun hand ony wark gritt or small quhilke he is no'abill to performe qualifeitlie vnder the pane of fourtie pundis money or ellis the fourt pairt of the worth and valo'of the said wark, and that by and atto' ane condigne amendis and satisfacioun to be maid to the awnaris of the wark at the sycht and discretioun of the generall Wardene, or in his absence at the sycht of the wardeneis, **dekynis**, and maisteris of the shrefdome quhair the said wark is interprisit and wrocht*

As with most things in early Masonry, it isn't certain that James VI was made a Mason. If he was, then this may be an instance of the entry of a Non-Mason into an Operative Lodge. And it wont have been the first!

[Edward Macbean claims that the initiation of James VI, King of Scotland, is apocryphal, <sup>2</sup> and it must be noted that there is no primary source documentation]

Whether or not James VI was a Mason (I suspect he was) we have here **Deacons** within a Lodge. Operative probably.

In 1424, the Scottish Parliament decided that each Craft should be empowered to choose a 'Dekyn or Maisterman' to 'goven an assay' all work of a particular trade.

The Incorporations in Scotland (similar to the English Trade Guilds) was a means of communicating between each Lodge and the Community.

In 1730 and presumably many years before that date, the officers of the Lodge seem to have been Master [or more accurately the senior Fellow Craft] occupied the East of the Lodge. The Junior and Senior Wardens were situated together in the West at each corner. The senior EnteredPrentice was in the South and the junior EnteredPrentice, armed with TWO drawn swords was at the entrance of the room with the sword in his right hand held point uppermost. His duty to keep out strangers. Other duties were