

# MASONIC MUSINGS

*The Masonic Education Newsletter*

**of Lodge Epicurean No 906 and Lodge Amalthea No 914**

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Welcome to *Issue Twenty-two*, the fourth for 2015. In this edition I look at the origins and use of that most important Masonic document - the *Warrant of the Lodge*. We also consider the question, *Which Temple?* Enjoy!

Fraternal regards,  
Kent Henderson.

## **THE WARRANT or CHARTER OF A LODGE**

The origin and use of Lodge's warrant or charter, involves an interesting study. Among several meanings of the word 'warrant', the *Standard Dictionary* gives the following:

'That which gives authority for some act or course; sanction; authority.' It defines 'charter' as: 'A writing issued by the authorities of an order or society empowering certain persons to establish a branch or chapter.'

The two words are thus interchangeable in meaning. 'Warrant' is more largely used in Great Britain (and thus Australia); 'charter' is more common in America. Both words mean the legalizing and empowering document issued by a Grand Lodge to brethren for the formation of a new lodge. In England (and in Australia) a warrant for a new lodge is issued by the Grand Master, whilst in America is issued by the Grand Lodge.

The first Masonic charter, so far as is known, was that issued by Prince Edwin, with the consent of his father, King Athelstan, at York, in 926 A.D. This charter, told of in numerous copies of various old Masonic Constitutions, or *The Old Charges*, provided fundamental right of Masons to assemble, work, take apprentices, make their own laws, have their own organization. It is, in the thought of many, the fundamental landmark of the Craft.

But to modern Speculative Masons, the charter of a lodge is a document, setting forth the consent of its Grand Master/Grand Lodge that certain brethren become the Master and Wardens of a new lodge, and that the new lodge is of right and of necessity must be, recognized as an equal by all other lodges, with no authority over it and its Master except Masonic law, the Grand Master and the Grand Lodge. The charter of a lodge is so important that, according to common Masonic practice, it must be present in the lodge-room whenever a lodge is open. Proceedings held without the physical presence of the warrant are generally considered null and void.

Warranted lodges began with the first Grand Lodge. Prior to 1717 most lodges were of *time immemorial* classification. Stone masons working on a great cathedral had their organization, meeting in the lodge (building) erected to hold tools and supplies, meeting place for meals, perhaps at times a dormitory. Their common work, common aims and, as the speculative or ethical teachings arose in their assemblages, common ideals, were a sufficient bond. Apprentices were accepted only at intervals; apprentices served seven years before being tested by making each his 'Master's Piece', which, if it was satisfactory, enabled him to become a Fellow of the Craft,

or fully fledged Mason. There was no pressure of applicants from without, no great desire on the part of non-Masons to become stone masons, except as some boy (or his parents for him), wanted to become an apprentice. Hence a charter for a lodge was unnecessary. As the Craft gradually changed from operative to speculative, Masons still held together by the common bond of their interests and their knowledge of the secrets of the Craft.

But with the formation of a Grand Lodge, a new idea took form. In 1717 a regulation (Number 8 of the original 39) adopted by the new Grand Lodge, read: 'No set or number of brethren shall withdraw or separate themselves from the lodge in which they were made brethren or were afterwards admitted members, unless the lodge becomes too numerous; nor even then, without a dispensation from the Grand Master or his deputy. And when they are thus separated, they must either immediately join themselves to such other lodges as they shall like best, with the unanimous consent of that other lodge to which they go (as above regulated) or else they must obtain the Grand Master's warrant to join in forming a new lodge.'

'If any set or number of Masons shall take upon themselves to form a lodge without the Grand Master's warrant, the regular lodges are not to countenance them, nor own them as fair brethren and duly formed, nor approve of their acts and deeds; but must treat them as rebels, until they humble themselves, as the Grand Master shall in his prudence direct, and until he approves of them by his warrant, which must be signified to the other lodges, as the custom is when a new lodge is to be registered in the list of lodges.'

The use of the word 'regular', above, is not in the sense in which it is now usually understood. To us today 'regular' and 'irregular' are opposites. To the Masons of 1717 a lodge was 'regular' when it had a

warrant, that is, had come under the Grand Lodge. Many 'time immemorial' lodges did not immediately ask for, or receive, a charter; this did not make them 'irregular' *per se*, but only non-regular. There are further etymological differences between our use of words, and their meanings as understood by our brethren of 1717. A Mason today knows that the word charter, or warrant, means the document given by Grand Lodge, creating his own lodge and in its possession.

Our early brethren at first understood no more by the word 'warrant' than we understand by the word 'permission'; the written document was not at first held necessary. The Grand Master, his Deputy, or some brother empowered by the Grand Master, gave permission to certain brethren to form a new lodge. When the Grand Master gave this authority to another, that authority was contained in a paper termed a deputation. But a deputation is not a warrant or a charter—it is merely the authority given by the Grand Master to another brother to act for him in 'warranting'—giving permission to certain brethren to be a new lodge.

While modern warrants, as instruments of a Grand Master and/or Grand Lodge, began in 1717, when the first Grand Lodge was formed, long before that warrants or charters were issued by Lodge Kilwinning of Scotland. Just how old 'Mother Kilwinning' is has been often disputed; few will dispute that it is as old as the fifteenth century and may be older. Mother Kilwinning chartered a number of lodges, thus acting as a Grand Lodge before there was a Grand Lodge! The daughters of Mother Kilwinning all took her name as part of theirs and thus there came into being Cannongate Kilwinning, Greenock Kilwinning, Cumberland Kilwinning, and others, some of which are still on the register of the present Grand Lodge of Scotland.

The Grand Lodge of Scotland was organized in 1736. Kilwinning for a time became a

lodge under the Grand Lodge. In 1743 it petitioned Grand Lodge for recognition as the oldest lodge in Scotland. On the ground that because the old documents, minutes, etc. of Lodge Kilwinning were lost, it could not prove its claimed antiquity, the Grand Lodge of Scotland refused to grant the petition. This response being unsatisfactory to it, Mother Kilwinning seceded from the Grand Lodge, and proceeded to charter more lodges, including one in Virginia, USA, and one in Ireland!

However, time heals all breaches. Just as the two rival Grand Lodges in England came together after more than half a century and in the Lodge of Reconciliation in 1813 and became one United Grand Lodge of England, so did Mother Kilwinning at last, in 1807, renounce all right of chartering lodges, returned to the fold of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, and brought her daughter lodges in Scotland with her. As part of the 'settlement', it became Lodge Mother Kilwinning No 0, (pronounced 'nothing'.) at the head the Scottish Roll of Lodges.

Most modern warrants given to a group to form and hold a lodge in a particular locality make the lodge stationary. Such a lodge cannot move to another location without permission of Grand Master or Grand Lodge, a provision necessary to keep records and permit inspection. But there have been travelling warrants, usually issued to military lodges, empowering them to travel from place to place with the military forces to which they are attached. The Grand Lodge of Ireland, in particular, freely issued travelling warrants, and still has two under charter - one meeting in England!

The warrant or charter of a lodge today is its symbol of legitimacy. It is its power to work, to make brethren, to do all that any lodge is empowered to do. It is its attestation that it is duly constituted, dedicated and consecrated, and is one among its sisterhood of lodges,

with rights equal to all other lodges, rights greater than those of no other lodge.

By the granting of a charter a Grand Lodge offers the greatest of evidence of its belief in the trustworthiness and dependability of the brethren named as the principal officers, and the successors they are to install.

While a Grand Master (or Grand Lodge) may suspend or even cancel warrant, forfeiture is very rare. What is not uncommon, it where a lodge may give up its charter voluntarily, returning the instrument which brought it life to the Grand Lodge which gave it, often done when circumstances have so dispersed the brethren that not enough remain to act as a lodge.

The following article, **When Does the Worshipful Master present the Warrant to the Lodge?** comes from a contribution by WBro Iain Taylor PGStdB to the Victorian Lodge of Research's monthly Newsletter (February 2014 edition) - *Thoughts for the Inquiring Freemason*:

According to our Book of Constitutions the Master of the Lodge should (according to Rule 154) produce the warrant at every meeting. This being the case, when should he present it and how?

If you look at our ritual we teach the Entered Apprentice that he was *made a Mason in a Lodge Just, Perfect and Regular* and without the Lodge being in this state there can be no meeting or any person be made a Mason or Raised or Passed.

I suggest that after the Master says "Brethren assist me to open the Lodge" after banging the gavel he says "*Brethren, in accordance with Rule 154 of the Book of Constitutions I produce the Warrant of this Lodge from the United Grand Lodge of Victoria.*"

or

After asking "has every brother signed the appearance book" he bangs the gavel and makes the above statement at this point.

I do not believe it can be said anywhere in the "opening". Where do we find the rules

governing the legality of the Lodge being able to Make, Pass and Raise Masons?

**In the Ceremony of Initiation:**

When an Entered Apprentice has been instructed on the working tools the Master informs him that "... our authority to admit you into Freemasonry is vested in this Warrant or Charter from the United Grand Lodge of Victoria which is open for your inspection on this or any future Lodge Meeting".

**In the First Degree Tracing Board:**

We are informed that "... emblematically depicted by seven stars which have an allusion to as many regular Masons without which number no Lodge is Perfect, neither can any candidate be legally initiated into the order".

**In the Entered Apprentice Questions:**

In the questions prior to his passing one of the questions are "Where were you made a Mason?" His reply "In the body of a Lodge,

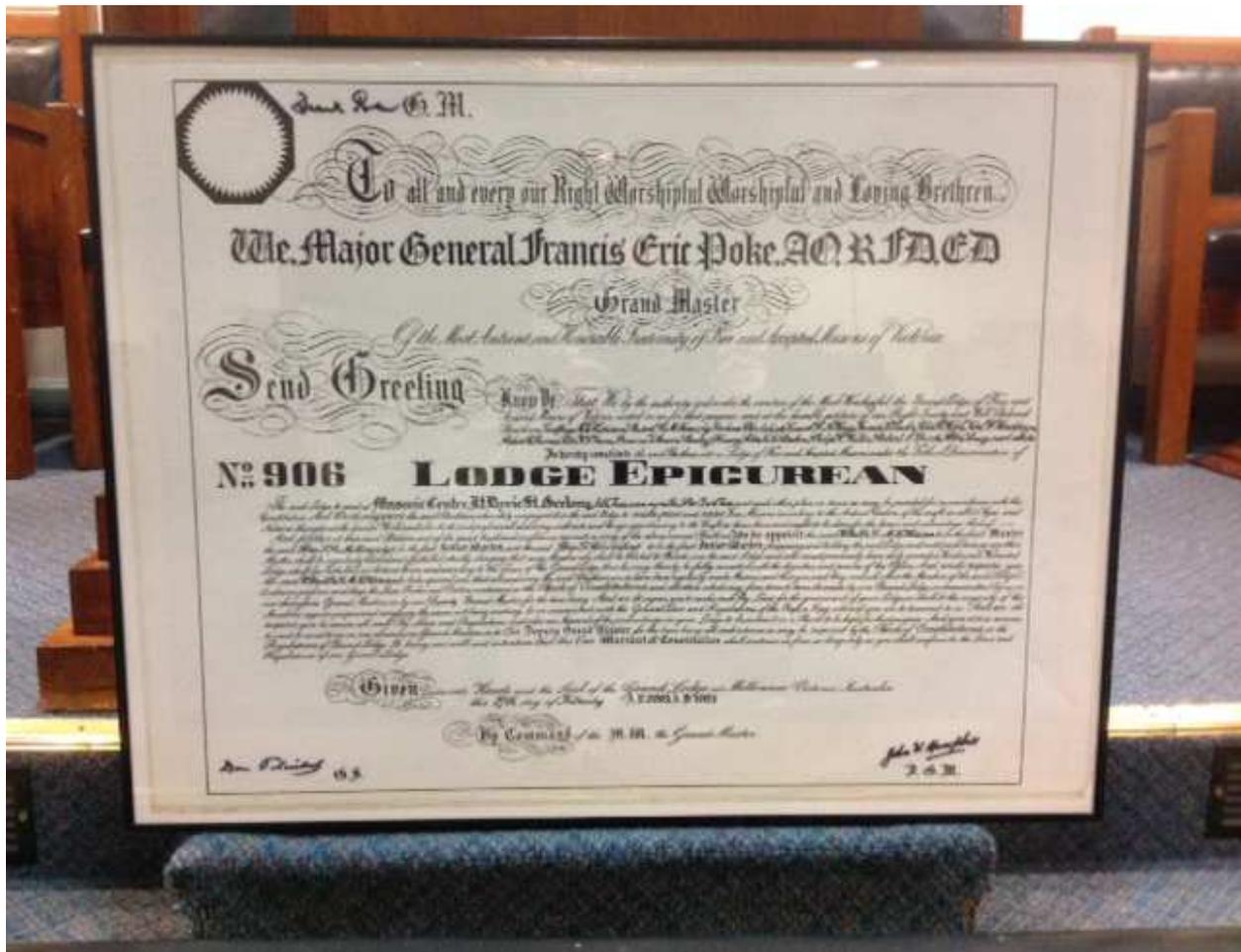
just, perfect and regular". What makes the Lodge Just? The VOSL open with the Square and Compasses on the right hand page (north). What makes it Perfect? Master, Two Wardens, two Fellow Craft and two Entered Apprentices. What makes it Regular? **The Warrant on display.**

**Let us now look at the Book of Constitutions of UGLV:**

Rule: 154. A Lodge's warrant shall be entrusted to the care of each successive Master, who will be responsible for its safekeeping and **its production at each Lodge meeting.**

Rule 155: A Lodge cannot meet unless its original Warrant or a Warrant of Conformation is physically present.

Rule 161: Should the number of registered members in a Lodge fall below seven, those members shall no longer have the ability to meet as a Lodge and shall return the Lodge warrant to Grand Lodge for cancellation.



*The Warrant of Lodge Epicurean No 906*

*The following brief article is by RWBro Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple AO RFD, Past Deputy Grand Master, United Grand Lodge of New South Wales & the Australian Capital Territory.*

## **Which Temple?**

For the builders of the medieval period, the Jerusalem Temple, as the first great edifice built to the glory of God, was an inspiration as they worked on the great cathedrals. We take it for granted that the Temple they were thinking of was the First Temple, the sanctuary which King David had hoped to build but his son Solomon erected in his stead. But Solomon's was not the only Temple in Jerusalem. The Royal Arch celebrates the Second Temple erected in 516 BCE by Zerubbabel – a more modest structure than its predecessor, even though the prophet Haggai had enthused that “the glory of the latter house will be greater than the former” (Hag. 2:9).



*Solomon's Temple*

The story of the Temples does not end there. There was a third Temple; the cruel monarch Herod tried to placate the Jews by rebuilding the sanctuary in much more ornate fashion, but to little avail. It did not improve his standing with his subjects, and before long the Romans destroyed it in the year 70 CE. Yet it must have been an impressive edifice. According to rabbinic hyperbole, “Whoever did not see Herod's building never saw a beautiful building in his life” (Bava Batra 4a). In the following century the Roman emperor Hadrian had ideas of creating a pagan temple on the sacred site, which provoked the Jews to revolt. The Jewish leader, Bar Kochba, defiantly struck coins “for the building of the Temple”, but he, his forces and plans were defeated.

As Christianity spread and the Roman Empire became Christianised under Constantine, a further bizarre chapter opened. The emperor Julian – “The Apostate” – was a pagan opponent of Christianity. Believing that his sun-god Phoebus was a universal god and more or less the same as the Jewish Deity, he convinced himself that he could counter the Christian belief in Jesus' prophecy that the site would remain in ruins and that he could gain support from the Jews if he built a Temple in Jerusalem. The project, spearheaded in 363 CE by one Alypius of Antioch, began but was never completed.

Gibbon's “Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire” says that the Jews gave money and many came to Jerusalem to show their support, but it is more likely that the Jewish Diaspora showed more suspicion than interest.

The building works were abandoned, probably because of bursting balls of fire. Julian was wounded in a campaign in Mesopotamia and may have been assassinated by one of his own officers.

By the Middle Ages, the Temple was merely a memory. Christian masons believed that the lack of a physical Temple was compensated on a spiritual level. Still, it gave them enhanced pride in their own craftsmanship to hope that their work would be worthy of the Temple. Temple symbolism carried over into speculative Freemasonry; one outcome was the practice of calling Masonic meeting-places Temples, though this gave the impression that the craft was a rival religion with its own houses of worship. To allay criticisms, Masons today prefer to call their meeting places Masonic centres.

Christians continue to attach little significance to building a Temple in the earthly Jerusalem. Jews, on the other hand, continue to believe that in the days of the Messiah, a new Temple will arise.