

# The Moderns and the Antients revisited<sup>1</sup>

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**I**T IS NOW GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT THERE WERE A NUMBER OF FREEMASONS' lodges in existence before four of them in London came together to form a Grand Lodge in 1717, and that the appearance of this Grand Lodge of London and Westminster was followed by a considerable and growing public interest in Freemasonry. This was partly demonstrated through an increase in the number of lodges declaring their allegiance to this new Grand Lodge; by 1725 the list of lodges includes lodges outside London and it was not long before there were also lodges outside England. But a further consequence of this interest was the publication of a number of so-called 'Exposures' giving details of the rituals and the 'secrets' of Freemasonry. The most prominent of these was Samuel Prichard's *Masonry Dissected* which appeared in 1730 and proved so popular that three reprints appeared during the next eleven days. While some of the market for these exposures was derived from a general curiosity about the nature of Freemasonry itself, some of it seems to have come from a desire to secure access to the secrets

<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally prepared for a general audience and broadcast on the internet in 2011 as a contribution to *World Exemplification of Freemasonry* as 'Why Antients and Moderns?' See: <http://www.matsol.info/index.php/videos/video/http-b-vimeocdn-com-ts-166-178-166178785-100-jpg>

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and charities of Freemasonry without actually becoming a Freemason. There are also references to the irregular or illegal ‘making’ of Freemasons by persons who had no right to do so, and there would seem to have been a number of imposters or irregular Freemasons securing entrance to lodge meetings through knowledge gained from such publications. Grand Lodge attempted to lay down a rule ‘that no person whatsoever should be admitted into Lodges unless some member of the lodge then present would vouch for such visiting brothers being a regular Mason’<sup>2</sup> but this clearly did not work, and Grand Lodge, sometime in 1739, decided to deal with these imposters and deny them admission by varying the recognition words connected with the first and second degree rituals. Since the imposters would not be aware of these changes, these irregular Masons would thus be excluded. What is not clear is whether all lodges and all regular Masons were actually informed of these changes, but their introduction was certainly one of the causes of what became a great schism.

To revert for a moment; the Grand Lodge in London set up in 1717 had not been the only Grand Lodge in existence in England. A number of other Grand Lodges emerged during the first half of the eighteenth century. In a way the existence of some of these various Grand Lodges resulted from the very success of the original group of four lodges. One of them was ‘The Grand Lodge of ALL England held at York’ which formed itself in 1725 from a ‘Time Immemorial Lodge’.<sup>3</sup> As such it had a somewhat shadowy existence as a grand lodge; it revived to a fresh if feeble existence in 1761 and between 1762 and 1790 warranted eleven lodges. It ceased operating about 1792. It also, in 1779, took advantage of a controversy in London to charter ‘The Grand Lodge of England South of the River Trent’ which in its turn constituted three daughter lodges, but this group seems to have collapsed in 1789. None of these however seem to have been in serious rivalry with the Grand Lodge formed in London.

There was however an additional Grand Lodge which was in direct rivalry with the Premier Grand Lodge founded in 1717 (later to be termed the ‘Moderns’), a Grand Lodge which from its beginning bore the title of the ‘Antients’. It was on 17 July 1751 that six lodges in London came together to form ‘The Most Ancient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons’. Some historians used to argue that these lodges were made up of seceders and schismatics from the earlier Grand Lodge, but further investigation has shown that none of their founding members had belonged to any lodge owing allegiance to this earlier Grand Lodge.<sup>4</sup> They seem to have been mostly Irish brethren resident in London. It would seem that there was a group of members of

<sup>2</sup> *Grand Lodge Minutes*, 15 December 1730.

<sup>3</sup> The term ‘Time Immemorial Lodge’ was used to refer to a lodge which had existed for a considerable time but for which there was no record of foundation.

<sup>4</sup> H Sadler, *Masonic Facts and Fictions*, 128.

the Grand Lodge of Ireland resident in London who found themselves unwelcome in English lodges, perhaps because of their lowly social status, perhaps because they could not afford the financial obligations, who decided to form their own lodge. They did not work on the English pattern nor did they work English rituals. Certainly some of these Antient Masons were immigrants who had brought their Masonry with them from Ireland, for one of the most prominent amongst them, Laurence Dermott, had previously served as Master of Lodge Number 26 in Dublin. It would seem also that there had been already in England before this date a number of lodges of Freemasons owing allegiance to the Grand Lodge of Ireland. The presence of a significant number of Irishmen in London was a consequence of social and economic differences between England and Ireland at this time, with many Irishmen coming to London to better themselves economically. Not all had succeeded, because the first *Book of Constitutions* issued by this new body described the founders as ‘Men of some Education and an Honest Character but in low Circumstances.’<sup>5</sup> This new group was initially presided over by the Masters of affiliated lodges until 1756, when their first titled Grand Master, Lord Blessington, was induced to accept the honour—their warrants having been left blank betimes, awaiting the coming of a nobleman to that office.

The original or ‘Premier’ Grand Lodge did not welcome the appearance of this new group, and the new group in turn denounced the original Grand Lodge. The new group averred that the others had adopted ‘new plans’ and had departed from the old landmarks. Apart from the discontent of the Irish, the causes of the break were rooted partly in a slackness and weak administration of the Premier Grand Lodge at the time. There had been in the 1740s a degree of malaise felt among some of the London lodges and at least one of the Grand Masters had seriously neglected his duties. There seems also to have been some discontent over a number of changes in custom and ritual which had been made in part for the purpose of excluding imposters and in part under the influence of Desaguliers, who had played a leading part in the development of Grand Lodge. Recent research on him and his associates indicates that they had been responsible for a change in ritual based upon Noah to one based upon a Hiram legend.<sup>6</sup> There was also an element of a dechristianization of Freemasonry, which seems to have started as early as 1723, and a neglect of the days of the St Johns (the Baptist and the Evangelist) as special Masonic festivals, and this was added to the already-mentioned transposition of the modes of recognition in the Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft degrees. This apparently was made the principal cause of offence. Further complaints came to include an abandonment of the esoteric part in the Installation of Masters and a neglect of the

<sup>5</sup> *Abiman Rezon*, 1756

<sup>6</sup> Information from the late Bro. C. J. Mandelberg.

catechisms attached to each degree. This new Grand Lodge claimed therefore to have reverted to the old forms; they set themselves up as *Antient* Masons and bestowed upon their rivals the odious name of *Moderns*. Later the two were to be further distinguished from each other by the names of their then respective Grand Masters, one being called the Prince of Wales' Masons while the others were termed the Atholl Masons. Successive Dukes of Atholl were to be Grand Masters of the Antients from 1771 to 1781 and from 1791 to 1813. The third Duke of Atholl became Grand Master in 1771 and after his death in 1774 his nephew John Murray succeeded both in temporal title and Masonic rank. The fourth Duke created something of a record in Masonic advancement in 1775, when he was initiated, passed and raised, installed Master of the Grand Master's Lodge (No. 1 today), and elected Grand Master – all in four days. He was Grand Master at the one time of Scotland and of the Atholl Grand Lodge, the Grand Lodges of Scotland and Ireland being represented at his installation in London. In 1791 he was re-elected and thereafter lodges under the Antients constitution became known as Atholl lodges. However, the great figure amongst these Antients was less their Grand Master than Laurence Dermott, to whose keen pen and indefatigable industry as its secretary for more than thirty years was due, in large measure, their success. In 1756 he published its first book of laws, entitled *Ahiman Rezon, Or Help to a Brother*, much of which was taken from the *Irish Constitutions* of 1751 by Pratt and the rest from the *Book of Constitutions* by Anderson, whom he did not fail to criticize with stinging satire, of which he was a master.

From almost the very beginning both of these Grand Lodges expanded in terms of new lodges owing allegiance to one or the other. In some cases this expansion was clearly the result of existing lodges establishing links with the larger body. But in many other cases it was a result of individuals petitioning Grand Lodge to allow the establishment – the warranting – of new lodges either in London or in the Provinces. By 1725 the list of lodges associated with the Premier Grand Lodge includes a number of lodges outside London and indeed several outside England, and, while these lodges did not always survive, by 1813 there were 359 Antient lodges as against 636 owing allegiance to the Moderns<sup>7</sup>. The Antients were particularly active in creating lodges outside London and seemed to have attracted support from the newly emerging centres of population in the North of England. Interestingly enough, one of the differences between the two Grand Lodges was in their attitude to provincial organisation. The Moderns had a large number of Provincial Grand Masters, many of whom had no lodges within the province nominally under their direction, and clearly used that title to give individuals a higher status within Grand Lodge itself. Although the Antients created many lodges in provinces they were never really organised in England on a provincial basis in that

<sup>7</sup> See W J Hughan, *Memorials of the Masonic Union*, 100–119.

they seem to have created only one English Provincial Grand Lodge and they had no Provincial Grand Masters. They did however create eleven Provincial Grand Lodges in the colonies.

Clearly rivalry and competition developed between the two Grand Lodges. While that rivalry was not necessarily healthy for the Craft the Antients Grand Lodge added much vitality to Freemasonry. One of the important differences between the Grand Lodges was the ritual. The Antients for example developed a formal ceremony for the installation of a Master of the lodge, while the Moderns merely placed him in the chair. The Antients had the office of deacon which the Moderns did not. But even more significant than such differences was the way in which many of the Antient lodges worked degrees and rituals which would now be regarded as being 'beyond the Craft'. They might have declared themselves as the true guardians of Masonic tradition, yet they introduced more innovations than the Moderns, especially Royal Arch Masonry. Indeed, the Antients held out for the right to award degrees all the way through from the three Craft degrees up to that of Knight Templar. The records of many Antient lodges show them to have been very active in conferring these degrees. The Moderns did not accept them as being part of the Craft regime. While, for example, the Antients insisted that the Holy Royal Arch was an essential part of Masonry, the Moderns for long held out against it. Although there are scattered references to an early version of this degree and to it being worked in some Craft lodges before 1750, the Moderns did not look kindly upon it; one Grand Secretary of the Moderns declared that 'The Holy Royal Arch is a society we do not acknowledge and which we hold to be an invention to introduce innovation and to seduce the brethren.'<sup>8</sup> When eventually the Moderns did come to accept the Holy Royal Arch they did not recognise it as part of the Craft regime, and the story of how they eventually produced a compact leading to the emergence of a Holy Royal Arch Chapter (including the falsification of the date on which it was signed) indicates the reluctance to accept even that measure. The Antients on the other hand had considered it to be an essential part of Freemasonry as the fourth degree, 'a degree certainly more august, sublime, and important than those which precede it and as the summit and perfection of Antient Freemasonry.'

All these differences meant that persons wishing to transfer their allegiance between Grand Lodges had to be remade in all three degrees. As a broad generalisation it might be said that in England at any rate the Moderns brought together mostly prominent men in a society proclaiming gentility, cultivating high social standing, while the Antients – lacking in political power and social distinction – were more popular and adaptable. Other differences between the two forms of Masonry covered a great deal of ground

<sup>8</sup> Samuel Spencer, 1767.

in addition to those already indicated. There is however little evidence of the details of ritual in the two grand lodges and all that can be done is to list the charges made by the Antients against the Moderns. It must be emphasised that, given the obvious problems of physical communication over the country and the lack of any real check upon what was actually done in each lodge, there must have been in practice a considerable degree of variation between lodges; almost certainly some practices of the Antients came to be used in the Moderns lodges and vice versa. Outside London the differences were not always clear. Evidence in some localities indicates a considerable movement of individuals between the two allegiances; personal differences within a lodge could (and did) lead to a transfer of loyalties.<sup>9</sup> Officers would move en bloc to the other Grand Lodge, sometimes taking their warrant with them. Some lodges indeed held two warrants, owing allegiance to both at the same time. Lodges under one Grand Lodge not infrequently received visits from lodges under the other. At times the Antients tried to warn those lodges suspected of holding such dual warrants that unless they surrendered their Moderns' warrants their Antient warrants would be cancelled. They also tried to induce Moderns lodges to transfer their allegiances by offering them new warrants at a reduced fee. The career of Thomas Dunkerley, and his position of being in effect a superintendent of Masonry in a number of provinces at the same time, suggests at the very least a realization by the Moderns of the need to introduce some regularity outside London.

The Antients were particularly anxious to maintain their links and position in relation to the Grand Lodges of Scotland and Ireland, ensuring that there was a full communication with each of them. At one stage the Grand Master of the Antients wrote to his Grand Secretary: 'It gives me pleasure to find that in all parts of the world the Ancient Craft is regaining its ground over the Moderns.'<sup>10</sup>

There were considerable surface elements of animosity, each Grand Lodge refusing to acknowledge the other. In 1755, soon after the formation of the Antients Grand Lodge the Moderns received 'A complaint against certain Brethren for Forming and Assembling under the denomination of a Lodge of Ancient Masons who as such considered themselves as independent of this Society . . . they likewise tended to introduce into the Craft the Novelties and Conceits of Opinionative Persons and to create a belief that there have been other Societies of Masons more ancient than that of this ancient and honourable Society.'<sup>11</sup> In 1759 one Irish Mason in London petitioned the Moderns for charity only to be told by the Grand Secretary of that body: 'Your being an Antient Mason, you are not entitled to any of our Charity. The Antient Masons have a Lodge at

<sup>9</sup> In Leicester, for example, the early history of St John's Lodge (founded in 1790) illustrates all of these features.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted, C N Batham, *The Grand Lodge of England According to the Old Institutions* (The Prestonian Lecture for 1981), 43.

<sup>11</sup> Minutes of Grand Lodge (Moderns), March 1755.

the Five Bells in the Strand etc. Our Society is neither Arch, Royal Arch or Antient so that you have no right to partake of our Charity.’<sup>12</sup> In 1777 the Moderns Grand Lodge made it clear that ‘the persons calling themselves Antient Masons . . . are not to be countenanced or acknowledged as Masons by any regular Lodge or Mason under the Constitution of England; nor shall any regular Mason be present at any of their Conventions . . . neither shall any Person initiated at these irregular Meetings be admitted into any Lodge without being re-made and paying the usual Making Fees.’<sup>13</sup>

In the 1760s the Moderns made an attempt to establish a supremacy over the Antients by securing a charter of incorporation for Freemasons under their Grand Lodge; it was avowedly ‘*in order to annihilate the Society who styled themselves Antient Free Masons.*’<sup>14</sup> The attempt failed, but one consequence was a decision by the Moderns to build a hall in London for the use by Freemasons as a headquarters. Inevitably this resulted in a need to raise a lot of money and to a series of grievances in the provinces.

Another of the issues in this period relates to Military lodges. Details are not clear, if only because of the large number of warrants issued by the Scottish and Irish Grand Lodges. There were some 500 military warrants issued in all, but it would seem that between the Antients and the Moderns there were some 116 military warrants issued, and that the Antients warranted over 90 of them.<sup>15</sup> One of their features was that they were particularly attractive to the lower ranks.

So far the account of these Grand Lodges and their differences has dealt with affairs in England, and certainly there was no parallel in either Scotland or Ireland to these sets of divisions. Each of them had a single Grand Lodge, and although on occasions internal dissensions did emerge, even to the extent of individual lodges declaring their independence of the national Grand Lodge, in none of them did rival Grand Lodges appear. But elsewhere the differences between Moderns and Antients could show themselves as most ferocious. This was particularly true of the American colonies. Freemasonry had spread rapidly there and the original London Grand Lodge had recognised a number of Provincial Grand Masters in North America, as elsewhere. But the news of the split did not take long to reach America: within six years of the creation of the Antients Grand Lodge there were already Antient lodges in the colonies, and in 1759 the Antients had established a Provincial Grand Lodge in Philadelphia. Some colonies had received warrants from one Grand Lodge while other lodges in the same colony received warrants from the other Grand Lodge. Rivalry developed between the vari-

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in the Minutes of the Grand Lodge of the Antients, 5 December 1759.

<sup>13</sup> Minutes of Grand Lodge (Moderns), quoted Batham, *Op. Cit.*

<sup>14</sup> Reported in the *Newcastle Journal*, November 1768.

<sup>15</sup> See F Smyth, *The Master-Mason-At Arms* (Prestonian Lecture for 1990) and R F Gould, *Military Lodges 1732-1899*.



ous lodges, and such rivalry was not healthy for the Craft. An illustration of how deep the division was between the two factions can be seen from the Masonic career of Benjamin Franklin who was a member of what had been a Moderns' lodge in Philadelphia. During the Revolution he went to France upon an official mission, but on his return it transpired that his lodge had changed to (and had received a new warrant from) the Antients Grand Lodge; apparently it now no longer recognized him and even declined to give him 'Masonic Honours' at his funeral. Another illustration of this bitterness comes from the history of the various lodges and Grand Lodges in South Carolina; one Modern lodge writes: 'We have been informed that they have gone so far on the admission of a person into their Lodges, As to tender an Oath to promise & declare that he will never visit a *Modern Lodge* or suffer a *Modern* to visit their Lodge.'<sup>16</sup> These splits in American Freemasonry were accentuated by political and social divisions too. In many cases those lodges which were linked to the Moderns Grand Lodge adhered to the loyalist (i.e. British) cause, and were also tarred with the 'Tory' label, while most of the Antients seemed to have been revolutionary in their politics.

Although by the end of the eighteenth century there remained differences between the two Grand Lodges in England – in many cases a result of clash of personalities more than anything else – they could be brought together by real threats to their existence. One of these resulted from the French Revolution, reactions to which in England and Ireland included a widespread fear of a number of alleged underground revolutionary movements. Organizations which might have originated as harmless groups often became transformed into movements threatening to overthrow established society. One of the most important of such movements which certainly emerged in Britain during these years was that of the United Irishmen, a 'United Society of the Irish nation; to make all Irishmen citizens – all citizens Irishmen', which was established in 1791. Its initial aims had been catholic emancipation and radical parliamentary reform, but by 1796 it had become an avowedly republican movement. There was a fear that a parallel society of United Englishmen might be established, and following a debate in the House of Commons a number of parliamentary committees were appointed to examine secret evidence held by the government and to report back on the nature of such a threat. The House of Commons secret committee reported on 15 March 1799. It declared that, from the documents shown to it by the government, it had found the

clearest proofs of a systematic design, long since adopted and acted upon by France, in conjunction with domestic traitors . . . to overturn the laws, constitution and government, and every existing establishment, civil or ecclesiastical, both in Great Britain and Ireland, as well as to dissolve the connection between the two kingdoms . . .

<sup>16</sup> Cited by A. Bernheim, 'Lodges and Grand Lodges in South Carolina, 1788 – 1824', *AQC* 125 (2012), 133.



The secret committee went on to state that 'The most effectual engine employed for this purpose has been the institution of political societies, of a nature and description before unknown in any country, and inconsistent with public tranquillity and with the existence of public government.'<sup>17</sup>

The Prime Minister, Pitt, announced that the Government intended to introduce legislation to deal not only with the specific societies mentioned in that report but with all other secret societies. He denounced their characteristic forms:

These marks are, wicked and illegal engagements of mutual fidelity and secrecy by which the members are bound; the secrecy of electing the members; the secret government and conduct of the affairs of the society; secret appointments unknown to the bulk of the members; presidents and committees, which, veiling themselves from the general mass and knowledge of the members, plot and conduct the treason – I propose that all societies which administer such oaths shall be declared unlawful.

The Government proceeded to introduce an *Unlawful Societies Act*.

One major difficulty which then emerged was the position of Freemasons. The provisions of the bill against the use of secret oaths in societies potentially placed Freemasons in a difficult position, although arguably these oaths were outside the scope of the bill since they were not seditious. More problematic was the requirement that initiations should take place in a public meeting. The Grand Lodges were also uneasily aware that they did not have a comprehensive register of members of the sort required by the bill, and that the compilation and distribution of such a register would have been an enormous undertaking. The two English Grand Lodges and the Scottish Grand Lodge had quickly to take action to try and deal with these problems before the bill got to committee. The Irish Grand Lodge was not affected by projected British legislation since Ireland had its own parliament and its own legal machinery. On 30 April, the day on which the bill received its second reading, Pitt received a request for a meeting with Masonic representatives, and a delegation went to Downing Street on 2 May. The Masonic representatives included Lord Moira, Acting Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, the Duke of Atholl, Grand Master of the Antients' Grand Lodge and Past Grand Master Mason of Scotland, as well as other Grand Officers.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> For fuller details of the *Unlawful Societies Act* of 1799 and the debates leading to its passing through the Houses of Parliament see Andrew Prescott, 'The Unlawful Societies Act of 1799' in M. D. J. Scanlon (ed), *The Social Impact of Freemasonry on the Modern Western World*, The Canonbury Papers I (London: Canonbury Masonic Research Centre, 2002), 116–134.

<sup>18</sup> Moira as the Acting Grand Master was the equivalent of the Pro Grand Master in today's terms - while the Grand Master was the Prince of Wales.

The most important official record of this meeting is a note in the Minute Book of the Hall Committee of the Moderns Grand Lodge, reporting that the Prime Minister had ‘expressed his good opinion of the Society and said he was willing to recommend any clause to prevent the new act from affecting the Society, provided that the name of the society could be prevented from being made use of as a cover by evilly disposed persons for seditious purposes’. William White, Grand Secretary of the Moderns, afterwards recalled the meeting in similar terms, saying that Pitt ‘paid many compliments to the Society and said there was no imputation against its conduct, and that it was only wished to adopt some regulations to prevent the name of our Society from being perverted by bad people to a cover for their machinations against the government’. Lord Moira also subsequently recalled how ‘I have pledged myself to His Majesty’s ministers that should any set of men attempt to meet as a lodge without sanction, the Grand Master, or Acting Grand Master (whomsoever he might be), would apprise parliament.’<sup>19</sup> Pitt himself reported to the House of Commons that the Freemasons ‘were very ready to acquiesce in any security the legislature would require from them for the tranquillity of the state’

It was the Grand Lodge of the Antients who took these concerns most seriously, perhaps because of their greater strength in the north-western industrial towns, where the various ‘United’ groups were strongest, and because of their close connections with Irish Masonry. Immediately after the meeting with Pitt, the Grand Officers of the Antients met at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand. They agreed to recommend two emergency measures. The first was:

to inhibit and totally prevent all public masonic processions, and all private meetings of masons, or lodges of emergency, upon any pretence whatever, and to suppress and suspend all masonic meetings, except upon the regular stated lodge meetings and Royal Arch chapters, which shall be held open to all masons to visit, duly qualified as such.<sup>20</sup>

It was also agreed that ‘when the usual masonic business is ended, the lodge shall then disperse, the Tyler withdraw from the door, and formality and restraint of admittance shall cease’. These two measures were formally approved on 6 May at a Grand Lodge of Emergency, with the Duke of Atholl himself in the chair.

The actions of the Antients and the assurances given to Pitt convinced him that the Grand Lodges were determined to ensure that Freemasonry could not be used as a front for radical activity, and at the committee stage of the bill Pitt himself accordingly intro-

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Prescott, ‘The Unlawful Societies Act of 1799’, 122–3.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

duced amendments to exempt them from the Act. He proposed what was essentially a system of self-regulation operated by the Grand Lodges. The relevant clause read as follows:

... nothing in this act contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to prevent the meetings of the Lodge or society of persons which is now held at Free Masons Hall in Great Queen Street in the County of Middlesex, and usually denominated The Grand Lodge of Freemasons of England, or of the Lodge or society of persons usually denominated The Grand Lodge of Masons of England, according to the Old Institution, or of the Lodge or society of persons which is now held at Edinburgh, and usually denominated The Grand Lodge of Free Masons of Scotland, or the meetings of any subordinate lodge or society of persons usually calling themselves Free Masons, the holding whereof shall be sanctioned or approved by any one of the above mentioned lodges or societies...<sup>21</sup>

The amendment envisaged a system whereby the Grand Secretaries would each year deposit with the clerks of the peace a certificate containing details of the time and place of meeting of all approved lodges in the county, together with a declaration that the lodges were approved by the Grand Master. All lodges were to keep a book in which each member was to declare, on joining, 'that he is well affected to the constitution and government of this realm, by King, Lords, and Commons, as by law established'. This book was to be kept open for inspection by local magistrates. The Grand Lodges were thus to be made responsible for policing Freemasonry; lodges whose names did not appear on the return made by the Grand Secretaries would be criminal conspiracies.

One odd side-effect of the hasty way in which the amendments had been passed was that only lodges which existed before 12 July 1799 were protected by the legislation. This meant that the Grand Lodges could not authorise new lodges, and had to resort to the expedient of giving lodges the warrant and number of extinct lodges. The measures of the 1799 act were extended and refined by further legislation against subversive clubs in 1817, and it was assumed that this resolved the problem about new lodges, but many years later this was found not to be the case.

These external pressures upon Freemasonry were now however combined with a number of internal pressures to lead to the beginnings of moves to bring the two Grand Lodges closer together. Even at what might have appeared a time of greatest animosity there had been some contrary indications. When he published *Abiman Rezon* Dermott had expressed a hope that he might see a general conformity and universal unity between the worthy Masons of all denominations. There had been a hint at a possible

<sup>21</sup> Ironically, recent research by Dr John Wade suggests that the threat by Radicals and Revolutionaries in Edinburgh Lodges was greater than Atholl might have imagined. See *AQC* 127 (2014), x-y.

reconciliation as early as 1790.<sup>22</sup> In 1794 the local Canadian Deputy Grand Master of the Antients and the Deputy Grand Master of the Moderns had written to the Duke of Kent who was Provincial Grand Master of Canada inviting him to forward a reconciliation between the two Grand Lodges. His reply showed his sympathy for the move. An initial approach not merely faltered but resulted in the expulsion of Thomas Harper who had been expelled from the Premier Grand Lodge in 1803 because he was a senior member of the Antients Grand Lodge. The comment must be made that it had taken the Moderns more than a decade to recognise this, despite the fact that in 1796 Harper had been a Grand Steward (as a member of Globe Lodge) in the Moderns when he was Deputy Grand Secretary of the Antients. In 1801 he became the Deputy Grand Master of the Antients, but a blind eye had been then taken. In 1806 however two Antient lodges wrote again to the Duke of Kent along the same lines as the previous move, although they were reprimanded for doing so.

The first step towards negotiating an equable union with the Antients was the decision by the Premier Grand Lodge to reverse the 1730s changes. Prominent Masons were desirous of promoting a Union. In 1809 it was resolved:

That this Grand Lodge do agree in opinion with the Committee of Charity that it is not necessary any longer to continue in force those Measures which were resorted to in or about the year 1739 respecting Irregular Masons and do therefore enjoin the several Lodges to revert to the Ancient Landmarks of the Society.<sup>23</sup>

In October 1809 they set up a special Lodge of Promulgation whose brief was to ascertain that their ceremonies were in accord with those practised in Ireland, Scotland, and lodges over the seas and to establish the landmarks of the order. That was the public reason; the reality was that they wished to bring themselves more into line with the practices of the Antients lodges to ease the road to union. It was now resolved that the resolution of the Grand Lodge of 9 February 1803 for the expulsion of Brother Thomas Harper be rescinded. Harper's re-admission to the Premier Grand Lodge made the revival of the idea of union possible.<sup>24</sup>

At the communication of the Premier Grand Lodge in April 1809 the Minutes record that the Earl of Moira was pleased to inform the Grand Lodge that in a conference which he had had with His Grace the Duke of Atholl they were both fully of opinion that it would be an event truly desirable and highly creditable to the name of

<sup>22</sup> Most of the material relating to the negotiations for the Union and its implementation are now readily available in J. Belton, *The English Masonic Union of 1813* (Bury St Edmunds: Arima Publishing, 2012).

<sup>23</sup> Quoted by J. R. Clarke in *Grand Lodge 1717–1967* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 125.

<sup>24</sup> For a full account of the negotiation see J. M. Hamill and G. Redman, 'Even More of our Yesterdays', *Proceedings of Grand Lodge, Quarterly Communication*, December 2010

Masons to consolidate under one head the two Societies of Masons that existed in this country. In consequence of the points then discussed and reciprocally admitted the matter came under deliberation in the Antients Grand Lodge under his Grace the Duke of Atholl and the result was a resolution which the Earl of Moira laid before the Moderns Grand Lodge. It was as follows:

That a Masonic Union of the Grand Lodges under the present Grand Masters H.R.H. the Prince of Wales and his Grace the Duke of Atholl on principles equal and honourable to both Grand Lodges and preserving inviolate the Land marks of the Ancient Craft would in the opinion of this Grand Lodge be expedient and advantageous to both.<sup>25</sup>

Needless to say the resolution was passed unanimously and a committee appointed 'for negotiating this most desirable arrangement.'

That resolution having been passed, the union ceased to trouble the Moderns. They were quite happy for their negotiators to have full powers to discuss and move forward, without their having to come back to the Grand Lodge on every point. Over the next two years the Antients were not so trusting of their negotiators who had to listen and discuss but had no powers of decision. They had to report back every point for discussion in and agreement by a quarterly meeting of their Grand Lodge. It is not surprising that the negotiations dragged on for three years! On the other hand it must be admitted that without such suspicion there would have been little information about the progress of the negotiations. At the Antients Grand Lodge meeting in March 1810, when it came to the reading of the Minutes of the Grand Lodge Committee, to which it had been delegated 'To consider of the propriety and practicability of accomplishing a Masonic Union with the Society of Masons under His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and to report thereon to the Grand Lodge' there was an objection that the proceedings should not be received, being 'informal and premature'. The objection was defeated on a vote and the Minutes continue:

The proceedings of the Committee were then read and thereupon the Grand Secretary recommended to the Grand Lodge to pause and consider well before they proceeded any further upon a matter of so great a magnitude; previous to any answer being received from the Most Noble R.W. Grand Master to whom the resolution of the Committee has been transmitted and before any communication had been made thereon to any of the Country, Military or Foreign Lodges immediately under or in correspondence with this R.W. Grand Lodge, the best interests and immunities

<sup>25</sup> Hamill & Redman, *op. cit.*

of this Grand Lodge ought not to pass nor be tendered or offered in barter without information to and consent of all parties interested first had and obtained.<sup>26</sup>

There were powerful forces within the Antients Grand Lodge who did not wish to see a union. Not least amongst them was their Grand Secretary, Robert Leslie, who delayed everything he possibly could. Even when the game was up and the union achieved he refused to accept it, or hand over the books and papers of the Grand Lodge, until paid off with a pension of £100 a year! At a Grand Lodge of Emergency held on 1 May, there were 'Read the Minutes and proceedings of the Grand Lodge Committee of the 19th April, with the Letter and Communication received from the Earl of Moira with the resolution therein inclosed from the Grand Lodge in Great Queen Street under H.R. Highness the Prince of Wales.' A threefold resolution was then passed:

1st: That as the Grand Lodges of the United Kingdom viz. The Grand Lodge of England under the Most Noble Duke of Atholl the Grand Lodge of Scotland and the Grand Lodge of Ireland are all bound by the same obligations and all work by Uniform Rules it is necessary in the first instance to be informed whether the Grand Lodge under H.R. Highness the Prince of Wales in order to a perfect Union will consent to take the same obligations under which the three Grand Lodges [are bound] and that they will consent to work in the same forms.

2nd: That it is essential to the true preservation of the true and ancient Land Marks that the Grand Lodge shall be a perfect representation of all the Lodges and that to this end it shall be composed of the present and past Grand Officers, Masters and Wardens of each Lodge with the Past Masters of all Lodges. That the Grand Lodge under H.R.H. the Prince of Wales shall agree that upon the Union the Grand Lodge of England in all times to come be composed of the present and past Grand Officers, Masters, Wardens and Past Masters of the regular Lodges under the two Constitutions the Lodges to sit under their respective banners according to Seniority of Number every Brother to speak and vote and that the Grand Lodge shall be convened and held quarterly on a given day in each quarter for communication with the Craft besides the Anniversary Meeting of St John the Evangelist and St John the Baptist.

3rd: That the Masonic benevolence shall be distributed monthly by a Lodge specially constituted and summoned for that purpose consisting as it now is of a deputation from the resident Lodges in and adjacent to London and Westminster.<sup>27</sup>

The Premier Grand Lodge had already gone a fair way to meeting the resolutions put forward by the Antients. Their special Lodge of Promulgation had been set up to bring its ceremonies into line with those of Ireland and Scotland (and thereby the Antients). They had introduced deacons into their lodges and recognised the Antients' custom

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

for the installation of the Master. Indeed they had spent a great deal of time holding special meetings to install those who had been Masters of lodges without receiving the secrets of the chair, including the Duke of Sussex and the Earl of Moira. In 1811 the Acting Grand Master, the Earl of Moira, expressed his intention of being installed previous to the business of the Quarterly Communication. He required the attendance of all the Grand Officers at a meeting of the Lodge of Promulgation which was opened in the first degree. The Earl was introduced to receive the benefit of Installation; all those present who were not been actually installed as Masters were directed to withdraw and Moira was then installed according to Antient Custom, saluted, and the usual procedures were gone through. Moira's installation was to encourage the others, for the Lodge of Promulgation continued to meet over the following months to enable Masters and Past Masters under the Moderns Grand Lodge to receive the benefit of installation.

The problematical point would be the composition of the new United Grand Lodge. The Premier Grand Lodge had reserved its membership to the Grand Officers, Masters of lodges and the Master and others from the Grand Stewards Lodge. The Antients Grand Lodge had been much more democratic and was composed of the Grand Officers, Master and Wardens of lodges and the subscribing Past Masters. This difference was to lead to long, and at times childish, arguments. The Premier Grand Lodge was set against an increase in the membership, arguing at one point that their hall was not large enough to take so many people. Happily the Antients won through.

One of the last steps was the resignation of the Duke of Atholl as Grand Master of the Antients and the appointment of the Duke of Kent as his successor. Similarly the Prince of Wales had earlier relinquished his place as Grand Master of the Moderns to be replaced by the Duke of Sussex. While Atholl and Moira wanted union, the two royal Dukes were in a position to lead their respective Grand Lodges into a union. Kent and Sussex worked it all out. Over a period of four years the Articles of Union had been negotiated and agreed, and a ritual developed reconciling those worked out by the two Grand Lodges.

The Premier Grand Lodge of England and the Antient Grand Lodge of England were amalgamated into the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) and on 27 December 1813 (the feast day of Saint John the Evangelist) the union was formally brought into being by the twenty-one articles of 'The Articles of Union – specifying the agreements made regarding the various points of contention. A special lodge, The Lodge of Promulgation, had been established by the Moderns in 1809 to promulgate the ancient landmarks of the order, as well as instructing and negotiating with the members of the two factions to include the discontinuation of any innovations or changes introduced by the Moderns. The union largely confirmed the Antients' forms and ceremonies, and therefore considerably revised the Moderns' rituals. One of the most important changes was



the reference in Article Two to the Royal Arch Degree as included in the third, the Master Masons' degree – a practice that had always been peculiar to the Antients lodges. Following the union in 1813, a Lodge of Reconciliation (1813–1816) was established to complete the rationalization of the ritual into a form acceptable to both parties forming the newly constituted United Grand Lodge.

Union came at length, in a great Lodge of Reconciliation held in Freemason's Hall, London, on St John's Day, 27 December 1813. It was a memorable and inspiring scene as the two Grand Lodges, so long estranged, filed into the hall – delegates of 641 Modern and 359 Ancient or Atholl Lodges – so mixed as to be indistinguishable the one from the other. Both Grand Masters had seats of honour in the East. The hour was fraternal, each side willing to sacrifice prejudice on behalf of principles held by all in common, and all equally anxious to preserve the ancient landmarks of the Craft.

It was not to be the last word on the relations between the erstwhile Moderns and Antients. There was to be much self-examination and much grieving over the fine print of the Articles of Union. Indeed those articles themselves were to be silently varied over the next few months, and the emergence of The Grand Lodge in Wigan in itself illustrates how deeply many felt over the changes which had to be implemented. The extent to which the union might be seen as having been to the greater advantage of one former grand lodge than the other is a further theme which might well be pursued. An examination of the names of the leading officers of the new United Grand Lodge and of its leading committees in the decade following 1813 is certainly very suggestive, the predominance of former Moderns being most evident. The financial situation of each of the former grand lodges also suggests a strong motive for urgency on one side of the discussions. But that is for the future, and it is surely sufficient here for our acknowledgement of the achievement of our predecessors in securing the emergence of the United Grand Lodge of England.



**Bro. Aubrey Newman**

Brother Aubrey Newman was born in 1927 and educated in London, Glasgow and Oxford obtaining an MA from Glasgow, a BA, MA and DPhil from Oxford. National Service in the RAF Education branch in Germany was followed by marriage in 1954 which produced four children and latterly five grandchildren. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and a Past President of the Jewish Historical Society of England. His working life in academia brought appointments as a Lecturer in History followed by a Readership and a personal chair in History.

Initiated into the John of Gaunt Lodge, No. 523 in 1967 he became its Master in 1981 and now holds the rank of Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies in Grand Lodge. He is active in Mark and Royal Arch. His many years as Secretary of the Leicester Lodge of Research was followed by his Mastership in 1996. In 1998 he was elected Master of Quatuor Coronati Lodge. He was appointed Prestonian Lecturer for 2003 with his paper: 'The Contribution of the Provinces to the development of English Freemasonry'. In company with two other brethren of the Province of Leicestershire and Rutland he has published a history of Craft Masonry and of all the other degrees and orders to be found in that Province.

**BRO. ROBERT L. D. COOPER, WORSHIPFUL MASTER, SAID:** On behalf of the brethren here present I offer a vote of thanks to Bro. Newman for a very informative and well-presented paper on a subject which is both timely and appropriate given that it was delivered in the bicentenary year of the Union of 1813. The significance of this anniversary, within the English Craft at least, seems to have gone largely unremarked. Had the Union not taken place the English Masonic world is likely to have been far different from what it is today. Bro. Newman, and consequently this lodge must surely be congratulated for not allowing this important 200 year landmark to slip by unnoticed.

Although some of what the author has presented this evening has been mentioned elsewhere, Bro. Newman has done a sterling job in bringing numerous threads together

in one paper and has presented them at exactly the right time for inclusion in *AQC*. The irony of having a Scot as Master when this particular subject was presented in the lodge will not have escaped many!

This paper provides a great deal of information but in such a manner that a complicated period of English Masonic history has been rendered clearly. While references have been made to Scotland and Ireland, one must wonder if papers on the activities in those Grand Lodges for the period reviewed in this paper might also be worthwhile?

Having recently read the book *The Foundations of Modern Freemasonry. The Grand Architects: Political Change and the Scientific Enlightenment, 1714-1740*, by Bro. Ric Berman wherein he examines some of the members of what were, or rather later became Antient (or Atholl) Lodges, one cannot help but notice that a substantial number appear to be Scottish or at least of Scottish origin. The prevailing view is that the schism was created by disaffected Irish Freemasons, and although this may be true it cannot be taken for granted until possible Scottish involvement is either proved or disproved. Another piece of research going a-begging!

Bro. Newman makes a most interesting comment that the Antients Grand Lodge was more democratic than that of the Moderns. In addition it is observed that the Moderns gave way on almost every point of contention in order to ensure that the Union did not fail even to the extent of accepting that the Royal Arch ceremony including the Excellent Masters (which was referred to in Bro. Baker's paper 'The Real History of the Ceremony of "Passing the Veils" in Bristol', delivered in the lodge in June 2013) be adopted by the United Grand Lodge. I wonder if Bro. Newman would care to comment as to whether or not he believes that the newly United Grand Lodge also adopted the more democratic methods of the 'Antients'?

**BRO. E. JOHN T. ACASTER, SENIOR WARDEN, SAID:** It is very appropriate that this lodge should have the chance of being reminded about the clash of cultures between the Moderns and the Antients as we approach the 200th anniversary of their Union in December 1813. We are fortunate in having Bro. Professor Newman to provide us with such a rich and accessibly-written summary, and I hope that many brethren will take the opportunity to add to their knowledge by it. It should also provoke reflection. Our Masonic historical studies should not only serve to deepen our appreciations but also lead us to re-consider evidence and re-evaluate commonly-accepted conclusions.

There is only one statement in Bro. Newman's careful paper that I would query. It is his passing reference to Thomas Dunckerley being 'in effect a superintendent of Masonry in a number of provinces at the same time' as suggesting 'at the very least a realization by the Moderns of the need to introduce some regularity outside London'. Bro. Newman has made some study of provincial organization and may be able to cite similar cases of

efforts in the 1770s and 1780s by the leadership of the Moderns to begin this. Certainly John Allen in Lancashire was concerned to make key provincial appointments and to hold a few Provincial Grand Lodges during that time, but I wonder whether Dunckerley and Allen were merely displaying personal initiative. In Dunckerley's case I suspect that his forceful and ambitious character was probably more responsible for his astonishing clutch of fiefdoms than from being the product of any desire at Freemasons' Hall that he should do so.

As regards the term 'Antients and Moderns', Laurence Dermott has been justly celebrated for attaching these terms as a witty shorthand to designate the two rival Grand Lodges. It should not be supposed that he invented them. The two terms had become a common currency of long standing among the intelligentsia by the mid-eighteenth century. The origins of 'Antients' and 'Moderns' as contrasting terms began in the seventeenth century as a literary dispute in France. This had originated from Boileau (1636-1711) singing the praises of authors from the classical ancient world. He was countered by Perrault (1628-1703) who maintained that writers in the modern age had been able to progress to produce much greater enlightenment. This set off a fierce debate from 1687-96. Jonathan Swift popularized the use of the terms in England with the publication of *A Tale of a Tub* in 1704. The debate extended beyond literary merits. Chapter 6 of William Wotton's book *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, published in 1694, is headed 'Of Ancient and Modern Architecture, Statuary and Painting' and quotes extensively from Perrault. This very interesting discourse regarding the importance of ancient geometric principles, yet commending the pleasure and utility to be derived from modern development, is currently free to be read on the web.

There is a considerable modern (!) literature concerning this fascinating quarrel (*querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*). It has lately been regarded by Dan Edelstein as an important stimulus for the Enlightenment (*The Enlightenment: A Genealogy*). A heightened appreciation of the sublime – an influence attributed to the modes of classical Ancients – was important to eighteenth-century aesthetics and led eventually to the Romantic movement.

The thought is provoked that Dermott's interest in Hebrew may have been stimulated by this, and indeed fuelled his very early interest in, and entry to, the Royal Arch – a Masonic conception of some sublimity. Dermott was both educated and an artist. It is remarkable that only two years after being initiated he was among the subscribers to Fifield DAssigny's *A Serious and Impartial Enquiry into the Cause of the present Decay of Free-Masonry in the Kingdom of Ireland*, published in 1744. Dassigny himself designed a striking frontispiece to that book. And as regards the antiquity of Freemasonry there we have only to remember that the *Dedication to Long Livers*, published in 1722, was

addressed 'To the Grand Master, Masters, Wardens and Brethren, of the Most Antient and most Honourable Fraternity of the Free Masons of Great Britain and Ireland'.

I would further add that this broader appreciation of the terms 'Antient' and 'Modern' may provide the answer to the puzzlement that Bro. Roderick H. Baxter expressed in his comment in 1943 upon the seminal paper 'The Traditioners' printed in *AQC* 56 (1946), 190: 'It has always amazed me that the LEADERS of the older body ever acquiesced in the sobriquet "Modern" being applied to them. Perhaps they had their own ideas of it not being really obnoxious.' I think, given the wider cultural context of the period, this observation is likely to be true.

These are my immediate thoughts promoted by Bro. Newman's classic paper, and I am delighted to offer him my thanks and congratulations.

**BRO. JOHN BELTON SAID:** Bro. Newman deserves our thanks for revisiting the Antients and Moderns in the bicentenary year of the Union of 1813. Outside these walls there is too much ignorance and the paper goes a long way to correct that. And in some ways those attitudes that brought about those changes of 1751 and onwards are still with us. For example, there remain some who will always call the 1717 Grand Lodge by the appellation Premier and the Atholl lodges still retain that appellation and are also immensely proud of it – and of course what went on in London was not the same as elsewhere in England or Wales, in the Provincial areas that is, and not in the Colonies of the Empire either. Concentrating only on London, or instead on Lancashire, or simply ignoring what was happening in Ireland or Scotland (the order being simply related to the year their Grand lodges were formed), will tend to produce a biased outcome (in my opinion that is).

I am sad to see the word schism appear for there is an implicit assumption arising that there is a split in what came before and then of there being schismatics – those who broke away. I think that is less than helpful to gaining a clearer understanding of the how and why of both the Antients and the original 1717 Grand Lodges.

On several occasions there were statements that make the assumption that any competition is bad for Freemasonry. I do accept that some order is required in society and that anarchy is to be avoided. But I do also believe that competition is a desirable thing and it forces organizations and businesses to keep on their toes and pay attention to the needs and wants of their customers. Historically, of course, bodies which saw themselves as the controlling monoliths tend to become fossilised and either implode or fragment. That is the way of humanity over the millennia.

I think it is exceptionally hard today, in the twenty-first century, to imagine just how hard and expensive it was for a Grand Lodge to communicate with its daughter lodges. There was printing of course and curiously I discovered that in 1780 Bro. James

Watt obtained a patent for a 'letter copying press', which was used by the likes of Bro Benjamin Franklin, Bro George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. The cost of postage until the arrival of the Penny Post in 1840 was considerable.

Bro Newman does state that there was no parallel in either Scotland or Ireland. I might take a differing view on that. The Grand East of Ulster (which followed the breakaway version of the Grand Lodge of Ireland in 1806) started with 311 lodges and ran from 1808 till 1814. What were the causes? Ulster masons ignored the Grand Lodge of Ireland: it was hard for them to be represented in Dublin, there were disagreements about the Royal Arch, the Knights Templar and the extraction of monies by the Grand Lodge. Scotland saw the departure of Mother Kilwinning from the Grand Lodge over its place in the roll (its status) and this lasted until the return was agreed in 1807 – and Mother Kilwinning chartered lodges across Scotland during that period.

Bro. Newman does illustrate his position regarding colonial rivalries, or perhaps I would be more correct describing them as post-colonial in South Carolina. Very largely what conflict there had been was much less in the colonies, perhaps in part because they were many thousands of miles from London and its petty squabbles. Consideration of the American States to the north or south of the York River adds a valuable perspective: those to the south tended to be more for retaining the link with Britain, were primarily Modern and were the previously cotton-producing slave-owning states; the north by contrast was the more rapidly industrializing part (with all the problems that brought, as it did in Britain), with more immigrants, and Masonry in which the Ancient style (not necessarily Antient) predominated.

I would finally like to comment upon one aspect of the Unlawful Societies Act. I am sure that the envisaged system did intend that registration would be run by the Grand Lodges. However while that was the case in Scotland (and the Grand Lodge of Scotland used the law to attempt to hammer its daughter lodges into obedience) if one looks at the registers it is clear that it had little effect upon the pre-existing rate of non-compliance. It is my understanding that it was the intervention of Mother Kilwinning advising Parliament that it also existed and wished for and claimed the same rights that actually changed the position of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. Thus in England whatever the Grand Lodges might have done it was individual lodges who deposited the lists of their members.

This prompts all sorts of fascinating questions. Some of the lodge lists of members do remain in a patchy way in some county archives. But did the Grand Lodge of England make any returns regarding the total number of lodges, and if so where are they? Again, if the Grand Lodge of Scotland made returns, or retained the returns made by them to individual lodges, then are they still extant? All that could be a fascinating research resource.



**BRO. MIKE KEARSLEY SAID:** I congratulate Bro. Newman on a most interesting paper. Of course, it is well ploughed ground – and many others here tonight have written extensively about these events. Indeed I feel somewhat depressed that my own Prestonian Lecture for 2014 also covers some of the same ground, and probably not so well as our speaker tonight. What comes through so clearly is the unmasonic behaviour of so many Freemasons during the period covered in the paper – and senior Masons at that. Phrases which include terms such as ‘annihilate’ and ‘ferocious’ suggest an animosity that should surely have no place among Freemasons. However, there is a ray of hope in the behaviour of those Masons who managed to have a foot in both camps, and who blithely ignored what was going on in London. Also we learned how warring factions can be united by a common threat. However, would union have been possible without the Royal brothers and Royal influence? Could those senior Masons embroiled in their power play have really put aside their differences? I suspect not. It is pertinent to reflect that Freemasonry, then and now, is a voluntary organisation which members pay to belong to and give much time and energy in supporting. For most it is, in essence, a hobby. Much has been written about group (or cult) behaviour, and often little of this behaviour is logical or reasoned. There are morals for Freemasonry today, but Bro. Newman has wisely avoided making any such connections!

**BRO. JOHN WADE SAID:** I would also like to congratulate Bro. Newman on his most interesting, and indeed stimulating paper. I have a number of brief questions: you gave 1725 as the date for the creation of the Grand Lodge of All England at York. I believe that our late and much-lamented Bro. Neville Barker Cryer has postulated an earlier date for this, possibly as early as 1705. Have you any thoughts on this?

I also wondered at what date the regulation was introduced for ‘abstaining from all political or religious discussion’ in the lodge? I believe it was Desaguliers who introduced this concept, but I wonder also whether the various revolutionary movements in the final quarter of the eighteenth century led at least to a reaffirmation or strengthening of this regulation. I am asking this particularly in relation to your comment about Moderns lodges being ‘tarred with the “Tory” label, while most of the Antients seemed to have been Revolutionary in their politics.’

Finally, we know that the Moderns had constituted a Chapter in 1764 and a Grand Chapter in 1766. Do we know what the attitude of the leaders of the Moderns Craft Grand Lodge was towards this?

**BRO. BRIAN PRICE SAID:** In this bicentenary year it is entirely appropriate for this lodge to have this topic again brought forward for consideration, and I am pleased to be associated with the comments already voiced in the lodge.



In recent years additional material has come to light in a number of areas connected with the early development of the Antients and the Moderns, and I recall Bro. Will Read citing evidence from Yorkshire lodges which demonstrated clear Antients practices even if they held Moderns warrants. Certainly traces can still be found in some Yorkshire lodges today.

Bro. Newman specifically mentioned Grand Lodges other than the Antients and the Moderns, and it is clear that there were more 'regional bodies' than mentioned in his paper. Although most of these concerned degrees and orders 'beyond the Craft', their influence cannot be ignored and there are areas of the country where evidence is still emerging of such activity, affecting both ritual development and attitudes to 'centralized control'. It is of course extremely significant that, although most of these regional bodies covered degrees beyond the Craft, at that time there was virtually no evidence of warrants for such additional degrees and, in parallel with the philosophy adopted by the Antients, it is reasonable to presume most lodges were happy they could work any degrees or orders under their Craft warrants. Of particular interest, in my opinion, is the development of the Royal Arch in bodies which retained a requirement for a 'Passing the Chair' and a 'Mark' qualification well after the Union, and evidence for this activity exists in both Lancashire and Yorkshire well into the last third of the nineteenth century.

In addition, the emergence of a United Grand Lodge must not be regarded either as just a 'Moderns versus Antients' struggle or even just a purely home-grown phenomenon. One particularly intriguing field of study, which was being opened up by John Mandelberg in the period shortly before his death, concerned the introduction to the British Isles and the spread of the French Rite of Seven Degrees. This was widely distributed through French Prisoners of War, who were already Masons on parole after their incarceration in British penal institutions. Between c.1740 and the Union, up to 122,00 French Prisoners of War were imprisoned in over fifty towns spread throughout England, Scotland and Wales. The officers were allowed out 'on parole' and were permitted to visit British Masonic lodges or, in towns where such lodges did not exist, to form their own. The French Rite – seven degrees including the Knights Templar and Rose Croix Rites – was of key interest to brethren working after the manner of the Antients and such interaction brought not only French ideas to British Freemasonry, but also ideas from visiting Masons introduced to the Craft through The Netherlands and the New World. Evidence is fairly sparse, but, for example, one such French lodge was one of the earliest to be warranted by the Grand Lodge of All England at York, and a Frenchman (de Litton) with well-documented connections to lodges working in the French language in London, was a leading light behind the 'breakaway' Grand Lodge of All England South of the River Trent. The questions by Bro. Newman regarding how

much was communicated to their brethren by the rival Grand Lodges and his comments about ‘references to the irregular or illegal “making” of Freemasons by persons who had no right to do so’ must therefore be placed in the alternative perspective of a widespread field of Masonic activity in the British Isles where perhaps only a minority of the Freemasons actually owed allegiance to those two rival Grand Lodges.

This prompts me to enquire of Bro. Newman if other such examples have come to light during his researches, or suggest that this could perhaps be a useful extension to this field of study, covering other lodges around the country which have French influence in their early history.

**BRO. HUGH O’NEILL SAID:** Although this general subject is one that has exercised minds for more than two centuries, I must thank Bro. Newman for a new perspective on several aspects and I join the Master, Wardens and brethren in so doing.

Those of us who are fortunate enough to belong to historic lodges, with records reaching back into this general era, will no doubt find relevant Minutes describing, or at least hinting at, what was being done regarding work that was not strictly Craft as we understand the term today. I give an example from Chichester, on the south coast in Sussex, of what might well be found elsewhere at that time.

In that fair city, being a busy market town, which was then contained almost entirely within the confines of the original fairly compact Roman walled plan, there were two lodges, one of each persuasion: a Moderns lodge and an Antients lodge. The lodge Minutes from just before the union of the two Grand Lodges in 1813 are complete for the Antients from 16 April 1812 and for the Moderns from 11 April 1811 to 6 October 1819 only. The two lodges eventually combined in 1828 to form the present Lodge of Union (now No. 38). The two lodges comprised many of the local gentry, businessmen, bankers and tradesmen. They knew each other well in their daily lives and socialized at their lodge meetings, some being members of both – a matter touched upon by Bro. Newman.

What is quite remarkable is the detail recorded by the secretary of the Moderns lodge, concerning the various degrees worked beyond the Craft. They include (with knocks) ‘The Past Masters Degree of Arts and Sciences’ (o o o o), ‘The Excellent Degree’ (o o o o o), ‘The Super Excellent Degree’ (o o o o o), and ‘The Red Cross of Babylon.’ Further, in the Minute Book of our Antients lodge for the same period, there is no mention whatsoever of any degrees other than the three Craft ones. We would be entitled to expect the Antients to be working (and recording) these extra degrees under the authority of their lodge warrant and not the Moderns, but the reverse is evidently the case here. Immediately following the 1813 union of the Grand Lodges, our two lodges were busy re-obligating the brethren of each other’s lodges, as would be expected, particularly as there was much cross visiting and combined Saints John festival banquets.

Interestingly, there had been a Holy Royal Arch chapter in Chichester up to just before 1800 (possibly 1799??) and from which we have the regalia, and a new one was consecrated on 10 December 1813 (with J. C. Burckhardt and William H. White present, no less!). The members were drawn from the Moderns lodge and not from the Antients because, of course the latter had no need.

My reasons for this comment on Bro. Newman's paper are both to underline what he says about there being nothing straightforward about the Grand Lodge union, particularly away from London, and to encourage brethren to examine their own lodge archives for the 'doings' of this still most interesting of periods.

Again, I must thank Bro. Newman for his fascinating and thought-provoking paper.

**BRO. AUBREY NEWMAN REPLIED:** Bro. Cooper has raised some interesting questions about the Grand Lodges of Scotland and Ireland and possible parallels with what was happening in England. Certainly it cannot be an accident that out of the thirty-eight Grand Masters of the Moderns Grand Lodge ten were Scottish Peers. Here is certainly scope for further research on Masonic links within the British Isles. He has also asked whether the newly-united Grand Lodge adopted the more democratic methods of the Antients; very clearly, as the career of the Duke of Sussex illustrates, it did not.

I am grateful to Bro. Acaster for his reminder of the way in which there was during this century the 'Battle of the Books' and the arguments between the Classical and the Modern writers; it certainly offers a further understanding to the background of the conflict between Masonic Moderns and Antients. I would agree also that I went too far in seeing in the career of Thomas Dunckerley an intention in London to establish some regularity as distinct from his own ambition and desire to impose his own views.

Bro. Belton who has recently published his study of the events of 1813 reminds us of the need to investigate the other Grand Lodges in the British Isles and I am also grateful to him for the reminder of the problems of internal communication and multiple letter writing. I am also grateful to Bro. Kearsley whose Prestonian Lecture will cover much of this ground.

Bro. Wade raises the question of when the Grand Lodge of All England at York was created; a lodge at York was certainly in existence in 1705 but it was in 1725 that it proclaimed that it had always been a Grand Lodge. He is of course right in pointing out my error in claiming that the Antients had created a provincial Grand Lodge in England. The political label I attached to Modern and Antient Lodges was intended to apply to the various lodges in the North American Colonies. As to relations between the leaders of the Moderns Craft Grand Lodge and the Royal Arch it would seem clear that they did their best to ignore it and the fact that so many of them were actually members of it.

Bro. Price, who has done invaluable work on various degrees and orders 'beyond the Craft', is quite right in drawing attention to the practice of many lodges in working such degrees under the cover of their Craft warrants, and that this practice can be found in a number of Moderns' lodges and not only in Antients. He, and Bro. O'Neill draw attention to the way in which many lodges went their own way in ritual and practice. The recent drive by Grand Lodge to preserve lodge archives will I am sure lead many to examine what was going on in these lodges in the years before the Union and will throw considerable light upon patterns of Masonry in the eighteenth century. I echo Bro. O'Neill's recommendation that we go back and analyse these materials

To all who have made their comments on this paper I express my deep gratitude.