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# **The Lectern**

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## **W.H.J.MAYERS MEMORIAL LODGE OF RESEARCH**

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AFFILIATE OF THE AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND  
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Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Lodge as a whole or Freemasonry in General but are of the authors

## **A short presentation given whilst walking around the lodge to the Members of Ravenshoe Lodge May 2013.**

By Harvey Lovewell

I will start here, in the North East Corner of the Lodge. Traditionally this is where a building started and for this we thank the Egyptians.

But before I go too far why do we use these Cardinal compass points and where does the word come from? It is from the Latin *Cardo* which means to hinge or hang from.

In masonic research whenever you see writing about the cardinal compass points the cardinal virtues are always close by and they are Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude and Justice,

*“The first to direct, the second to **chasten**, the third to support a Brother and the fourth to be a guide to all his actions”*

The East symbolizes **WISDOM**, the West **STRENGTH**, the North **Darkness** and the South **BEAUTY**.

Corner stones are the first stones placed at ground level. They are generally placed in the northeast corner, from which, a building was traditionally commenced.

They are part of the structure of the building, and, of necessity, are placed at the start of building. Until the 1950s and 60s, this was the type of stone most commonly placed by the fraternity. Our district Grand Lodge conducted this ceremony at the commencement of the new building at Carpentaria Homes. Of course the foundations must have been already laid as some foundations for big stone cathedrals were up to 10 metres below ground level.

Symbolically the North was a place of darkness and cold a place good to leave behind and find a way to the warmth and light which was the East from where the sun rose. You must remember that Freemasonry was and is strongest in the Northern Hemisphere hence cold in the North was and is a reality.

The association of Masonry with the placement of corner stones comes from the craft guilds. There are records of Masonic Lodges in Ireland placing corner

stones, with full parades and ceremonies, dating from the 1500s and records from England from the late 1600s.

In ancient times sacrifices were conducted on corner stones to appease the gods, corn, oil, wine, and a gold coin were also placed under these stones. So you can see the importance of tradition placed in the North East corner.

Here in the Lodge we have three of the columns from the five orders of Architecture. The first degree tracing board tells us their symbology I urge you to read it. Suffice to say they represent Wisdom, Strength and Beauty.

The Master's column, the Ionic representing Wisdom, was created to meet the need for grace and elegance. The Ionic order was employed in the erection of the temple of the goddess Diana. This column is formed after the model of a beautiful young woman, dressed with her hair up, represented by the volutes, those lovely spiral scrolls appended to each side of the capital.

Here we have the altar, a place that supports the VSL, again check out the first degree tracing board which shows it to be the start of a ladder to the deity. In old times, this was a place where bloody sacrifices were held.

On the front is a circle with a point in the centre and two parallel lines, one on each side. The symbolism of the point within a circle is, again from your Ritual:

1. Point = The Individual Brother.
2. Circle= The boundary line of his duty to God and to man, beyond which a man should not allow his passions, prejudices or interests to betray him.

To the Pythagoreans, the point and circle represented eternity, whose "centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere." The point and the circle can be expressed as the same substance as potential (the point or monad) and as fully manifest (the circle.)

*Some definitions of the word Monad:*

**Monad** (philosophy) *a term meaning "unit" used by philosophers to signify a variety of entities from a genus to God.*

*monad. Philosophy An indivisible, impenetrable unit of substance viewed as the basic constituent element of physical reality in the metaphysics of Leibniz.*

*The word **monad** is used by the neo-Platonists to signify the One; for instance, in the letters of the Christian Platonist Synesius, God is described as the **Monad** of **Monads***

In ancient times, festivals were held on the days of Summer and Winter Solstices these 2 days because they represent and illustrate, the cycles of life. Each parallel line touches the outer circle, which, from ancient times was the sun at the extremes, the Solstices. Today, our Winter Solstice is June 21st and our Summer Solstice is December 21st. They also represented the highest and lowest points which the sun reached, the shortest and longest hours in the day. They signify a time of celebrating the bountiful harvest of plenty that emerges from the seeds of the Earth.

In speculative Masonry, combined, they denote, in essence, the celebration of reaping the fruits of your labour.

The following is not a strong tradition in Australia but it is overseas and is a Christian explanation and maybe you should be aware of this.

The two parallel lines at each side of the Point within a Circle denotes St. John the Baptist, whose "day" is June 24th and St. John the Evangelist, whose "day" is December 27th. They are the 2 Patron Saints of Masonry. While many Master Masons are aware of the celebration of these 2 days, few realize why it is cause for celebration within a lodge.

The Lodge of St. John was the primitive Mother Lodge, held in Jerusalem and dedicated to St. John, the Baptist and then to St. John the Evangelist and finally to both. It is called the Lodge of the Holy Saints John of Jerusalem and from this lodge all other lodges descended."

Here we have the Director of Ceremonies with his Baton.

The crossed batons are on the jewel of the Director of Ceremonies; in some places he is called the (Marshal).

The marshal was originally the officer in charge of the well-being of the king's horses (as the steward was of his pigs), but he came to have certain ceremonial functions in the marshalling of processions and pageantry. The rod, staff, verge, or sceptre has always been a sign of authority; archaeology tells us its use can be traced back beyond the Egyptians, the wands now borne by the Deacons and Stewards of the lodge preserve vestiges of this function. In like manner the DC always carried an abbreviated staff, or baton, as the badge of his office.

So now I have started to walk around the lodge clockwise. Why? You have all heard this called to perambulate. This started as walking around a holy object with the right hand pointing to said object in reverence.

Originally, *circumambulation* was only performed in the lodge in relation to the specific preparation and examination of the candidate prior to his obligation, to ensure that he was properly prepared and a fit and proper person to participate in the ensuing ceremony.

The *rite of circumambulation* is also related to the *circle of existence*, which is a symbol of the passage of the spiritual self through the cycle of life, whence darkness is dispelled and the long upward course of purification is begun, leading from darkness to light, barbarism to civilization. This advancement will ultimately lead us from this profane earthly existence to a state of perfection in that grand lodge above, eternal in the heavens.

By the second half of the nineteenth century *circumambulation* was no longer regarded as a purely religious or mystical practice, having acquired a new and more general usage, simply meaning to walk around or about. During the same period *perambulation* had also lost its specific meaning, because it was being used more and more frequently when *circumambulation* previously would have been used to describe the movement more accurately.

Over-enthusiastic ritualists then introduced the squaring of the lodge room for all movements on the floor, so that the original purpose of *circumambulation* ceased to be understood, or at the very least it was subjugated to the extent of becoming a mere routine, seriously detracting from the symbolism of the ceremonials.

Do you know that our ritual shows that the 1<sup>st</sup> degree perambulation is 3 times the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree 4 times and the third 5 times. The Pythagorean triangle!

In here we have the skull and crossbones. This was a common fraternal motif as a symbol of mortality and warning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It has been adopted by sporting teams, American university fraternities and don't forget the pirates.

In general freemasonry, it is an emblem of *our limited* opportunity to do good. It is also a symbol of the Knights Templar in exile who used the symbol as a mode of recognition, it represents the bones of Jacques De Molay, the last grand master of the KT who was tortured and then burned at the stake by the King of France and the Catholic Pope in March 1314.

The KT were the originators of a system of banking and it said that King Philip IV of France was deep in debt to the KT and that he colluded with the Pope Clement V to get rid of the Templars. There is much to the history of this event and it would take too much time to go further.

Here we have the JW's column Behold, a thing of Beauty, this Corinthian Column, fluted, with a spray of God's creation of beauty, flowers. It is thought to have been invented by Callimachus, a Greek sculptor who lived in 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. The fern, flowers and scrolls that grace the chapters of these columns gives the beauty of Ancient Greece, from Corinth which give it its name. It is representative of the Junior Warden in the Lodge, an observer of Time in the form of the Sun, watching it as it rises from the East, superintends it as it travels in a Southern direction towards the West. The Junior Warden represents Hiram Abif, the Widow's Son, sitting in the South. He also observes the craft when they are at refreshments. Seeing that they do not fall prey to the wiles of the evil one, one that may devour their soul, for he comes to kill, steal and destroy. The Pillar of Beauty is the final result when Wisdom and Strength work together. It is the summation of what to expect when you have Wisdom to contrive and Strength to support, then you will have Beauty to adorn. Strength cannot support and build without the planning of Wisdom, and Beauty cannot paint, carve or beautify if there is nothing. The miniature column here on the desk represents Boaz and is down during work.

Here we have the rough ashlar and over there with the SW is a perfect ashlar. From your ritual you understand the significance of changing rough to smooth. However let's look a bit deeper. All rough ashlars must have within them the potential to be made into a perfect stone for building. The stone must be made of sound material and have a minimum of character flaws which may cause it to weaken the structure. It must be capable of being worked into a perfect stone. This is why candidates for the degrees are asked many questions as to their qualifications and character about why they wish to become Freemasons. The candidate must have the potential to both serve and support the Fraternity. He must be carefully inspected, just as each Rough Ashlar is inspected for quality in order to be able to "fit" him into Freemasonry's tenets and goals, which are compatible with God's laws.

An imperfect stone may be made perfect, however major flaws are difficult to overcome and when assembled into a structure, the entire structure can be weakened from its improper use. This is as true of men as it is of stones.

We now travel around the lodge to the SW here is placed the Doric column. It is the first of the Greek Columns and represents Strength, the Pillar of the Senior Warden in the Lodge, one of Support for the Master in the opening and closing of his Lodge. He is the keeper of the wages of the craft and is to pay them out on the orders of the Master of the Lodge.

This pillar is emblematical of the West in direct contact with and for the Worshipful Master, both representing the sun as it travels from East to the West. It is a journey of life, rising and setting, doing so on the just as well as the unjust. This miniature column is up at work and represents Jachin.

But what of this? (pointing to the tessellated pavement) We walk around it. What do we know of its significance? What is missing?

Yes the Tessellated pavement this Checkered floor of black and white, symbolic of the triumphs and the despairs throughout life, symbolic of good and evil.

In the instructions of 1735, it is detailed as a part of the furniture of a Lodge, with the explanation that the “Mosaic Pavement is the Ground Floor of the Lodge, the Blazing Star, the Centre, and the Indented Tarsel, the Border round about it!”

“The Blazing Star, or glory in the centre, refers us to the sun, which enlightens the earth with its Shinning rays, dispensing its blessings to mankind at large and giving light and life to all things here below.”

However I find that at various times the Masonic Blazing Star also depicted in old writings as the Dog Star or Sirius, has been declared to be a symbol of

1. Divine Providence
2. The Star of Bethlehem
3. Prudence
4. Beauty
5. The Sun

The point is it belongs in the centre of the pavement. I have observed that there are Lodges in our district which do not have this. Millaa does. Why this is so I do not know.

From ancient civilizations to modern man, our Masonic Blazing Star is a symbol of Divine Providence...the symbol of Deity which represents:

**Omnipresence** (the belief that the Creator is always present in our lives)

**Omniscience** (the belief that the Creator both sees and knows everything about us, including our thoughts and the secrets of our hearts)

And throughout history, the Masonic Blazing Star is an ancient emblem of faith which shines for each of us, no matter which specific religion we embrace.

Here we have the Inner Guard masonically speaking the office of Inner Guard is of comparatively recent origin - 1816 being the first recorded mention of

that office. For nearly a hundred years preceding this date the visitors would have been admitted and the candidates received in due form by the youngest entered apprentice or a brother appointed by the Junior Warden.

It is interesting to note that the rank of Inner Guard is unknown in most American Lodges, where the Junior Deacon, under the command of the Junior Warden admits the visitors and receives the candidate.

The name guard or guardian is evolved from the same origin as the word Warden the word Wardian and Guardian were one and the same, and a scholar noted in 1605 that the French, Italians and others whose language comes from the Latin turned the “W” of such words as wardian into a single “U”. because their alphabet had no W at all, but then to mend the matter - they put before the U a G, and so warden or wardian went to guardian, and ward to, guard Thus it was explained that the Wardian, Warden and Guardian are all one, ‘ so a definition could be a keeper or attender to the safety of that which he hath in charge’. The word ward is to do with the internal workings of a lock which needed a key to operate so there is the origin of warden where a ward was an obstruction meaning you had to have the correct key to bypass the obstruction or ward .